

Instrumento de Pesquisa

A New List of Iliadic Wounds, Deaths and Acts of Aggression

Uma nova lista de ferimentos, mortes e atos de agressão na *Iliada*

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Abstract: This paper presents a new, digital, and interactive list of wounds, deaths, and other acts of aggression in the *Iliad*. After an introduction, it discusses the state of the art in quantitative approaches to the subject. The following section presents the methodology for compiling the data, briefly establishing the criteria for the distribution of instances in each category. In the discussion, I compare the results with previous similar projects and mention a few examples of the potentiality of the new list – to be published online, not included in the paper –, showing the advantages of the digital format.

Keywords: Homer, *Iliad*, wounds, deaths, war.

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta uma lista nova, digital e interativa de ferimentos, mortes e outros atos de agressão na *Iliada*. Após uma introdução, ele discute o estado da arte em abordagens quantitativas do assunto. A seção seguinte apresenta a metodologia de compilação dos dados, estabelecendo brevemente os critérios para a distribuição das instâncias em cada categoria. Na discussão, comparo os resultados com projetos semelhantes anteriores e menciono alguns exemplos da potencialidade da nova lista – a ser publicada on-line, não incluída no artigo –, mostrando as vantagens do formato digital.

Palavras-chave: Homero, *Ilíada*, ferimentos, mortes, guerra.

1. Introduction

Almost half of the twenty-four books of the *Iliad* are “battle books” (5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21), and much more than half if we also include those in which there is at least one battle scene (3, 4, 6, 10, 14, 22). The *Iliad* is a war poem in the strictest possible sense of the word: it is a poem about a war, and most of its action is devoted to recounting events of that war. This also means that a fundamental part of its study aims towards understanding how combat works: from comparing it with archaeological and historical sources¹ to analyzing the formulaic systems used to describe battle,² many works have been concerned over the decades with exploring how Homer’s heroes fight and die. Despite this, there is today no comprehensive list of aggressions in the *Iliad*. The goal of this paper is to present such a list.

I will begin by revising the available data in publications, and afterward, I will present the main characteristics of the new list. Section 3 will discuss in detail the different criteria used in the compilation of the data, and section 4 will provide some examples of the potentiality of the complete list in digital format.

It should be said at the outset that the list will not be available in this paper, since one of its most important traits is that it is digital and interactive. It can be found in <https://www.iliada.com.ar/en-detalle-y-en-debate/lista-de-muertes-heridas-y-actos-de-guerra-en-iliada/>, both in English and in Spanish.

2. Previous quantitative approaches to wounds and deaths in the *Iliad*

The first list of wounds in the *Iliad* is Frölich’s (1879, p. 58).³ It includes 147 wounds and deaths classified by three criteria: weapon (stone, sword, spear, arrow), site of the wound (head, neck, trunk, arms, legs), and effect of the wound (fatal, not-fatal, uncertain). It provides a considerable amount of information: Frölich’s table allows us to know that all head wounds are fatal, all sword wounds are fatal, that stones are the less dangerous of weapons, etc. It has, however, two important problems: firstly, it is not a complete list of combat actions, but a table of wounds in the strictest sense, which skews the results in different ways. The sword, as mentioned, is the most fatal weapon in Frölich’s analysis, with 100% efficacy; however, when one takes into account the several times that a sword breaks or simply does not wound its target, that number drops to 82%, not too far from the efficacy of the spear (74%), and actually less of that of the spear when used in close combat (83%). The second and probably most significant problem of Frölich’s table is that it is nothing more

than a table: the information he provides cannot be verified nor his interpretation of the different passages checked. Needless to say, today that should not be an acceptable standard.

The next important example of a volume devoted entirely to the study of wounds in the *Iliad* is again by a German author: W.-H. Friedrich's *Verwundung und Tod in der Ilias* (1956). The book deserves mention because it was translated into English with a new appendix by Saunders in 2003. However, Friedrich's approach is a qualitative one: none of its 150 pages offers a count of wounds, and the author's goal is the highly debatable one to identify different "styles", with an outdated analytical intention. Although this does not detract from his contributions to the study of certain passages, it is clear that this is not a text that contributes in the sense that interests this paper.

