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FIGHTING BY THE RULES

THE INVENTION OF THE HOPLITE AGÔN

ABSTRACT

This examination of the unwritten rules of Greek warfare suggests that the ideology of hoplite warfare as a ritualized contest developed not in the 7th century, but only after 480, when nonhoplite arms began to be excluded from the phalanx. Regular claims of victory, in the form of battlefield trophies, and concessions of defeat, in the form of requests for the retrieval of corpses, appeared in the 460s. Other 5th-century changes in military practice fit the theory that victories over the Persians led to the idealization of massed hand-to-hand combat. Archaic Greeks probably fought according to the limited protocols found in Homer.

In a collection of essays published in 1968, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Marcel Detienne, and Jacqueline de Romilly spoke of Greek warfare as an *agôn*, a contest, conceived like a tournament with ceremonies and rules.[1] Though it was not altogether new, this idea soon spread to other influential French scholars such as Yvon Garlan and Raoul Lonis.[2] Pierre Ducrey and W. Kendrick Pritchett have put the subject on a much firmer foundation by meticulously collecting the evidence for many Greek military practices, and Victor Davis Hanson has described the misery of Greek battle in gritty detail, even while popularizing the idea that Archaic warfare followed unwritten protocols.[3] This view of Greek warfare dominates the field.[4]

Josiah Ober has made the most explicit attempt to set out the unwritten conventions of hoplite warfare. In his article "The Rules of War in Classical Greece,"[5] Ober lists a dozen "common customs (*koina nomima*) of the Greeks" that governed interstate conflict. He maintains that these rules of war developed after the Homeric epics were put into writing about 700, and that they broke down after about 450, especially during the Peloponnesian War. During the Archaic period, the rules of hoplite warfare "helped to maintain the long-term practical workability of the hoplite-dominated socio-military system" by making frequent wars possible without risking "demographic catastrophe."[6] Hanson also believes that hoplite ideology dominated Archaic warfare, as farmers agreed to decide disputes through pitched battles. "After the creation of the hoplite panoply," he writes, "for nearly two and a half centuries (700–480 B.C.) hoplite battle *was* Greek warfare."[7] Hanson attributes the breakdown of this admirable system to the Persian Wars and the growth of the Athenian empire, a generation before the Peloponnesian War.

The earliest references to Greek military protocols come in Euripides and in speeches in the historians Herodotos, Thucydides, and Xenophon. In the *Herakleidai* Euripides mentions "the customs of the Greeks" (τοῖσιν Ἑλλήνων νόμοις, 1010) regarding the killing of prisoners. In the *Suppliants* he refers to customs regarding burial of enemy soldiers: the "customs of the gods" (νόμιμα θεῶν, 19), the "customs of all Greece" (νόμιμα πάσης Ἑλλάδος, 311), "the custom of all Greeks" (τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον, 526, 671). In Herodotos, Xerxes refers to "the customs of all people" (τὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων νόμιμα, 7.136.2) about the inviolability of heralds, and Mardonios describes the way in which he heard the Greeks were accustomed (ἐώθασι, 7.9β.1) to wage war. In Thucydides, Archidamos says it is not "customary" (νόμιμον, 1.85.2) to attack someone prepared to make restitution, the Mytilenians refer to "the custom established among the Greeks" (τὸ καθεστὸς τοῖς Ἕλλησι νόμιμον, 3.9.1) about those who revolt during a war, the Plataians cite the "common customs among the Greeks" (τὰ κοινὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων νόμιμα, 3.59.1) regarding treatment of enemies who surrender, and a Theban herald (in Thucydides' summary) refers to "the customs of the Greeks" (τὰ νόμιμα τῶν Ἑλλήνων, 4.97.2) regarding invaders and sanctuaries. In Xenophon's summary of the Eleians' refusal to let Agis pray for victory in war, the Eleians cite "the old custom" (τὸ ἀρχαῖον νόμιμον, *Hell.* 3.2.22) that Greeks not consult an oracle about a war against other Greeks.

Claims made in the second half of the 5th century, however, do not prove that the customs were really old. By the time of the Peloponnesian War, for example, Thucydides could describe the annual public burial of Athenian war dead as an "ancestral custom" (πάτριος νόμος, 2.34.2). Kimon probably began this practice when he brought back the ashes of the men who died at Eurymedon (Paus. 1.43.3), and the law requiring public burial at home probably goes back no further than the mid-460s. So this "ancestral custom" started only one generation before the Peloponnesian War.[8]

Some customs—the ones in which the gods took an interest—certainly go back to Homer: oaths, including oaths sworn as part of a negotiated surrender, were respected; heralds, priests, and suppliants in sanctuaries were inviolable; the dead were buried.[9] What about the other

5. Ober 1996.

6. Ober 1996, pp. 60–61.

7. Hanson 1995, p. 241.

8. Pritchett 1985, IV, pp. 112–124. The 460s date fits the earliest inscriptional evidence for the burial games (*IG* I³ 523–525, the first of which, however, Lewis and Jeffery incline to put ca. 479) and the earliest inscribed casualty list (*IG* I³ 1144).

