THE HOMERIC CATALOGUE OF SHIPS
AND ITS DRAMATIC CONTEXT IN THE Iliad

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The main purpose of this note is to reinforce the argument that the Homeric Catalogue of Ships is not a late (i.e. post-Homeric) insertion in the Iliad. Furthermore, I hope to establish that the Achaean Catalogue and its Trojan counterpart are essential to the Iliad, and not merely an optional addition. At the same time, however, I support the current view that the Poet of the Iliad adapted for his particular dramatic purpose a pre-existing Catalogue, and that he had no need or desire to invent a new one. The catalogue which he used was evidently not a studious copy of an official roll of contingents, but rather part of a poetic tale (unfortunately lost to us),
presumably based on an actual expedition against Troy. But it is clear that this tale included the start of the expedition; whereas in the Iliad one theme is selected (the Wrath of Achilles), set in one period (the Tenth Year). In order to give to this theme the full force of dramatic concentration, Homer selects from the saga of the Trojan War such material as may enhance or enliven his story, with few attempts to eliminate the minor discords between the (old) saga and the (new) dramatic setting of his Iliad. Most of the traditional material that appears to have been added by Homer to the framework of the traditional Catalogue may thus be explained either as giving extra information about the persons and places in it, whether the procedure implied is a likely one for the time..." (cf. C. M. Bowra, Homer and His Forerunners, Edinburgh 1955, pp. 5 f.). For the "O-ka" tablets themselves see L. R. Palmer, «Minos» 4, 1956, pp. 120 f., H. Mühlestein, Die Oktatafeln von Pylos, Basel 1956, and V. Burr, "Die Tontafeln von Pylos und der homerische Schiffskatalog" (Festbuch ... des Peutinger Gymnasiums, Ellwangen, Jagst 1958, Teil II, pp. 71-81).

There is still debate as to whether or not there was such an expedition (cf. «JHS» 84, 1964, pp. 1-20).

cf. Il. 2. 301-332.

For instance the use of the verb ἄνω in two different senses in two adjacent lines — 557 ἄνω (a sea scene — going to Aulis?) and 558 ἄνω (a land scene — before Troy?). I discuss below the authenticity of 558.

It has, of course, been demonstrated that this traditional Catalogue has undergone at least some changes in the process of oral transmission. See, e.g., J. M. Cook, «SMEA» 2, 1967, pp. 102-109, and G. L. Huxley, Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies 7, 1966, pp. 313-318. Huxley, however, argues that the ship numbers themselves, although they sometimes appear in Ionic forms, are as reliable as the names of places, peoples, and heroes. But both the ship numbers and the epithets (the latter are discussed by J. M. Cook, loc cit.) seem particularly "at the mercy of the metre" (cf. Page HHI, p. 152). τεσσαράκοντα and ἕκαστον πολεμόν seem among the most attractive forms in the two categories respectively. But it is, after all, the names which constitute the kernel of the tradition; so that it is in this category that the best memory work would be expected (see C. R. Beye, The Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Epic Tradition, New York 1966, (abbr. Beye IOET), pp. 15, 76, 90 f., and 161). The point is that for so difficult a feat of memory to be performed (a"tour de force", Beye IOET, p. 90), a special motivation is required. The names of places, peoples, and heroes, also provide material for the battle narratives (Beye IOET, pp. 93-96), and in particular serve as a preparation for the "psychological drama" of Iliad IV, and for the beginning of Iliad X (Beye IOET, p. 92); whereas the exact numbers of ships and the sizes of the contingents are needed only once, in the formal enumeration of the forces in Book II. It is surely significant that little information concerning the size and organization of the individual contingents is given; while there are no indications that the Ionian audiences had any greater knowledge than we possess concerning the size of the ships.

C. R. Beye, «HSCP» 68, 1964, pp. 345-373, esp. pp. 346 f., analyses the "items" in the Catalogue into (a) basic information (names of men and leaders etc.), (b) anecdote (pedigree etc.), and (c) contextual information (numbers of ships etc.). But some of the anecdotes also might be said to have a contextual purpose,
or else as intended to adapt a first year muster to the needs of a tenth year Achilleid.

As regards the former category, that of interesting additional information, we must recognize that some such expansions may have been contained either in the original Catalogue, or in adaptations made before the time of Homer. The additional information itself is in the form of pedigrees and other minor embellishments, which do not bear directly on the theme of the Iliad, but serve to relieve the monotony inherent in the catalogue form.

More important is the second category, which might be called "story additions". This consists mainly of the explanations concerning the absences of Protesilaus and Philoctetes, and especially the reminder of the absence namely to "build up" the characters of the heroes, many of whom are destined to be "cannon fodder" (in the androktasiai). And the names of men and leaders must also be in some sense "contextual information". There were some areas of the Achaean world which apparently did not send contingents.