Before the flourishing approaches which began at the end of the last century, the first work to attempt to outdo Frölich is a 1981 article by Robert Garland, "The Causation of Death in the *Iliad*". Garland is primarily interested in the description of the process of death, so his paper includes a study of the terms used to express it (μόλος, θανάτοιο, θάνατος, etc.) and how the poem indicates that someone has died. His work, therefore, does not deal strictly with wounds, but with their consequences. Nevertheless, it has an important advantage over its predecessors: in a long series of appendices, which occupy five full pages, the author provides a list of the people killed in the text and all the passages used in his analysis. The latter is a significant step forward, and one that for the most part will be replicated in all later scholarship.

At the turn of the century, the relatively low interest in the quantitative study of war in Homer began to be counterweighted with the publication of J. V. Morrison's paper "Homeric Darkness" (1999), again, as in Garland's case, a work of formulaic and linguistic analysis, and again one that includes a (much shorter) appendix with a presentation of data, this time of the specific places where the wounds in the poem occur. Morrison offers more a list than a table (e.g. "Head and neck: Neck (9), head (6), forehead (5), temples (4), jaw and ear (3), mouth (2), ear (2), eye, jaw, throat, vertebrae"), but the information is there and, more importantly, the author accompanies each item with a note indicating the Greek word he is translating in his list and the passages where it appears.

Morrison's paper was followed by Saunders' "Frölich's Table of Homeric Wounds" (2004), the first contemporary work dedicated specifically to the compilation of a list of wounds in the *Iliad*. As its title suggests, the author intends to revise and reconstruct Frölich's table from a modern perspective and with a more careful philological approach. The result, however, is a new table that has the same form as the one published in 1879. It is undoubtedly a better, corrected table, but it does nothing to solve the practical problems that

Frölich's had. Saunders seems to be aware of this because he adds a second table distinguishing throwing-spear ("javelin") from thrusting-spear ("spear") in order to introduce a distinction that his predecessor did not take into account. Nevertheless, his explicit intention (p. 14) of replacing "an inadequately described, inaccurate, and unverifiable nineteenth-century analysis with a carefully described, accurate (I hope), and verifiable twenty-first-century analysis" is not achieved, for how can a simple table with no access to raw data be verifiable? Saunders discusses a great number of passages, certainly, and perhaps most of his numbers could be accounted for, but, while that might have been adequate for the twentieth century, it is definitely not for the twenty-first.

In the years since the publication of Saunders study, there has been an explosion of papers in the field of medical history dealing with the issue: Sapounakis *et al.* (2007), Mylonas *et al.* (2008), Ralli *et al.* (2014), Swinney (2016), Nomikos (2018), Kayhanianand Machado (2020). A quick look at the bibliography below would prove that these are not papers by researchers in the field of Classics, but by physicians interested in the history of medicine. Although they offer interesting conclusions, they are always based on translations and in almost no case address the philological problems of the original text. This does not undermine the fact that these articles offer important breakthroughs: Swinney's analysis, for example, which demonstrates the limited value of helmets as protection from wounds, is an important contribution both to the study of the poem and to military history in general.

From a methodological point of view, as is to be expected, there is considerable variation in these papers. However, most of their analyses share an open-minded approach to the data (perhaps because the authors are aware that they are not using the original sources), something of great importance when contrasting their results.⁴ Beyond this, the fact that they do not work with the Greek text and that they deal with specific topics (neck wounds, head wounds, etc.) and not the question of wounds in general, restricts its value beyond their particular objectives: rather than instruments for the study of wounds in the *Iliad*, these articles are important mainly because they demonstrate the demand for a tool that allows such a study.