9. On oaths, see Karavites 1992. On heralds, "messengers of Zeus and men," see *Il.* 7.274–276 and elsewhere; in the *Odyssey*, the Laistrygonians reveal their inhumanity by eating Odysseus's herald (10.110–117). On priests, note that Odysseus spares a sacred grove of Apollo, along with the priest, Maron, and his child and wife (*Od.* 9.197–201; the troubles in the *Iliad* begin when Agamemnon mistreats Chryses, another priest of Apollo, by refusing to accept ransom for his daughter, 1.9–100). On suppliants in sanctuaries, see Parker 1983, pp. 181–182, and Karavites 1992, pp. 150–155. On burying the dead, see *Il.* 7.394–432, where the Greeks accept the Trojan herald Idaios's request for a truce to bury the bodies. Achilles' attempt to mutilate Hektor's body is the exception that proves the rule. Apollo protects the body, and in the end Zeus has Achilles grant Priam's request for a truce to hold Hektor's funeral.

alleged protocols? Do the rules apply to the fighting in the *Iliad*? If not, when do they first appear? I will argue that some practices go back to Homer, that others are matters of tactics rather than conventions, and that several important new rules and practices appear only in the 5th century. I will propose an alternative model below for the development of Greek warfare, agreeing with Hans van Wees' recent suggestion that the hoplite phalanx did not reach its Classical form until after the Persian Wars.[10] A new, nostalgic ideology of war developed as fighting became more destructive.

A REVIEW OF MILITARY PROTOCOLS

Ober assumes rather than defends the existence of his informal rules, which he draws from the works of other scholars. Nevertheless, Ober's formulation of the rules (indicated by italics) will serve as a convenient foil for discussion. I consider them not in descending order of formality, as Ober lists them, but in the order in which they would arise during a campaign.

The state of war should be officially declared before commencing hostilities against an appropriate foe.

In their study of Greek diplomacy, Frank Adcock and D. J. Mosley say that "although surprise attacks were made it was the habit of the Greeks to make a formal declaration of war."[11] So it would certainly seem from Herodotos and Polybios. Herodotos has the Persian Mardonios say (7.9β.1, Waterfield trans.):

> Besides, from all I hear, the Greeks usually wage war in an extremely stupid fashion, because they are ignorant and incompetent. When they declare war on one another they seek out the best, most level piece of land, and that is where they go to fight. The upshot is that the victors leave the battlefield with massive losses, not to mention the losers, who are completely wiped out.

And Polybios, comparing the practices of his own day to those of an earlier era he admired, says (13.3.2–6, Patton trans.):

> The ancients would not even consent to get the better of their enemies by fraud, [3] regarding no success as brilliant or secure unless they crushed the spirit of their adversaries in open battle. [4] For this reason they entered into a convention among themselves to use against each other neither secret missiles nor those discharged from a distance, and considered that it was only a hand to hand battle at close quarters which was truly decisive. [5] Hence they preceded war by a declaration [τοὺς πολέμους ἀλλήλοις προύλεγον], and when they intended to do battle gave notice of the fact and of the spot to which they would proceed and array their army. [6] But at the present they say it is a sign of poor generalship to do anything openly in war.

10. See van Wees 2000, pp. 155–156.

11. Adcock and Mosley 1975, p. 202.

The earliest attested instance of a herald declaring war, however, is the Corinthian herald sent to Corfu before the Corinthian fleet set sail in 435 (Thuc. 1.29.1).[12] In his detailed description of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War a few years later, Thucydides has the Lakedaimonian king Archidamos say that it is not "customary" (νόμιμον, 1.85.2) to attack someone prepared to make restitution. Rather than declaring war on Athens, the Lakedaimonians sent delegations making various demands, which the Athenians rejected, though they said they were willing to go to arbitration as required by treaty (Thuc. 1.145.1). Once the Peloponnesians were on the march, a final ambassador was refused admission (Thuc. 2.12.1–2). These delegations, sent to negotiate before an invasion, sound Homeric: a young Odysseus went to Messene to seek reparations for 300 sheep and their shepherds that the Messenians had taken (*Od.* 21.16–21), and Menelaos and Odysseus went to Troy to demand the return of Helen (*Il.* 3.205–224, 11.138–142). Greek practice, therefore, remained fundamentally the same from Homer to Thucydides: Greek states normally sought reparations for injuries before invading enemy territory, but did not declare war in the formal Roman manner.

Hostilities are sometimes inappropriate: sacred truces, especially those declared for the celebration of the Olympic games, should be observed.