C. R. BEYE, «AJP» 82, 1961, pp. 370-378 (cf. Beye IOET, pp. 90 f.) seems to be arguing (although he does not say this explicitly) that the Catalogue may always have been designed for a Tenth Year setting at Troy. Taken one by one, certain features in the Catalogue which have suggested an Aulis muster (e.g. ἐν νητ. ... ἐπαυν, κλω, and ἐν Σαλαμινος διγέν) are made to look ambiguous. The verbs ἐπονοσ and ἐπιτυχ-ωντο are, as Beye says, more appropriate to "animate" objects; and ships, of course, have to be animated. Thus his suggestion that ΝΑΙΣ in the Catalogue stands for 'ship-load' or 'ship-unit' may serve as a clarification, if this is needed. But the sense of motion inherent in the verbs and their imperfect tenses (Beye's arguments for a use of imperfects here in the sense of recording a "historic fact" are not convincing, and thus do not answer Page's comment, HHI p. 124) seems to imply the sailing of ships in convoy or the process of arranging ships in order. The verbs are surely not appropriate to ships which have been static for nine years. As for κλω in 509, some Boeotian contingents at least might have arrived at Aulis by sea, namely those from Hyrie and Anthedon. But the simplest answer to Beye's rather complicated hypothesis is that the Catalogue, taken as a whole, (but in this case, of course, without its surrounding context in the Iliad), gives an overwhelming impression of a dramatic situation, of a muster taking place, not merely of a simple list of forces.

For discussion of the passages regarded as post-Homeric by the Alexandrian scholars, see T. W. ALLEN, The Homeric Catalogue of Ships, Oxford 1921, p. 171, and Page HHI, pp. 149 f.

i.e. lines 513-515, 518 (cf. Webster, From Mycenae to Homer, pp. 163 f., who notes that ἵπτω is compulsory), 629 (possibly), and 871-873.

i.e. lines 528-530 (distinguishing the two Ajaxes), 547-551 (about Athens), 553-555 (a personality for Menestheus), 594 ἔθη τῇ Μοισαῖ to 600 (Thamyris’ contest with the Muses), 641-642 (a note on the Aetolian commanders), 658-667 (the story of the Achaean settlement in Rhodes), 673-675 (the beauty of Nireus), and 831-834 (gratuitous prophetic information), and possibly also 612-614 (the Arcadia known to the Ionians was land-locked) and 535 (is this to inform Ionian audiences that Locris is opposite Euboea?).

699-709 (excepting 705), and 721-728 respectively (see Wade-Gery PI, pp. 53 f.). For some unaccountable reason, Page, HHI, p. 149, includes 719-720 as similarly 'additional'.
of Achilles on account of Wrath 14. There is also, moreover, a sub-division of this category, which we may perhaps term "battle stations information". Under this heading can be placed lines 525-526 (where the Phocians are said to be drawn up on the left, near the Boeotians). Also attributable is the much-athetized line 558, στησά δ’ ἂγων ἤ ’Ἀθηναίων ἵσταντο φάλαγγες. If this were an interpolation 15, it would be a very shrewd imitation of the style of 525-526 (but not, it must be noted, a direct copy). The phrase ἀνάτερεθε δὲ ὅρφησοντο (587) is very similar 16, and the description of the Abantes (541-544) also seems to belong to this type. These «battle stations» entries clearly demonstrate the Poet's awareness that the description of a ship muster is to some extent inadequate for the situation on land in the Tenth Year of the War. But equally clearly the Poet does not wish to labour the point 18, and these particular entries are therefore few in number and brief.

All these "additions" help to amplify the data in the preexisting Catalogue, and to mould it into the structure and context of the Iliad. The same purpose is served by the long dramatic prelude to the Catalogue. As Wade-Gery reminds us, Homer's narrative in this introduction is "exactly imagined and exactly described" 19. Jacoby, however, thinks that the narrative has been contaminated by a Katalogist's insertion (i.e. 459-785), and that we can recover Homer's uncontaminated narrative only by omitting these lines, and passing directly from 458 to 786 20. He claims that "... we can detect this in the fact that the actions are duplicated: the army is paraded twice, and twice marches out for Troy. The two parades are at 444-446 (Homer's) and 474-477 (the Katalogist's): the two marches are at 455-458 (Homer's) and 780-785 (the Katalogist's)" 21. Page accepts Jacoby's analysis, and suggests that the two proposed sequences are "alternatives for recitation" 22.