In addition to these academic works published in specialized journals, two online publications are worth mentioning: Ian Johnston's list of deaths (2013) and the infographic based in part on that list by L. E. Jenkinson (2014). These are works that offer useful information. The format of Johnston's, though uncomfortable, allows it to be reused to cross information, as shown by Jenkinson's own infographic. More importantly, the level of detail in Johnston's list is the highest available to date, as it includes nine pieces of information per entry: perpetrator, perpetrator's side, effect of the

wound, victim, victim's side, weapon used, site of injury, book and verse. However, both publications have a basic flaw: they use Johnston's translation of the poem as a source, a poetic translation that does not regard the verse numbers of the original. Thus, the first entry on the list, the death of Echepolus at the hands of Antilochus, which according to Johnston occurs in 4.529, actually occurs in 4.457-62. While strictly speaking this does not affect the openness of the publication, it makes it cumbersome to use.

We can extract several conclusions from this review:

- The current trend is towards more openness, which allows for more verifiability of data.
- None of the publications provides a comprehensive and detailed survey of the information. Some deal with the deaths, others with the wounds (some with specific types of wounds), but none provide complete data, let alone the possibility of crossing them.
- Almost none of the publications addresses all elements that a complete study of the forms of combat in the poem requires, such as the verbs used to describe the attacks, the specific locations where the wounds are received, the context in which they occur, etc.
- Despite all this, the need for such information is clear, given the number of studies that have been produced on the subject over the past decade.

3. The shape of a new list

In order to surpass the previous compilations of data regarding the wounds in the *Iliad*, the first obvious fact to take into account is that a traditional publication is not ideal. Not only does a printed list limit the amount of information that one can include, but it also diminishes the possibility of crossing data to reach new conclusions. Cross-referencing the information of the number of Trojans killed by Achilles with the information of how many of them are wounded by a spear, how many by a sword, and how many by other types of weapons is impractical in a journal article that does not deal specifically with this problem because it would mean introducing a table for the hero. But even if one chooses to compile that data, what of, for example, the question of how many heroes survive a chest wound because of their armor, or how many deaths occur in the context of an *androktasia*, or what is the book with the most Trojan wounded, etc.? This information is partly available in the publications mentioned above, but the idea of designing some kind of table that covers all of this data and falls within the usual boundaries of a specialized journal is inconceivable. In addition, a printed or fixed version of that unimaginable table would not only be unmanageable

but would also not allow for convenient cross-referencing of information.

A new table must necessarily have, therefore, three main traits:

- It should be comprehensive, that is, it should include at least as much information as the previous quantitative approaches offer, and preferably more.
- It should be digital, not only to accommodate a huge number of data but also to allow for easy cross-reference and navigation.
- It should be interactive, giving the users a chance to correct and expand the information offered.

The list I present here has all these traits. It includes 373 individual entries with 22 columns, more than five thousand cells of information,⁵ and it is designed as a table in Microsoft Excel, which lets the users modify it as they prefer and provides different tools for its navigation and analysis. In the following section, I will discuss each column individually, explaining the criteria used in the classification of cases.

4. Individual column discussion

4.1. No.

For organizational reasons, each entry is numbered. This allows to sort them in order of appearance with ease.

4.2. Book

Number of the book in which the act of aggression happens.

4.3. Verse

The numbers of verses in which the act of aggression occurs. I have taken an all-encompassing approach, including all the verses in the sequence in the count. No. 4 on the list, Pandarus' attack on Menelaus in Book 4, for example, goes from verse 122, when Pandarus starts pulling the bowstring, to verse 139, when the arrow hurts Menelaus.

4.4. Perpetrator

Name of the attacker. For the spelling of names, I have used Johnston's glossary (2013).

4.5. Perp. side

The side of the attacker. In addition to the expected “Achaean” and “Trojan”, the options include “god” (in this case, I mark the entry in yellow), “Achaean animal” and “Trojan animal”, although I only use these two options in the “victim side” column.