Abundant evidence shows that Greeks observed an ἐκεχειρία, literally a "hands-off," for the Eleusinian Mysteries and the panhellenic festivals at Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, and Nemea.[13] These truces protected pilgrims and contestants going to and from the festivals, as well as the state sponsoring the festival. They did not prohibit all warfare. Moreover, to be valid the truces had to be declared and accepted. People celebrating a festival were not necessarily immune from attack. In fact, as Aineias Taktikos noted in the 4th century, an ideal time to attack an enemy was during a festival (4.8).[14]

It is not certain when the custom began. Homer does not mention any of these festivals or the sacred truces for them. The Olympic truce was alleged to have begun in the 8th century, but the earliest historical reference appears in an inscription from Selinous dated ca. 460, about the same

12. There is some possible negative evidence: early in the 5th century Aigina and Athens fought a "war without a herald" (πόλεμος ἀκήρυκτος, Hdt. 5.81.2), and the Lakedaimonians and Messenians are said, by much later writers, to have done the same earlier still (Paus. 4.5.8, Plut. *Pyrrh.* 26.11). If this expression means "unannounced," as Myres (1943) argued, it implies that a war would normally be announced. But it may carry the sense, well attested in

the 4th century, of a war so bitter that the two sides did not communicate through heralds.

13. See Baltrusch 1994, pp. 117–122, with literature cited. Herodotos (6.106.3–107) mentions a rule (νόμος) forbidding the Lakedaimonians from marching out before the full moon, but as Pritchett notes (1971, I, p. 120), the ban applied only to marching, not fighting.

14. For example, Kolophonian exiles

shut the gates against the men of Smyrna when they were outside celebrating a festival of Dionysos (Hdt. 1.150); the Aiginetans attacked the Athenians during a festival at Sounion (Hdt. 6.87); the Athenians hoped to surprise the Mytilenians while they were outside the city celebrating a festival of Apollo (Thuc. 3.3.3); and Phoebidas seized the Theban Kadmeia during the Thesmophoria (Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.29).

time the Eleusinian truce first appears in an inscription.[15] The truces for the festivals at Delphi, Isthmia, and Nemea could not predate the founding of the festivals in 582, 581, and 563, respectively. Given the state of our evidence, it would be rash to assert that these truces began only in the 5th century, but nothing puts them in the 7th century either.

War is an affair of warriors, thus noncombatants should not be primary targets of attack.

No one ever claims that civilians should not be attacked. In practice invaders did not attack noncombatants because defenders got them out of the way, either behind city walls or off to a friendly state or into the hills.[16] For example, when Agesilaos invaded Akarnania in 389, the Akarnanians fled into walled cities and sent their cattle to the mountains (Xen. *Hell.* 4.6.4). Similarly, each time the Peloponnesians invaded during the Archidamian War, the Athenians brought their children, women, and possessions into the city, and sent their sheep and cattle to Euboia and other islands (Thuc. 2.14.1). This alleged protocol is therefore no protocol at all, but rather a matter of military tactics.

Battles should be fought during the usual (summer) campaigning season.

In the 4th century, Demosthenes remarked that the Lakedaimonians, like everyone else, used to campaign only during the four or five summer months (9.48). But no source turns this fact into a *should,* into a rule of proper conduct. Battles in the Archaic period were fought during the summer because for Greece's farmer-soldiers, fighting at other times of the year was impractical if not impossible. When increased economic resources in the 5th century made pay for military service the norm, at least in Athens, campaigns occurred at other times of the year too. The timing of campaigns was another matter of military tactics rather than military conventions.

A battle is properly prefaced by a ritual challenge and acceptance of the challenge.

The title of Pritchett's chapter on this subject, "The Challenge to Battle," does not include the word "ritual," and even so it suggests something more formal than what he describes.[17] Despite Polybios 13.3.5 (quoted above), there is no known case in Archaic or Classical history of a Greek herald issuing a challenge to battle at a particular time and place—though a *Persian* herald challenges the Lakedaimonians at Plataia to a single combat between equal numbers of Persians and Lakedaimonians (Hdt. 9.48).

Pritchett takes the deployment of an army in battle formation as a challenge to fight: "phalanx battles normally began when both sides were ready. They were, to use Polybios's phrase, μάχαι ἐξ ὁμολόγου" (battles by agreement).[18] In this sense, each of the four days of fighting in the *Iliad* begins with a "challenge to battle": both sides arm and go out to fight

15. For the reference to the Olympic truce, see Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993: side A, line 7. For the Eleusinian truce, see *IG* I³ 6 B 8–47. The story of the Olympic truce's origin appears in Phlegon, *FGrHist* 257 F 1, Plut. *Lyc.* 1.1–2, and Paus. 5.4.5–6, 20.1. The "discus of Iphitos," apparently seen by Aristotle, contained an inscribed version of the truce, but was probably made to justify Eleian control of the games (Lämmer 1982–1983, pp. 49–50).

16. Müller (1975) catalogues the occasions on which Greeks sent children, women, and possessions away for safety. Pritchett (1991, V, pp. 350–351) notes some additions, mostly from after 350.

