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Introduction: The Tally of Text

The list is the origin of culture.

Umberto Eco, interview in *Der Spiegel*, 2009

In the treatise *On Hunting*, during a discussion of how to raise and train dogs, Xenophon offers some additional advice on what to call them (*Cyn*. 7.5):

> τὰ δ᾽ ὀνόματα αὐταῖς τίθεσθαι βραχέα, ἵνα εὐανάκλητα ᾖ. εἶναι δὲ χρὴ τοιάδε· Ψυχή, Θυμός, Πόρπαξ, Στύραξ, Λογχή, Λόχος, Φρουρά, Φύλαξ, Τάξις, Ξίφων, Φόναξ, Φλέγων, Ἀλκή, Τεύχων, Ὑλεύς, Μήδας, Πόρθων, Σπέρχων, Ὀργή, Βρέμων, Ὕβρις, Θάλλων, Ῥώμη, Ἀνθεύς, Ἥβα, Γηθεύς, Χαρά, Λεύσων, Αὐγώ, Πολεύς, Βία, Στίχων, Σπουδή, Βρύας, Οἰνάς, Στέρρος, Κραύγη, Καίνων, Τύρβας, Σθένων, Αἰθήρ, Ἀκτίς, Αἰχμή, Νόης, Γνώμη, Στίβων, Ὁρμή.

> Give them names that are short, so that they are easy to call out. They should be like these: Soul, Spirit, Handle, Spike, Spear, Snare, Lookout, Guard, Lineup, Sworder, Cutthroat, Blazer, Courage, Crafty, Ringwood, Wily, Lusty, Charger, Passion, Roarer, Outrage, Burster, Might, Bloomer, Youngblood, Cheerful, Joy, Eagle-eye, Sunbeam, Turner, Force, Lineman, Gusto, Eagle-owl, Rock-dove, Rugged, Screech, Killer, Whirlwind, Toughguy, Air, Beam, Pique, Mind, Brain, Tracker, Rush.

Almost fifty examples later, one has presumably gotten the idea. Why include this litany, so charmingly excessive? Perhaps the aristocratic sportsman needed so many suggestions, or perhaps they were culled from the population of dogs known to the author. But more likely, the passage underscores a very basic aesthetic premise, and one from which this book begins: the ancient Greeks liked lists, catalogues, inventories, enumerations. Long ones. They liked composing them, performing them, hearing them, reading them, writing them down, and cutting them into marble. They did not think they were dull or uninspired, and they probably did not skip over them when they cropped up in the midst of a perfectly good narrative sequence.

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Lists, though, were not merely entertaining flourishes or chances for an author to demonstrate erudition and virtuosity. As this book will argue, Greek lists functioned from the earliest literature on as the consistent and continuous means of expressing cultural value in text. Ultimately, they came not only to record value, but to create it. This system can often be circular: items of intrinsic value are included in lists, but inclusion in a list endows an item with extrinsic value, thus making it worth re-listing. Robin Coste Lewis's 2015 narrative poem *Voyage of the Sable Venus* deploys this feature of lists to expose the historical violence done to Black bodies. The work consists, in the author's words, "solely and entirely of the titles, catalog entries, or exhibit descriptions of Western art objects in which a black female figure is present, dating from 38,000 BCE to the present."[1] Through the relentless selection and positioning of source texts, Lewis arranges and redisplays these dismembered objects in all their diachronic horrors of design and description. Thus a passage from the section "Catalog I: ANCIENT GREECE & ANCIENT ROME" lists:[2]

[Two Nubian Prisoners Bound
to a Post] Protome [Probably

The Handle of a Whip
or Other Implement] Oil Flask Back

View Head of an African Prisoner
Statue of Prisoner Kneeling Arms

Bound at the Elbows
Left Arm Missing

Bust of a Nubian Prisoner
with Fragmentary Arms

As Lewis re-curates Western art through each set of entries, she also exposes the catalogue form itself as a powerful tool for propagating, but also revising, ingrained cultural systems of worth. *Voyage of the Sable Venus* shows moreover that catalogues can manipulate objects in time and space, preserving what is long lost, and spotlighting what is otherwise invisible.

In the ancient Greek world, the list in its many manifestations became the recognizable mode of expressing quantifiable and lasting value in contexts sometimes lacking standards. The sheer quantity of lists in Greek literature hints at the importance of the form. From the *Iliad*'s monumental Catalogue of Ships to Aeschylus' account of war dead in the *Persians* or Callimachus' list of

[1] R. C. Lewis 2016: 35. [2] R. C. Lewis 2016: 47.

