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## HOMER'S ARCHITECTONICS OF WAR: ATROCITY AND SYMMETRY

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**Abstract:** In the earliest extensive "fiction" of war that we possess, there is a marked contrast between the content of the work and the form in which that content is told. The content of the Iliad, its subject, is atrocity and catastrophe, both particular and universal. In the particular, the Iliad gives us perhaps the most grotesque, detailed, accurate and anatomical descriptions of combat deaths in any war literature. And all paths lead to such deaths: the most magnificent actions lead their actors both to impose and to suffer appalling and pitiable violence. In the universal, the subject of the poem may be said to be a mourning for what historians have recently come to term "The Bronze Age Collapse," which Robert Drews has described as "the worst disaster in ancient history, even more calamitous than the collapse of the Western Roman Empire." By contrast, the form of The Iliad is symmetrical both spatially and chronologically. I will show how the disorder of temporal violence and cultural collapse in the poem is intimately connected to, how it necessitates its rigorous order of the architectonic, atemporal form.