17. Pritchett 1974, II, pp. 147–155.

18. Pritchett 1974, II, p. 148.

(3.1, 8.53–59, 11.15–66, 20.1–4). The formal language mentioned by Pritchett, however, does not appear in Homer. When does it first occur? The phrase "by agreement" (ἐξ ὁμολόγου) is common in Polybios (1.87.9, 2.66.4, 3.90.5, 4.8.11, 11.32.7, F 144), but absent from the Classical historians. Another term for pitched battle, παράταξις, is also common in Polybios and absent from the Classical historians—or rather all but absent, for Thucydides does use it once, when he says that the battle of Amphipolis in 422 was *not* a pitched battle (μὴ ἐκ παρατάξεως, 5.11.2).[19] The verb παρατάσσω occurs frequently in Thucydides and Xenophon, but only three times in Herodotos (8.95.1, 9.31.2, 32.2). I wonder whether Archaic troops were ever deployed more specifically than they are in the *Iliad*, where the heroes sometimes arrange their men in five sections under five named leaders (4.293–296, 16.171–198). Nestor places the chariots in front, the brave infantry at the back, and the cowards in the middle (4.297–300).[20] The linguistic evidence, therefore, points to a more formal deployment only after the Persian Wars.

The main issue, however, does not revolve around terminology. Homeric warriors happily deceived their enemies, yet Herodotos's Mardonios and Polybios (quoted above) assert that Archaic Greeks fought open battles when both sides were ready. Their assertions do not apply to Classical warfare, which is full of deceptions.[21] It is true that Greeks deployed in a plain rarely attacked an enemy's camp or sprang an ambush during a battle. Commanders who brought their armies out into a plain believed that their troops were a match for the enemy. Under those circumstances, they generally hesitated to try risky deceptive maneuvers. A desperate, or daring, commander might, like Peisistratos in 546, attack during the afternoon siesta (Hdt. 1.63). And if the risks could be minimized, even a Lakedaimonian king might attack a camp during a meal. When the Argives put off battle in 494, Kleomenes observed that they were obeying his herald's commands, and had his men attack after the herald gave the order for breakfast (Hdt. 6.77–78). These examples from the Archaic period suggest that practice had not changed from what Homer describes.

Greeks did not feel obligated to accept a challenge to battle if they were heavily outnumbered. Most battles took place between armies of about the same size.[22] If the defending army was heavily outnumbered—as must often have been the case, given the variations in size among the Greek poleis—the leaders usually declined a battle. Perikles' famous refusal to lead the Athenians out to fight a land battle in the Peloponnesian War was not a strategy devised on the spur of the moment in 431.[23]

19. For the term παράταξις, see Isoc. 10.53, Dem. 9.49, Aeschin. 3.88, Polyb. 2.18.2, 2.21.5, 2.26.8, 2.51.3, 2.70.6, 6.26.11, 15.12.3, 30.4.2. Plutarch (*Mor.* 231E) describes the battle that broke out after the "Battle of Champions" (Hdt. 1.82) as a μάχη ἐκ παρατάξεως, but Herodotos does not.

20. Xenophon's Sokrates also recommends putting the best men in the front and the back (*Mem.* 3.1.7–8).

21. See Krentz 2000.

22. Hanson 1995, p. 277.

23. In addition to the Greeks who abandoned their cities in the face of the Persians (Byzantines and Chalkedonians, Hdt. 6.33.2; Naxians, Hdt. 6.96; Phokians, Hdt 8.32; and the Athenians themselves, Hdt. 8.41), we know of many invasions before 431 that did not culminate in a battle: Tolmides' capture of Chaironeia in 447 (Thuc. 1.113,

though he was ambushed on his way home); the unsuccessful Athenian siege of Oiniadai in 454 (Thuc. 1.111.3); the Athenians' failure to take Pharsalos in 454 (Thuc. 1.111.1), when the Thessalian cavalry kept them pinned to their camp, and similarly in 457 (Diod. Sic. 11.83.3–4); the unopposed Lakedaimonian burning of trees in the Megarid in 457 (Thuc. 1.108.2); the Phokian invasion of Doris in 457, when the

Use of nonhoplite arms should be limited.

Despite Polybios's claim (quoted above) that "the ancients" agreed not to use unseen missiles or missiles shot from a distance, the only such agreement known is the one Strabo says was inscribed on a column in the sanctuary of Artemis Amarynthia, prohibiting missiles in the Lelantine War (10.1.12). Polybios and Strabo probably drew on the 4th-century historian Ephoros for this pact, and Everett L. Wheeler has argued that Ephoros invented it as part of a protest against the catapult, a frightening new distance weapon in his day.[24]

But even if the agreement is historical, it is the exception rather than the rule. Archaic battles included many projectile weapons, with light-armed men—javelin- and stone-throwers, slingers, and archers—fighting in the phalanx, not in separate units or behind the hoplites.[25] The 7th-century poet Tyrtaios, for example, advises (F 11.35–38, West trans.):

> You light-armed men, wherever you can aim
> from the shield-cover, pelt them with great rocks
> and hurl at them your smooth-shaved javelins,
> helping the armoured troops with close support.