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Sicilian cities, the literary record boasts an enduring tradition of interrupting long narrative sequences with enumerations. Similarly robust, if less well-preserved, is the tradition of longer, stand-alone poetic catalogues, such as the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* – indeed, the list form may underlie some of the oldest Greek poetry.[3] At the same time, lists pervaded an apparently entirely separate tradition: the vast corpus of documentary inscriptions. Amidst scores of decrees, laws, and dedications, one can peruse as many casualty lists, ship manifests, inventories, building accounts, and tribute records. While scholars have long analyzed and mined these primary materials for evidence about their historical contents, only rarely have they entered discussions focused on literary list and catalogue. The mandate of Armayor, who decades ago noticed numeric correspondences between Homeric and Herodotean catalogue, still holds: "What we have to contend with here is not coincidence but Catalogues, Greek Catalogues with themes and rules of their own which we have not yet begun to understand."[4] Although many of our texts share cultural heritages, audiences, and perhaps even authors, we tend to treat literary lists and epigraphic lists as entirely different beasts. This book aims to align these two discourses, working toward a poetics of Greek lists across genres, and inquiring into common traditions, mechanics, and underlying objectives. In lists of the archaic and Classical periods, the Greeks exhibit a previously unexplored preoccupation with amassing, displaying, and counting prestige objects, real or imagined. These enumerations do not simply exhibit items: rather, as they mirror physical collections they create permanent virtual facsimiles of personal and public wealth. As a result, list-texts take on a worth so culturally weighty that they supplant and supersede physical objects themselves.

An additional contention of this book is that listmaking represents a distinct and autonomous tradition in the Greek world, often transcending the bounds of poetry and prose, literature and document.[5] Greek lists do not function discretely *within* genres and registers: they more properly form a genre unto themselves. Apparently disparate examples overlap in their uses and abuses of the list format, presenting intertextualities throughout the Classical period that ultimately anticipate the fused archival and literary cataloguing practices of the Hellenistic period. Thus studying lists brings together not only literature and epigraphy, but disparate theories of genre and medium. The Greek list was a transmedial phenomenon,[6] a text-form with a cohesive set of functions and

[3] See, e.g., Kühlmann 1973: 11–13. [4] Armayor 1978: 7.

[5] For lists in the Roman tradition, cf. now Riggsby 2019, chapter 1. Galjanić 2007 treats the Indo-European tradition of enumeration.

[6] As separate from "intermedial," though some lists also are this. For distinctions between these terms, see Rajewsky 2005. Martin 2008 outlines useful approaches to Greek object–text relations; see e.g. 337–339 on representation.

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behaviors in a variety of manifestations – from oral performance to written text to inscribed surface. While this book focuses on texts from the archaic period on, much of this material discussed here shows affinities with the palace records of goods so well-preserved for Mycenean culture. While the Linear B evidence is beyond the scope of this book,[7] it is clear that the written text in Bronze Age Greece had become an established means of documenting wealth, and making a list of important items appears to have been a regular administrative practice well before the Homeric poems became solidified. The Linear B evidence is beyond the scope of this book but would make for productive future study.

"What's in a List?" Revisited

This book engages particular lists on their own terms, but it also revisits broader thematic concerns about lists.[8] Lists have often been related to questions about ancient literacy and orality, due in no small part to Jack Goody's chapter-length treatment of them nearly half a century ago in *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*.[9] For Goody, who discussed lists primarily in early writing systems of the Near East but also gestured to Greek evidence, lists led to knowledge:

> [I]t was the keeping of such chronicles and the re-ordering of materials by means of the visual inspection of the written word, that permitted wider developments in the growth of human knowledge, more particularly in knowledge of the past, but also in knowledge about the natural world.[10]

While Goody's broader claims about literacy and the Greek alphabet have met with ample and appropriate criticism in the intervening decades, more specified applications like this have received less attention and critical engagement and run the risk of persisting in the received scholarly understanding of the topic.[11] Lists, like writing itself, should be understood as

[7] For more general ideas about the function of the written tablets, see, e.g., Schwink 1999 and Palaima 2003.

[8] Examples of longer specialized studies include: Trüb 1952, Kühlmann 1973 on (mostly) epic catalogue, Ormand 2014 on Hesiod, Minchin 1996, Gaertner 2001, and Sammons 2010 on Homer, Asquith 2005 and 2006 on Hesiod and Hellenistic poetry, R. Hamilton 2000 on the Delian inventories, Gordon 1999 on magical lists, Harris 1995 on inventories of the Athenian Acropolis, Aleshire 1989 on the inventories of Asclepius, Spyropoulos 1974 on Aristophanes.