14 686-694. We might also add here 577-580 ("for the greater glory of Agamemnon"). Page HHI, p. 150), and possibly 588-590 (the motives of Menelaus).
15 T. W. ALLLEN, The Homeric Catalogue ..., pp. 56 f., once argued against the attack on this line, but later changed his mind. As he says, however, the Megarean condemnation guarantees that the line is at least as old as the 6th century B.C., and "... though suppositious it by no means bore the fraudulent meaning which the Megareans put upon it, unless we are to include in the same condemnation 526 (but no one charges the Boeotians with interpolating this line to base a claim to Phocis on it) and 587. It was meant to eke out the Catalogue at a weak point..." (my italics).
16 As noted by Allen, loc. cit.
17 We note also that there were Abantes in Ionia (Webster, From Mycenae to Homer, p. 152).
18 Whether or not the Poet has left a "jarring incongruity" (Beye IOET, p. 91) is a subjective question.
21 Wade-Gery, loc. cit.
22 Page HHI, pp. 133 f., and 166 f.
Wade-Gery, believing that Jacoby's theory depends on erroneous interpretations of χρίνοντες (446) and of ἐφρυμένων (457), rightly points out that χρίνοντες may mean something like "singling men out", and that ἐφρυμένων means no more than "in motion". But, in concentrating on his refutation of Jacoby's hypothesis, Wade-Gery seems not to put enough stress on the positive case for unity of composition. As he says, 444-458 are merely the preliminary to the parade and march; they are not the parade and march itself. In the first part of Book II, Agamennon's authority has been weakened, and must therefore be propped up by speeches and actions on the part of Nestor, Odysseus, and the other main heroes (278-440). Nestor recommends (364-368) a sorting out of the brave from the cowardly. The leaders rush about "singling men out" (446 θύνων χρίνοντες), and in this they are presumably following Nestor's advice. Before the parade can take place, there is much to be done in the way of boosting morale. We note the repetition of this theme by Nestor - πολέμοιο (368) and ὑξίων "Ajax" (440). Finally, Athene too must put into men's hearts strenght. Thus θεία (444) is not the actual process of "falling in" on the parade ground. It is, rather, the necessary preliminary gathering together of the scattered forces. The heralds have to go κατὰ νῆς (437-438), dragging men out from the ships themselves. θύνων χρίνοντες describes the bustling about before the parade. The theory advanced by Jacoby (and accepted by Page) virtually denies that any action taken before the parade is described. Yet only at 464 are we expressly informed that any men have actually left either ships or huts, and the first unmistakeable sign that the troops are on parade and in order comes at 476 διεκόσμεον. Even at this stage there is still apparently some preoccupation with morale (ἐνθα καὶ ἐνθα picks up the θύνων of 446). As for the supposed "two marches" (455-458 and 780-785), the "first march", which is in reality no more than the coming on

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23 Wade-Gery PI, pp. 51 f., and n. 107 on p. 84. I should prefer, however, to take ἐφρυμένων in the sense of "coming on" or "approaching" (the audience at this point would be, supposedly, agog with expectation). Page, however, (loc. cit.) asserts that the normal meaning of ἐφρυμένων is "going to battle"; while he adroitly places the onus of disproof of this theory on others. Similarly, on a mere assumption that χρίνοντες (446) is related to διεκόσμεον (476), he takes χρίνοντες in a most unusual sense of "arranging" (Liddell and Scott give separate, distinguish, pick out, choose, judge, estimate, question, accuse, condemn).

24 F. Jacoby, Die Einschaltung . . ., pp. 596 f. says that 339-397 are interpolated. His arguments, however, have been well disposed of by V. Burr, Neon Katalogos, pp. 9 f., and cf. Wade-Gery PI, p. 83 n. 104.

25 Wade-Gery PI, loc. cit.

26 C. R. Beyle, s AJP s 82, 1961, p. 378, regards κατὰ νῆς as of the same nature as κατὰ φύλα, κατὰ φόρτας (362). But surely here, at least, real physical ships (not mere 'ship-loads') must be meant. The men have been skulking in the ships and huts (cf. 464 . . . νεών ἄπτο καὶ κλοπτάων).
parade, is a fine preparation for the eventual splendid marching out to battle after the parade. For it is plain that \( \pi\upi\upsilon\dot{\sigma} \) (780) recalls \( \pi\dot{\upsilon}\rho \) (455), and in both passages the earth is said to resound with the noise of the approaching men \( (\epsilon\rho\chi\omicron\omicron\mu\acute{e}\nu\omicron\omicron\upsilon) \). But in the second passage, added weight is given to the climax by the description of the earth groaning beneath the tramping feet, as it does when Zeus in his anger delights in the thunderbolt. And the drama is, of course, further heightened by the cumulative effect of the recitation of the Achaean Catalogue, which immediately precedes the climax.

It is therefore strange that lines 474-477 and 780-785 could be regarded either as interpolations (Jacoby) or as alternatives for recitation (Page). For both passages are entirely necessary, as part of the skilful process by which the Poet successfully welds the traditional Catalogue into his narrative. In so doing, he breathes new life and meaning into its dry bones. And the Catalogue, both because of its content and its venerability, must always have been obligatory in any proper recitation of the Iliad. As Allen said, «...it was to serve as a list of dramatis personae and be an introduction to the fighting; for which purposes the additions fit it» 19. It is indeed an inseparable part of Homer’s Iliad.

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18 That the Iliad would have been recited without the Catalogue (as suggested by Page, *HHI*, p. 134 and n. 46 on p. 167) seem highly improbable, at least as regards the time of the Homeridae (whatever later copyists may have done - cf. Beye *IOET*, p. 90).