In the Archaic period, the distinction between "light-armed" and "hoplite" was not always sharp, as a few examples will demonstrate. Athenian red-figure vases sometimes depict archers with greaves, helmets, and shields, and a mid-6th-century bronze statuette of Herakles as an archer, found near Amphipolis, wears a bronze cuirass. A 6th-century molded pithos found at Sparta shows a slinger with a crested helmet. The north frieze of the 6th-century Siphnian Treasury at Delphi has two giants, armed with helmets and shields, throwing stones. The interior of a 6th-century cup found in the Athenian Agora shows a running warrior wearing an Oriental leather cap and greaves, carrying a hoplite shield and two spears.[26] The Chigi vase from Corinth, ca. 640, shows fully armed hoplites with two spears, one a javelin.[27] Athenian vases continue into the 5th century to show some hoplites with javelins, and burials excavated at Sindos, in northern Greece, regularly include a larger and a smaller spear until the late 5th century.[28]

Phokians captured one city before the Lakedaimonians arrived and compelled them to leave (Thuc. 1.107.2); Miltiades' unsuccessful siege of Paros in 489 (Hdt. 6.133–135); the Phokians' flight to the mountains before their night assault on the invading Thessalians, probably in the 480s (Hdt. 8.27); Histiaios's siege of Thasos in 494 (Hdt. 6.27); Hippokrates' sieges of Kallipolis, Leontinoi, Naxos, and Zankle in the 490s (Hdt. 7.154.2); Miltiades' siege of Myrina on Lemnos in the 490s (Hdt. 6.140.2); the Lakedaimonian siege of Samos in ca. 523

(Hdt. 3.47, 54–56); the siege of Kirrha or Krisa in the early 6th century (Isoc. 14.33, Aeschin. 3.107–113, Diod. Sic. 9.16, Paus. 10.37.4–8). Campaigns without battles surely go underreported in our sources. For an argument that the Athenians had devised their Peloponnesian War strategy by the 450s, when the long walls were built, see Krentz 1997.

24. Wheeler 1987.
25. See van Wees 2000, pp. 146–156.
26. For a list of armed archers on Athenian vases, see Lissarrague 1990, p. 129; the statuette of Herakles is

Boston 98.657 in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; for the molded pithos, see Wace 1905–1906, p. 292 and pl. 9; for the Siphnian Treasury stone-throwers, see *FdD* IV.2, pp. 84, 89. The Agora cup is published in *Agora* XXIII, pp. 299–300, no. 1678 and pl. 109.
27. For the Chigi vase, see van Wees 2000, pp. 136–137. [See also figs. 1 and 9 in J. M. Hurwit's article "Reading the Chigi Vase" in this issue of *Hesperia. –Ed.*]
28. *Sindos* (1985), a museum exhibition catalogue, documents the Sindos finds.

This mix of warriors and weapons sounds very Homeric.[29] By Thucydides' time, hoplites and light-armed troops normally fought in separate units. Before the hoplites engaged at the battle of Syracuse in 415, for example, the stone-throwers, slingers, and archers routed each other repeatedly, "as was likely for light-armed troops" (Thuc. 6.69.2). When did the Greeks exclude nonhoplite troops from the phalanx? There may have been a small cavalry force at Athens in the 6th century, but only after 479 did the Athenians establish what I. G. Spence calls a "proper cavalry corps," increased to 1,000 plus 200 mounted archers by 431.[30] True horsemen, as opposed to mounted hoplites, do not appear in Peloponnesian cities until the late 5th or early 4th century.[31] The Athenian contingent of infantry archers first appears at Plataia in 479.[32] As for light-armed soldiers, Thucydides says that at the time of the battle of Delion (424), Athens had no organized light-armed troops (ψιλοὶ ἐκ παρασκευῆς, 4.94.1). Little more than a dozen years later, however, Athens did have its own light-armed men, and no longer had to depend on Thracians or allies.[33] The Thebans had their *hamippoi*, infantry fast enough to serve with cavalry, by 418 (Thuc. 5.57; Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.23).

Pursuit of defeated and retreating opponents should be limited in duration.

No such rule is attested for Greeks in general. Thucydides says that the Lakedaimonians fought stubbornly until they routed the enemy, but then pursued them neither far nor for a long time (5.73.4). He does not explain their reasoning, and the fact that he makes the point at all suggests that other Greeks pursued their opponents long and hard. Seven hundred years later Plutarch explained that the Lakedaimonians thought it ignoble for Greeks to kill men who had fled, and added that the policy had the practical benefit of making enemies more inclined to run (*Lyc.* 22.9–10; *Mor.* 228F). Perhaps the cautious Lakedaimonians thought more about not exposing their troops to a reverse if they scattered in pursuit. After the battle of Haliartos in 395, the Thebans pursued the Lakedaimonians into the hills, where they rallied, first with javelins and stones, and killed more than 200 Thebans. Lakedaimonian practice avoided such a reverse.

29. In the *Iliad* spears are more often thrown (87 times) than thrust (79 times), arrows outnumber swords as weapons (21:19), and warriors throw stones 12 times (van Wees 1994, p. 144). Some contingents specialize in archery—Paionians (2.848, 10.428) on the Trojan side and Lokrians (13.712–718) and Philoktetes' men (2.718–720) on the Greek—but there are also individuals like Alexandros and Teukros who fight now with a bow (11.369–378, 8.266–272), now with a spear (3.330–339, 15.478–483), and even

individuals who seem to have bows and other weapons in the same fight, such as Pandaros (spear and bow, 5.171–216, 238–285), Meriones (spear and bow, 13.159, 650–652), and Helenos (sword and bow, 13.576–595). The Lokrians fight well with bows and slings, without helmets, shields, or spears (13.712–718), but other archers, such as Pandaros, do have armor (5.294–295), and the Catalogue of Ships describes the Lokrian leader Aias as an expert with the spear (2.527–530). All seven of the named warriors who throw stones

(Agamemnon, Aineias, Aias, Diomedes, Hektor, Patroklos, and Peiros— a real roster of champions) fight elsewhere with other weapons (Pritchett 1991, V, pp. 4–5).