[9] Goody 1977: 74–111. [10] Goody 1977: 90.

[11] But for a more a nuanced account of "List Literacy" and Greek documentary culture, see Thomas 2009: 30–42; cf. also Thomas 1989: 287–288 and mentions of lists throughout Thomas 1989, and Davies 2003 and 1994.

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a product, and not a prerequisite, of human knowledge. Moreover, it is not easy to separate ancient lists by their presumed level of sophistication. A division between epic lists and other apparently more mundane lists also informed, separately, Kühlmann's monograph on the topic,[12] and the roots of this kind of approach inhere in the overall tendency to treat archival "documentary" lists as separate from "literary" ones, and oral ones apart from written ones. As this book aims to show, however, the cultural functions of Greek lists did not wholly depend on their status as oral or written, or as "document" or "literature." In fact, features of Greek oral poetic lists persisted in written texts; meanwhile, in other contexts, such as performed drama or historical inquiry, one can scarcely categorize lists as one medium or another. And, as we shall see, it is not always clear whether the list was transmitted to its audience via "visual inspection" or aural reception; moreover, these media do not always correspond precisely to different goals and purposes. Thus this book also interrogates Umberto Eco's claim, quoted in the epigraph, that the "list is the origin of culture," by considering how the diverse range of lists from across Greek culture operate.[13] In the case of the Greeks, there is much to be learned from how they organize and present their valuable information.

Several previous studies, Kühlmann's included, have shed light on the relationship of lists to various Greek textual genres. For Kühlmann, lists in epic are modes of presenting truth and fact, and of eliding the authorial voice. Gordon's study of magical lists, itself a short anthropology of ancient listmaking, responds to both Goody and Kühlmann. Taking his title from Goody's chapter heading, Gordon softens Goody's claims, putting forth that "with the advent of writing, listing of many different kinds became institutionalized in Greek and Roman culture." In dialogue with Kühlmann, he highlights the uncertainty of the list:[14]

> [I]s it best understood as an active, purposive fragmentation of the world, an act of magisterial disarticulation, or as a passive collection of things that are lying about, that need to be brought together? Does the list break down the unity of experience in order to assert the power of the list-maker over, and with, the matter in question; or does it rather tend towards holism, assembling *disjecta membra* into an implied totality? . . . part of the rhetorical achievement of a list may be precisely this uncertainty about the grain or flavour of its reading.

While no theoretical framework can account for every example, and indeed no one study can encompass the vast range of Greek lists without itself

[12] Kühlmann 1973: 18. [13] Eco 2009. [14] Gordon 1999: 246–247.

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being reduced to a catalogue, this book inclines toward the theory that lists do "tend towards holism" and approach "an implied totality," with the caveat that such a totality is, almost by definition, incomplete. In this I follow in part the more specific theory of Umberto Eco that the list is a kind of representation that "suggests infinity almost physically, because it in fact does not end, nor does it conclude in form."[15] I would revise the formulation slightly to suggest that the form may appear to end, but its recursive potential to contain the infinite persists.

Beyond their importance to literacy and orality, Greek lists crucially impinge on several other areas of intellectual inquiry. One that has recently received more scholarly attention is the topic of ancient numeracy, that is, in Cuomo's recent definition, "the ability to count, calculate, and measure."[16] Often evidence about Greek counting and measurement is couched within lists, and, as I shall discuss below, lists themselves can enable the act of counting itself. In this regard, the term "tally" bears special significance to this project. Originally denoting a stick with notches to mark debts and repayments (from Lat. *tālea*, cutting, rod, stick), it came to mean a record or account of such values, in the form of a list. Thus it encapsulates one of the central themes of the book, that catalogues and inventories always retain an intimate connection to physical objects of value, and themselves become the objects of value over time. The study of lists also relates closely to the study of collecting. Not only does listing often follow upon collecting: the list too is its own form of collection.[17] More broadly, lists crucially inform our understanding of knowledge production in antiquity, of generic boundaries and intersections, and of performance cultures. The story of ancient historiography, for instance, is not complete without consideration of such projects as genealogies and chronicles, or catalogic documentary sources.[18] Meanwhile, debates about the composition of Homeric epic inevitably turn to the origins of catalogic sections, as either older relics or newer additions; moreover, the genre of the catalogue poem seems closely related to the origin of epic.

What Is a List? (What Is It Not?)