4.6. Victim

Name of the character attacked. In some cases, the victim is identified by a trait (nos. 86, 137, 138, 178). In four passages, it is not identified: in 8.268-70 (no. 89), Teucer kills an unnamed Trojan, in a general description of his combat technique that seems to have developed into a specific death. In 10.483-8, 15.743-6, and 16.784-5, a single warrior (Diomedes, Ajax Telamonius, Patroclus) kills a group of people; for the sake of completeness, I have included an entry for each death (nos. 102-13, 235-46, 291-317), but these are certainly exceptional cases that should be handled with care in any analysis. Note that in Diomedes’ and Ajax’s entries, the weapon is specified.

4.7. Victim side

See Perp. side. When the victim is a god, I do *not* mark the entry in yellow.

4.8. Weapon

This column includes the four main classes of weapons in the poem: spear, sword, stone, and arrow. Also added are the categories “axe”, which is used in a single case in 13.614-5 (no. 195), and “hand/fist”, with which Apollo hits Patroclus in 16.788-804 (no. 318) and Athena hits Aphrodite in 21.423-5 (no. 369). There are many cases where the poet does not specify the weapon used, for which I have reserved the category “unknown”; the cells are not left blank because, naturally, there is always a weapon involved, even if we do not know which. Since the noun *χαλκός* only accompanies spears when used for offensive weaponry, I have classified the cases where the word appears alone in the category “spear” (no. 214, 222, 321, 322, 325).⁶ Since there is a special column for mode of use, there was no need to distinguish throwing-spears from thrusting-spears as did Saunders (2004).⁷

4.9. Weapon (Greek)

The Greek word used to describe the weapon, when it appears. When more than one weapon is mentioned in the context, I record the one closest to the verb indicating the wound. In cases where a noun that clearly alludes to a weapon appears in the context, I record that noun, even if another word may have been recorded (e.g. *δουρὸς ἀκωκῆ* > *δόρυ*, not *ἀκωκῆ*). In this column, I use parentheses to

indicate the weapons that are implicit in the context; in 11.321-2, Diomedes and Odysseus make simultaneous launches, but the spear is mentioned only for the first (no. 135), being implicit in the description of the action of the second (no. 136). Note also that I include nouns that metonymically allude to a weapon (e.g. *αιχμή*, *χαλκός*, *ἀκωκή*).

4.10. Mode of use

Most weapons have only one mode of use: ranged (arrows, stones) or close combat (swords, axes, hand). The spear, however, can be thrown or used in closed combat. In some cases, this remains undefined. In other cases, the verb used by the poet is an indicator of the mode of use:⁸ *βάλλω* seems to indicate that the spear is thrown, while *οὐτάω*, *πήγνυμι*, *νύσσω*, *τύπτω* and *ὀρέγω*, that it is used in closed combat.⁹ The categories “Unknown (ranged combat)” and “Unknown (close combat)” are reserved for these instances.

4.11. Verb

The Greek verb used to describe wounding or killing. Only the one that describes the main blow, or the one that points to the act of killing the enemy, is noted. Verbs implicit by context are between square brackets; e.g., in 8.274-6 (nos. 90-7) the poet lists several Teucer’s victims, who are introduced as direct objects of a tacit *ἔλε*, implied by the explicit *ἔλε* in the question of 273. Between parenthesis in this column, I mark all instances (except the first) of a verb with several objects; in 5.677-8, Odysseus kills seven Lycians (nos. 46-52), but the poet includes only one verb for the first.

4.12. Effect

This category is probably where most innovation is found compared to previous studies. In addition to the obvious categories “fatal” and “non-fatal wound”, I have included cases where a warrior strikes but the blow fails to harm his enemy, namely, missed shots (“miss”), attacks stopped by the shield and attacks stopped by the armor. The importance of these categories becomes evident when one notes that the total number of the three taken together represents more than 10% of the total number of entries on the list.¹⁰ To these five categories I have added “Uncertain (fatal)” for the complex case of 5.159-64 (nos. 29-30), in which Diomedes “takes” (*λάβε*) two Trojan warriors and then captures their armor; the only other case of *λαμβάνω* used in this way (*pace* Saunders, 2004, p. 10), is in 11.126, where Agamemnon definitely does not kill his victims until after they plead in 11.130-5. In the case of Diomedes, Saunders assumes that the process is the same (capture, murder, and removal of armor), but I