30. Thuc. 2.13.8; Spence 1993, pp. 9–19; Bugh 1988, p. 39.

31. Spence 1993, pp. 1–9.

32. Hdt. 9.22, 60; archers on ships appear at the battle of Salamis a year earlier, Aesch. *Pers.* 454–464. See Plassart 1913.

33. Thuc. 8.71.2; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.33–34. See Best 1969.

When they had the opportunity to do so safely, Greeks showed little hesitation in slaughtering their enemies. In a fragmentary poem found on papyrus, Tyrtaios seems to imagine that the Messenians "will kill every Spartan that they catch fleeing the battle" (F 23a.20–22, West trans.). In 510, the Krotoniates routed the invading Sybarites and did kill every one they caught (Diod. Sic. 12.10.1). Fleeing from the Athenians after a defeat in 460, some Corinthians became trapped in a field surrounded by a ditch, with no exit. The Athenians blocked the front with hoplites, surrounded the Corinthians with light-armed troops, and stoned them all to death (Thuc. 1.106.1–2). After the battle of Delion in 424, the Boiotians and especially the Boiotian and Lokrian cavalry chased and killed Athenians until darkness stopped the pursuit (Thuc. 4.96.7–8). In 392, at the battle between the Corinthian long walls, the Lakedaimonians killed so many Corinthians, Xenophon says, that "men used to seeing mounds of grain, wood, and stones now saw mounds of corpses" (*Hell.* 4.4.12). In 368, the Lakedaimonians killed more than 10,000 Arkadians without losing a single man in what was called—from the Lakedaimonian point of view—the "Tearless Battle" (Xen. *Hell.* 7.2.31; Diod. Sic. 15.72.3).

The extent of a pursuit therefore appears to be another matter of military tactics rather than military protocols.

Punishment of surrendered opponents should be restrained.

In Euripides' *Herakleidai* (961–966, 1009–1011), "the customs of the Greeks" forbid later killing a prisoner taken on the battlefield, but do not say that a soldier offering to surrender must be spared. Warriors never spare individuals who try to surrender during combat in the *Iliad*: when Menelaos was once about to show mercy, Agamemnon told him not to spare anyone, not even the unborn child (6.37–65). Other rejected appeals include 11.122–147, where Agamemnon cuts off Hippolochos's arms and sends him spinning away like a log, and 21.64–135, where Achilles feeds Lykaon's corpse to the fish. For an example of mercy granted during fighting, we have to go to Odysseus's Cretan tale at *Od.* 14.276–284, where the Egyptian king spares him as he grasps the king's knees. In his recent study of supplication, Fred S. Naiden suggests that Greek soldiers did not spare battlefield suppliants either because they might fight again, or because, on the principle of reciprocity, they deserve no mercy.[34] The same rationale applies to cities taken by storm: Homeric heroes kill the men and enslave the women. That's what Achilles did at Lyrnessos (*Il.* 2.691), Lesbos (*Il.* 9.665–666), Skyros (*Il.* 9.667–668), and Tenedos (*Il.* 11.623–626). It's what Odysseus does to the Kikonians (*Od.* 9.39–61). And it's what Hektor imagines will be done to Troy (*Il.* 6.447–465).

The evidence for later warfare shows little change. When a city fell, by siege or assault, the defeated might be killed or sold into slavery. As Xenophon's Cyrus says, "it is a custom established for all time among all people [νόμος γὰρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἀΐδιος] that when a city is taken in war, the persons and the property of the inhabitants belong to the captors" (*Cyr.* 7.5.73).[35]

34. Naiden 2000, pp. 71–72.
35. For similar sentiments, see Herakleitos, *FVorsokr* F 53; *Dissoi Logoi*, *FVorsokr* vol. 2, p. 410; Pl. *Resp.* 468a, *Leg.* 626b; Arist. *Pol.* 1255a.

Erecting a battlefield trophy indicates victory; such trophies should be respected.

This rule applies very well to the fighting in Thucydides and Xenophon, as Pritchett's catalogue of examples shows.[36] Pritchett finds a trophy in *Il.* 10.465–468, where Odysseus dedicates Dolon's equipment to Athena and puts it on a bush. But he puts it on the bush only in order to find it later, when he recovers it and plans to offer it elsewhere (10.570–571).

When did the custom of erecting trophies begin? Herodotos never mentions them, nor does he mention the *epinikia*, the victory sacrifice that accompanied the erection of a trophy.[37] The earliest literary reference probably comes from the mock-epic *Batrachomyomachia*, tentatively dated to the first half of the 5th century.[38] More securely dated are the references to trophies in lines 277 and 954 of Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes*, produced in 468.