The studies in this book treat a range of ancient evidence, from Homeric epic to Hellenistic inscriptions and much in between. Many of the texts here have

[15] Eco 2009: 17. [16] Cuomo 2012: 1; see also Netz 2002.
[17] On collecting, see, e.g., Elsner and Cardinal 1994, Pearce 1994 and 1995, Bounia 2004, and Tanselle 1998.
[18] On these questions see, e.g., S. West 1985 and 1991, Moyer 2002, Kosmetatou 2013.

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been categorized by other scholars with various labels such as "catalogue," "inventory," "account," "enumeration," and "chronicle." While each of these schemata has its own set of potentially useful nuances, in general I treat all as sub-groups of the blanket term "list." In this, I depart from previous scholarship that insists on a definition of a list as a bald, laconic series of short, unconnected, and concise entries, to be contrasted with, for instance, a "catalogue," which is usually taken to be a longer, further elaborated, and perhaps more expressive textual form. In addition, I concentrate on lists that could be classified as "inventories," in that much of the discussion focuses on lists that describe cohesive collections of objects, often physical ones. This term is usually applied in the context of documentary records, such as those of the sacred dedications discussed in Chapter 4; yet it could equally apply to many of the Homeric lists in Chapter 1, though these are generally called "catalogues." While I am in favor of collapsing these putative distinctions, for the sake of clarity I have continued to employ conventional terms applied to key texts, such as the Iliadic Catalogue of Ships, the Attic inventories, or the Lindian Chronicle.

Goody distinguished three kinds of lists, based partly on the temporal relationship between the list and its contents: the "record of outside events"-type, which archives past events, the "shopping list"-type, which serves as a "guide for future action," and the "lexical list."[19] Yet these groupings are limiting and uneven: they fail to account for examples such as a temple inventory, which both records the past and guides future behavior. As such they become logically dubious, for the list-type does not always correspond to the "correct" location of the list in time relative to events: rather, the direction-of-fit can change. This problem of intentionality in a shopping list, for instance, was brilliantly dramatized by Elizabeth Anscombe two decades before Goody:[20]

> Let us consider a man going round a town with a shopping list in his hand. Now it is clear that the relation of this list to the things he actually buys is one and the same whether his wife gave him the list or it is his own list; and that there is a different relation where a list is made by a detective following him about. If he made the list itself, it was an expression of intention; if his wife gave it him, it has the role of an order. What then is the identical relation to what happens, in the order and the intention, which is not shared by the record? It is precisely this: if the list and the things that the man actually buys do not agree, and if this and this alone constitutes

[19] Goody 1977: 81–82; at 84ff he further categorizes lists: "administrative lists, event lists," etc.
[20] Anscombe 1957: 56.

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> a mistake, then the mistake is not in the list but in the man's performance (if his wife were to say: "Look, it says butter and you have bought margarine," he would hardly reply: "What a mistake! we must put that right" and alter the word on the list to "margarine"); whereas if the detective's record and what the man actually buys do not agree, then the mistake is in the record.

In the case of many Greek texts, where we often have no information about the intentions of the listmaker or the list-user, any one of Anscombe's hypotheticals could be the reality. Thus I resist most formal distinctions about lists not as a reductive move, but because they tend to limit the analytical possibilities for serial texts, which can shift categories at will. Instead, I pursue a formal but liberal definition of a list influenced by Eco: a kind of text that is either presented as or is recognizably serial, and that is recursive, potentially extendable *ad infinitum*.[21] Discussions of lists also often posit a minimum number of elements (typically three) that a series should have to be determined a "list"; yet I contend that a very small or even null set can be a list if it is introduced as one.

This open-ended definition of lists draws also from educational psychology, in which listmaking constitutes an "epistemic game" of implicit questions, where, "if the answer to these questions must be discovered, rather than recalled or looked up, then the listmaking process is an inquiry process and the resulting list constitutes new knowledge."[22] Thus just "eggs, milk, tomatoes, bread" suggests "What do we need from the grocery store?," "eight hundred stallions, sixteen hundred mares, and a huge amount of dogs" answers "Why should we believe you about the Babylonians?" This all amounts to a kind of speech act that functions much as would a magical list, which, most agree, is essential to a charm's efficacy.[23] In authored literary texts, too, lists serve a specific and identifiable function beyond the decorative or the expository. Instead of effecting a charm or curse, though, the non-magical list, as a means of presenting a facsimile of a physical reality to an audience as evidence, has a curatorial aim.

[21] Eco 2009 does not precisely define lists, but his essay focuses on their visuality, their qualities of infinite possibility, and potentially infinite form.

[22] Collins and Ferguson 1993: 27.