prefer to leave the problem open. Other uncertain cases studied by Saunders (2004, p. 11-2), have been considered fatalities because there is very little doubt that they are killing scenes. An exemplary case might be mentioned here: in 6.63-5 (no. 76) the poet tells us that [Ἀδρηστον] κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων / οὔτα κατὰ λαπάρην·ὁ δ' ἀνετρέπεται, Ἀτρεΐδης δὲ / λάξ ἐν στήθεσι βὰς ἐξέσπασε μείλιον ἔγχος (“Lord Agamemnon struck [Adrestus] / beneath the ribs; he fell back face upward, and the son of Atreus / stepping with his foot upon his chest drew out his ash-spear”);¹¹ now, at first glance, one would tend to interpret this as a death scene, but Saunders (2004, p. 11), observes that the verb ἀνατρέπω nowhere in the poem indicates that someone has died, and an “Adrestus” will be stripped by Diomedes in 11.328 and killed by Patroclus in 16.693. This interpretation, however, seems to be excessively finicky: the repetition of the name is a very common resource in the poem, since many of them (and especially those of the “extras” or *morituri*) are stock names, and it seems inconceivable that Agamemnon would have removed the spear from the chest of the man whom he has just wounded without killing him, especially right after having told Menelaus (6.55-60) that no Trojan should escape from their hands. For the rest, “when in doubt, it’s a kill” seems to be a reasonable rule of thumb when approaching wounding in the *Iliad*, given the relative ease with which warriors die.

4.13. Location of impact (original)

The Greek word or phrase indicating the place where the weapon hits the victim’s body, when it is present in the poem. In several cases, the location is not continuous in the Greek text, and I note this with an ellipsis mark (e.g., no. 201, 14.409-20, στήθος... ὑπὲρ ἄντυγος ἀγχόθι δειρής). In addition, I indicate verse breaks with the vertical bar.

4.14. Location of impact

This column introduces an English term approximating the Greek word for the site of impact. In addition to making the list easier to understand for those who cannot approach the original text, this allows for a quicker search of the wounds received at specific places in the poem, since the Greek phrases in the previous column that point to the same places are not always identical. κατὰ λαπάρην (6.63-5, 14.442-8, 14.516-9 – nos. 76, 202, 214), λαπάρης (16.317-9 – no. 251) and παραὶ λαπάρην (7.248-54 – no. 81), for example, all seem to point to (different places of) the abdomen, which is the word I have used for these cases.

4.15. Area of impact

Following the guidelines of Frölich (1879) and Saunders (2004), this column groups the sites where wounds are received. I have used, however, four groups (not five): head and neck, trunk, lower limbs, and upper limbs. A head vs. neck division is unnecessary, as there is a column to list the specific sites of each impact. For borderline cases (e.g. Leucus' groin wound at 4.489-93, no. 8, considered a trunk wound), I have, for the most part, followed Saunders, including his decision of taking the shoulder as part of the arm. However, I have counted the collarbone (κλήϊς) as part of the trunk, not of the neck. When the impact site is not specified, I have used the category "unknown"; when there is no impact site (because the shot fails or is stopped by the shield), "not applicable".

4.16. Context

A type of data not considered in previous analyses, this column classifies the wounds and deaths according to the context in which they are produced, classifying them into six groups: duels (both formal, such as that of Ajax and Hector or Paris and Menelaus, and those that occur during battles), *androktasias* (rapid sequences of deaths at the hands of different warriors, in almost all cases of the same side), *aristeias* (in the broadest possible sense, when a hero kills several warriors in sequence), fights for a body, battles in broad sense (battles that do not enter in any of the above categories) and "others" (cases that are difficult to classify, such as the killings during Book 10 – nos. 101-4 – or the death of the torchbearers at the hands of Ajax at 15.743-6 – nos. 235-46). An interesting outcome of this column is that most deaths in the poem (138 of 295) happen during an *aristeia*, but the most appealing fights by far are duels, with 11 shots stopped by armor, 11 by shield, 13 misses, 14 killings, and 9 non-fatal wounds.¹²