The earliest physical remains of trophies belong to monuments from the Persian Wars: the marble columns erected, probably in the 460s, at Marathon and Salamis.[39] Battlefield trophies of the simple sort mentioned in Thucydides and Xenophon—pieces of captured armor and weapons hung on a post or tree—do not appear in vase painting until the middle of the 5th century, as John Beazley observed.[40] Trophies appear in other art forms (relief sculpture, coins, and gems) later still.[41] The later trophies differ from the monuments of the Persian Wars in several ways: they were erected immediately, constructed of perishable materials, and placed where the enemy turned to flee, rather than where most of the enemy died.[42]

After a battle, it is right to return enemy dead when asked; to request the return of one's dead is tantamount to admitting defeat.

Greeks took no unwritten law more seriously than the obligation to allow defeated enemies to retrieve and bury their dead.[43] Pritchett's exhaustive study of the burial of Greek war dead details the conventions. A herald regularly asks for a truce, and Justin says that the Greeks considered the sending of this herald as a concession of defeat (6.6.10). The last

36. Pritchett 1974, I, pp. 246–275.

37. Pritchett notes that none of the 96 occurrences of θύω in Herodotos refers to a post-battle sacrifice (1979, III, p. 186).

38. *Batrachomyomachia* 159: στήσομεν εὐθύμως τὸ μυόκτονον ὧδε τρόπαιον. The date depends on the poem's attribution (by Plutarch and the Suda) to Pigres, the son (Plut. *Mor.* 873F) or the brother (Suda s.v. Pigres) of the Carian Artemisia famous from her participation in Xerxes' invasion of Greece, in which Pigres also participated (Hdt. 7.98.1).

39. For Marathon, see Vanderpool 1966. For Salamis, Wallace 1969.

40. Beazley made the observation after listing eleven Attic red-figure

examples, one Boiotian black-figure, and one Campanian red-figure, in Caskey and Beazley 1963, pp. 66–67. The Boiotian black-figure fragment was originally published as late 6th century (*Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben* I, p. 123 and pl. 19.7), but fits better in the late 5th century (*Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben* IV, pp. 5–7).

41. Woelcke 1911; Janssen 1957.

42. Often, of course, most of the casualties would fall near where they first turned and fled. But the findspot of the fragments excavated by Vanderpool at Marathon does not, *pace* West 1969, p. 7, fit "the topographical requirements for the trophy." According to later practice, we would expect to find a trophy nearer the Athenian burial

mound, or *soros.* The monument apparently stood near the ancient marsh, where the largest number of Persians died.

43. The Thebans came closest to violating the rule, first when they refused to return the Athenian dead at Delion until they recovered the temple the Athenians had fortified, on the grounds that the Athenians had violated the rules of the Greeks regarding sanctuaries (Thuc. 4.97–101), and again when they attached conditions to the truce at Haliartos in 395 (Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.24). On the first occasion, the Theban case had some plausibility, since Athenians and other Greeks regularly denied burial to temple-robbers.

sentence of Xenophon's *Hellenika* comments on the odd result of the battle of Mantineia in 362, when "both sides returned the dead under a truce as though victorious, and both received back their dead under a truce as though defeated" (7.5.26). The Lakedaimonians condemned their king Pausanias to death in 395 partly because he opted to retrieve the corpses of Lysandros and others under a truce, rather than try to recover them by fighting (Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.22–25).

The right to bury the dead also appears in Homer (see note 9), but an important change occurs. The *Iliad* has a burial truce after the first day of battle, but not after the second, third, and fourth, so it does not appear to be standard practice. When the Trojan herald Idaios makes the request that first day, not only does he not concede the victory, he promises to fight again (7.396).[44] By Thucydides' time, the losers' request for permission to retrieve their dead has become as regular as the erection of trophies—in fact, Pritchett notes that "the context in which historians refer to the ἀναίρεσις τῶν νεκρῶν (retrieval of corpses) is repeatedly that of justification for erection of the trophy."[45] "Historians" here does not include Herodotos, who no more mentions burial truces than he does trophies.

Prisoners of war should be offered for ransom, not summarily executed or mutilated.

As discussed above, Greeks never felt a moral obligation to take prisoner an opponent begging for mercy during a fight. But both Homeric and Classical ethics dictated that prisoners taken in another context should be spared.[46] In the *Iliad* Achilles is said to have released for ransom Priam's sons, Isos and Antiphos, whom he caught on Mt. Ida (11.104–106), and to have sold at least one other, Lykaon, whom he caught in Priam's garden one night (21.35–41), and probably more, given the plural references at 21.102 and 22.45. Achilles' sacrifice of twelve Trojans on Patroklos's funeral pyre (23.175–176) indicates not that killing prisoners was acceptable behavior, but that his anger still raged out of control. In Thucydides, as well as in Euripides' *Herakleidai* (quoted above), we find the claim that by Greek custom captors should not execute prisoners who had surrendered (3.58, 3.66.1). An incident early in the Peloponnesian War shows that other captives ought not to be killed either. In 430 the Athenians executed a half-dozen Peloponnesian ambassadors intercepted on their way to the Persian king. They threw the bodies into a pit, thinking they were justified since the Lakedaimonians had begun acting this way at the beginning of the war, when they had killed and thrown into pits all the Athenian and allied traders they caught on merchant ships around the Peloponnese (Thuc. 2.67.4). This phrasing suggests that the Athenians were retaliating against what they perceived as improper behavior.