[23] The exact principles by which the list works in ancient magic remain contested. In summarizing several views, Collins 2008: 83–86 surmises that neither (1) a sense of completeness nor (2) parallels to administrative text style provide adequate explanation for the list's ubiquitous presence. Collins partially espouses rhetorical explanations such as those of Weiner 1983 and Gordon 1999, but stresses the importance of cross-cultural influences on the Greek and Roman world too. For a recent summary of the complications of that topic as regards the Near East, see Noegel 2010: 22–23. Collins is right, I think, to introduce the connection of body-part enumerations with healing *ex votos* that depict body parts. An approach to a related topic that examines compositional, rhetorical, and cross-cultural elements of healing together is that of Watkins 1995: 537–539 on Indo-European medical doctrine.

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What Lists Do

While this book suggests that listmaking works in distinct ways for ancient Greek culture, some of their analytical possibilities can be illuminated at the outset by recourse to modern texts, as we have already seen in the case of *Voyage of the Sable Venus*. A second example is Camus' *The Stranger*, in which the enigmatic murderer Meursault, imprisoned in solitary confinement, whiles away his time by composing mental lists of the objects in his old room. This game soon becomes a generative and creative enterprise, as he progressively lengthens his inventory with each performance (98).

> Sometimes I would exercise my memory on my bedroom and, starting from a corner, make the round, noting every object I saw on the way. At first it was over in a minute or two. But each time I repeated the experience, it took a little longer. I made a point of visualizing every piece of furniture, and each article upon or in it, and then every detail of each article, and finally the details of the details, so to speak: a tiny dent or incrustation, or a chipped edge, and the exact grain and color of the woodwork. At the same time I forced myself to keep my inventory in mind from start to finish, in the right order and omitting no item. With the result that, after a few weeks, I could spend hours merely in listing the objects in my bedroom. I found that the more I thought, the more details, half-forgotten or mal-observed, floated up from my memory. There seemed no end to them.

This passage encapsulates several of what this study defines as the central functions of inventories. Some of these are perhaps self-evident, but it is worth setting them out together. Lists can:

1 Collect a series of important items into one place
2 Count, whether implicitly or explicitly, the sum of the items
3 Collate the items into an order or into sub-groupings
4 Conjure items without their physical presence
5 Create a new, composite item (i.e., the list) that rivals the value of the items listed.

Meursault's inventory collects and counts its contents, if not numerically, still for the sake of completeness; it also collates them, attending to their spatial order. We can also read this list as a conjuring act. On one hand, it is an exercise that seems neatly emblematic of Meursault's person: obsessive and detached, pathological and indifferent. Yet behind all this perhaps lurks a *horror vacui*, an anxious attempt to materialize what cannot be

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present, to fill an empty prison cell and a troubled mind with the trappings of a free life, and to forge object-bonds to a civilization of which he was never fully part. Or so we perhaps merely hope: it could be that, for this man who does not grieve his mother's death, who shot a man five times because the weather was hot, and who will never leave prison alive, an inventory of his possessions stands only as the ultimate act of nihilistic perversity.

Whatever the case, Meursault's last comments point to a final quality of lists this book will pursue: its recursive possibilities. "So I learned," he airily concludes, "that even after a single day's experience of the outside world a man could easily live a hundred years in prison." Given just a brief glimpse of a collection, one can produce an infinite, ever-extendable inventory. This passage thus presents the inventory as, potentially, a powerful remedy for isolation and loss, a means of coping with disconnection and emptiness, and a tool for amplifying the briefest of material interactions.

Medium and Material

But lists can also create, or be generative of, material. Presented as a series of nouns with no surrounding narrative, lists assert the agency of objects, or, as Latour would call them, "a population of actants that mix with things as well as with societies."[24] This kind of agency is exemplified by a very different modern work: Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, a collection of stories about a platoon of American soldiers in Vietnam. The eponymous first story specifies (2):

> The things they carried were largely determined by necessity. Among the necessities or near-necessities were P-38 can openers, pocket knives, heat tabs, wrist watches, dog tags, mosquito repellent, chewing gum, candy, cigarettes, salt tablets, packets of Kool-Aid, lighters, matches, sewing kits, Military payment Certificates, C rations, and two or three canteens of water. Together, these items weighed between fifteen and twenty pounds, depending upon a man's habits or rate of metabolism. Henry Dobbins, who was a big man, carried extra rations; he was especially fond of canned peaches in heavy syrup over pound cake. Dave Jensen, who practiced field hygiene, carried a toothbrush, dental floss, and several hotel-size bars of soap he'd stolen on R&R in Sydney, Australia. Ted Lavender, who was

[24] Latour 1993: 90.

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