4.17. Additional circumstances

The first of three columns reserved for specific circumstances of the acts of aggression that do not warrant a separate column but are useful to systematize (that is, to include not merely as observations).¹³ This group includes the fact that the weapon breaks when impacting the armor (8 cases), the fact that a warrior is actually (25 cases) or possibly (19 cases) on the run when attacked, that the death occurs in revenge for a fallen comrade (2 cases) or for a wound received (1 case), that the victim was previously captured (5 cases) or is acting as a supplicant (4 cases). This column also includes the categories "First wound of a sequence" and "Second wound of a sequence", which allows two-step deaths to be entered into separate entries, such as that of Mydon, first struck by a stone thrown by Antilochus and then finished off (as in almost all cases) by his sword

at 5.580-8 (nos. 39 and 40).¹⁴ Finally, this column contains the indication that the victim is incidental (on which see Intended victim).

4.18. Intended victim

In 13 instances of the poem, a warrior tries to hit someone but, for various reasons, the shot impacts someone else. In such cases, the column Additional circumstances indicates that the victim is incidental, and the name of the intended victim is given here, thus providing a more complete picture of the situation.

4.19. Additional circumstances (2)

This column includes three circumstances: that a weapon goes through the shield before wounding or killing a warrior (8 cases), that the victim is a charioteer (14 cases), that the victim's body is mutilated post-mortem (4 cases).

4.20. Additional circumstances (3)

The final column of this type is reserved for cases in which the victim is attacked while stripping a body of its armor (10 cases).

4.21. Detailed description of wound

This column lists the 41 cases in which the wound is described in detail. It should be noted that this includes both extensive descriptions, such as that of the stone of Patroclus to Cebriones in 16.733-43 (no. 290), and shorter descriptions, such as that of the death of Epeigeus at the hands of Hector in 16.570-80 (no. 276).

4.22. Observations

The last column is reserved for exceptional phenomena, such as the intervention of a god, or other significant aspects for understanding the situation, such as the fact that one blow is simultaneous to another, or the detail of where a two-part death is completed or initiated.

5. Discussion and initial results

I have compared the numbers of the new list with Morrison's and Saunders'. In the first case, the numbers and interpretations are very different in several respects. Morrison, for example, counts four fatal injuries to the legs: 5.694, 16.308-10, 16.313-6, and 4.519. I count three: 11.423-5, 16.307-10, and 16.313-6. 5.694 is a mistake: there is no death there, but the removal of the Tlepolemus' spear from

Sarpedon's leg (who is not dead nor dying).¹⁵ 4.519 is not a fatal wound, since Diore is killed by a second blow from Peirous, not from his initial stone throw. Finally, 11.423-5, a hit to the groin, is simply not mentioned by Morrison. To replicate this exercise with the much more numerous wounds to the head and neck and to the torso and arms would be not only extremely cumbersome but otiose since the scholar has not offered detailed explanations of his decisions.

I introduce below Frölich's table with Saunders' numbers in parenthesis and mine next to them. In order to facilitate the comparison, I have combined the lines of head and neck.

		Stone	Sword	Spear	Arrow	Total
	Fatal	(4) 5	(13) 11	(26) 25	(2) 3	(45) 44
Head and neck	Non-fatal	(2) 1	(0) 0	(1) 1	(0) 0	(3) 2
	?	(1) -	(0) -	(0) -	(0) -	(1) 0
	Fatal	(0) 0	(3) 5	(43) 50	(2) 3	(48) 58
Trunk	Non-fatal	(1) 2	(0) 0	(5) 4	(1) 1	(7) 7
	?	(0) -	(0) -	(4) -	(1) -	(5) 0
	Fatal	(0) 0	(2) 1	(7) 10	(0) 0	(9) 11
Upperlimbs	Non-fatal	(1) 1	(0) 0	(6) 8	(3) 3	(10) 12
	?	(0) -	(0) -	(4) -	(0) -	(4) 0
	Fatal	(0) 0	(0) 0	(3) 3	(0) 0	(3) 3
Lowerlimbs	Non-fatal	(2) 2	(0) 0	(2) 2	(2) 2	(6) 6
	?	(0) -	(0) -	(0) -	(0) -	(0) 0
Total		(11) 11	(18) 17	(101) 103	(10) 12	(137) 143

The first obvious fact is that the numbers are very similar. However, there are many small differences. Some of them have already been accounted for (see sections 4.12 and 4.15). Others may be caused by the fact that Saunders does not count the killings of animals in 8.81-6 (no. 86) and 16.466-9 (no. 273) and counts as a separate wound the mutilation of Illioneus corpse at 14.488-99 (no. 206). Notice that many of the differences come from the redistribution of uncertain cases.¹⁶

Now, while in light of these similarities one might question the need for a new table, I believe a simple example of the potentiality of my list might justify the necessity: below is the same table as above, now including all categories in the new list.¹⁷

		Arrow	Axe	Hand/fist	Spear	Stone	Sword	Unk.	Total
Head and neck	Fatal	3			25	5	11	1	45
	Non-fatal wound				1	1			2
	Stopped by armor		1		2		2		5
Trunk	Fatal	3			49		5	2	59
	Non-fatal wound	1		2	4	2			9
	Stopped by armor		2		4				6
Upperlimbs	Fatal				11		1	1	13
	Non-fatal wound	3			8	1		1	13
Lowerlimbs	Fatal				3				3
	Non-fatal wound	2			2	2			6
	Stopped by armor				1				1
Not app.	Miss				17				17
	Stopped by armor				1				1
	Stopped by shield				15	2			17
Unk.	Fatal	9			20		19	126	174
	Uncertain (fatal)							2	2
Total		23	1	2	163	13	38	133	373

There is a huge amount of information here; however, my main point can be illustrated with a second table of similar form:

Achilles' wounds		Spear	Sword	Unknown	Total
Head and neck	Fatal	5	2		7
Trunk	Fatal	4	3		7
Upperlimbs	Non-fatal wound	1			1
Lowerlimbs	Non-fatal wound	1			1
Not applicable	Miss	4			4
Unknown	Fatal	1	2	7	10
Total		16	7	7	30

It took only a couple of seconds to obtain these data, and they offer several interesting pieces of information. Achilles, for example, hits the head of his opponent about 23% of the time, while the general number is almost 14%.¹⁸ That is a considerable difference, and one that, to my knowledge, has never been observed before. As the most proficient gamers, the hero tends to go for the head.

The study of specific cases is a considerable advantage of the digital format, but the categories of the new list themselves shed new light on Iliadic combat. An interesting example is the question of who is the most attacked warrior in the poem. Finding out this is possible because the effects “miss”, “stopped by armor”, and “stopped by shield” have been included, as well as the “Intended victim” column

for incidental casualties. The numbers are the following: Hector (13 attacks, including his death), Menelaus (7 times), Achilles and Ajax Telamonius (6 times), and Diomedes (5 times). The astounding number of attacks on Hector (1 miss, 2 non-fatal wounds, 3 stopped by armor and 2 by shield, 4 cases in which he is the intended target, and the fatal blow in Book 22) should, however, be compared with those of Achilles by taking into consideration the fact that this warrior comes out to fight at the end of Book 19, while Hector fights throughout the poem.¹⁹ Achilles is attacked 6 times (1 miss, 1 non-fatal wound, 1 stopped by armor, and 3 by shield) in three books, while Hector is attacked 13 times in about sixteen (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22); the number is still very high but in relative terms way lower than his killer.²⁰

6. Conclusion

The selected examples I have presented above are intended only as illustrations of the potential of the new list. I could have also noted that there are 3 fatal wounds in the head or neck produced by Achaeans with a spear in the context of an *androktasia*, or that one non-fatal wound with a spear to the upper extremities happens while the victim is stripping a body (Meriones' attack on Deiphobus in 13.528-30, no. 185). But this kind of raw data means little outside the context of specific questions presented by scholars. In this sense, while previous quantitative approaches were useful as attempts to solve such specific questions, the main advantage of the new list is that it can be used to solve not only those presented above but also hundreds more that were not even conceived at the moment of its elaboration. It is, I hope, a tool that will allow us to reach a deeper understanding of Homeric combat; however, it is nothing more than a tool, and as such, it can only wait for the hands of scholars to pick it up and use it.

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Notes

- 1 See e.g. Latacz (1977), Van Wees (1994), who reach opposite conclusions (see the summary of the debate in Coray, Krieter-Spiro and Visser, 2020, p. 183-5).
- 2 The classical reference is Fenik (1968).
- 3 With Frölich's one should, of course, mention Saunders (2004), but I will treat this paper separately below, so I do not include it in this discussion.
- 4 Abritta *et al.* (2021, ad 16.289) have taken advantage of this and found at least three mistakes in Nomikos (2018, p. 2).
- 5 22 times 373 is, of course, 8206, but many of the individual cells have no information.
- 6 There is one partial exception in 8.85, where *περὶ χαλκῶ* refers to an arrow, but, obviously, in no case can there be confusion between spear and arrow. Of course, spears are not the only bronze weapons (cf. 13.612 of an axe, 13.650, 662 and 465 of arrows, 16.136 and 19.373 of swords), but the noun appears to have specialized meaning when used of a single offensive weapon. It functions also as a general unspecific term for "weaponry" (cf. 5.558, 11.153, etc.) or other bronze implements, especially outside the context of war (cf. 1.236, 9.458, 17.126). See also Saunders (2004, p. 4, n. 8).
- 7 This is not simply a practical decision: Saunders (2004, p. 13, n. 31) claims that "javelins and thrusting spears are radically different weapons," which is undoubtedly true from the point of view of real combat, but completely false from the point of view of the *Iliad*: Achilles' spear is

both a thrusting and a throwing weapon, and nowhere does the poet seem to find any inconvenient with this. To classify, for example, Achilles' killing with his spear of Iphition (20.381-7, no. 337) and Demoleon (20.395-400, no. 338) as the product of different weapons because the second one seems to have been produced in closed combat would be extremely misleading, since the weapon is, in the most literal sense, the same.

8 See Saunders (2004, p. 5), whom I follow. The exceptions he lists in note 11 are the reason for leaving these cases in a different category than the ones where the mode of use is indisputable. .

9 "Aristarchus' rule"; see Schironi (2018, p. 232-4).

10 And if we exclude the more generic killings where no weapon is mentioned, that number rises to almost 20%.

11 I use Alexander's 2015 translation, with some modifications.

12 In *aristeias*, only 1 miss, 2 non-fatal wounds, and the two unknown cases mentioned in 4.12.

13 I have included three of these columns because of the superposition of the analyzed circumstances.

14 On the strange aftermath of this death, see Saunders (2000).

15 Morrison counts it probably because 5.696 uses death terminology to raise suspense about the death of Sarpedon (see Abritta, 2022, *ad* 5.696).

16 I should notice that it took me several hours to account for all these small differences, given that Saunders has not published raw data. This illustrates why an open approach is much needed when working with this type of information.

17 To reduce the size of the table, I only include lines and columns with totals different from 0.

18 The numbers are only to exemplify the potential of the new list since I have taken the gross totals. A more detailed analysis should choose the *comparanda* with care.

19 The same is valid, of course, of Diomedes, who is wounded in Book 11, but I will not consider this for the sake of brevity.

20 Another notable fact to take into account is that Achilles is always attacked in the context of a duel, but Hector is attacked six times in other contexts. One should probably link this with the fact that duels are the most interesting battle contexts (see above, sec. 4.16).



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Alejandro Abritta

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