Sparing prisoners did not necessarily mean releasing them for ransom. They might be sold into slavery or forced into exile. After an extensive survey of captives' fate, Pritchett concludes that ransoming was relatively infrequent and done for financial, not humanitarian, reasons.[47] The only real evidence for better treatment of prisoners in the Archaic period is the 4th-century orator Aischines' reference to an oath supposedly sworn

44. Similarly, when Priam asks Achilles to return Hektor's body for burial, Priam too promises to fight again (*Il.* 24.666).

45. Pritchett 1985, IV, p. 247. For examples, see Thuc. 1.63.3; 2.79.7, 82, 92.4; 4.72.4, 101.4; 5.10.12–11.2, 74.2; 6.70.3–71.1, 97.5, 103.1; 7.5.3, 72.1–2; 8.106.4; Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.21; 6.2.24, 4.14–15; 7.1.19, 4.25, 5.13, 5.26.

46. See Ducrey 1999.

47. Pritchett 1991, V, pp. 245–312.

by the Amphiktyons at the time of the First Sacred War (early 6th century?) not to depopulate any Amphiktyonic polis (2.115). The authenticity of this oath is tied up with the knotty question of the historicity of the First Sacred War itself, which John Davies pronounced "a plausible hypothesis, but no more."[48] Because the Amphiktyonic oath inscribed at Athens in 380 makes no reference to this clause (*CID* I 10, lines 4–10), it seems safer to conclude with Pritchett that Greeks treated captives similarly from Homer's time through the Classical period.

FIFTH-CENTURY CHANGES

The preceding analysis suggests that the list of customary practices traceable to Homer includes demands for satisfaction prior to an invasion. Treatment of surrendered opponents and prisoners of war does not change in the Archaic period, and does not deserve the term "convention." Other alleged military protocols turn out to be a matter of military tactics rather than of formal conventions designed to ameliorate warfare: noncombatants were not attacked because cities got them out of the way; campaigns usually took place in the summer because the weather was most reliable then and farmers could afford to leave their fields, trees, and vines; victors sometimes refrained from vigorous pursuit of a defeated army because scattering in pursuit might make them susceptible to a counterattack.

Some important changes remain. Nonhoplite arms began to be excluded from the phalanx about the time of the Persian Wars, when cavalry and light-armed troops started to fight in their own distinct units. Only thereafter do we find the word παράταξις for a pitched battle. Regular claims of victory, in the form of battlefield trophies, and concessions of defeat, in the form of requests for the retrieval of corpses, appeared in the 460s.[49] Trophies placed at the "turning" only make sense when the first turn generally became a rout, as it did in Classical hoplite battles, but not in Homeric fighting.[50] Hoplite warfare, therefore, did not break down gradually in the 5th century, but quite the opposite. New military protocols developed not in the 7th century, but only after 480.

Other relevant military practices also developed in the 5th century rather than the 7th. The paean sung before joining battle first appears in Aeschylus's account of the battle of Salamis in 480 (*Pers.* 393).[51] In the *Iliad* the Greeks sing paeans to appease the god who sent a plague (1.472–474) and to celebrate a victory (22.391–394), but they advance into battle in silence (3.8–9, 4.427–432). The Dorians by the time of Thucydides, and the Athenians by the time of Xenophon, also advanced to fight singing the song that brought courage to friends and dispelled fear of the enemy (Aesch. *Sept.* 270). As Pritchett points out, Greeks who advanced singing the paean gave up any attempt to achieve surprise.[52]

Second, Herodotos mentions *aristeia*, the awards for individual bravery in battle, for sixteen individuals, while Thucydides and Xenophon mention no such awards, since individual exploits mattered less in Classical battles than they had in Archaic warfare.[53] A change in shield devices also emphasizes the egalitarianism of the Classical phalanx. Apparently a

48. Davies 1994, p. 206.

49. I pass over here the truces for festivals that appear about 460, because they may have started earlier. In seeking to explain the Olympic officials' change in name from διατατήρ to Ἑλλανοδίκας ca. 480, Siewert (1992, p. 115) suggests that, because of the Olympic truce, the Eleians were named the guardians of the panhellenic truce agreed upon in 481 for the defense against the Persians. Alternatively, the truce of 481 may have prompted the Olympic truce.

50. The battle of Solygeia in 425, where the Corinthian left wing retreated to a hill, regrouped, and charged again (Thuc. 4.43.2–3), resembles the fighting in the *Iliad* more than it does other Classical battles.

51. Pritchett (1971, I, pp. 105–108) has collected the evidence.

52. Pritchett 1971, I, p. 105. For instance, at the Nemea River in 394 the Lakedaimonians did not realize the allied troops were advancing until they heard the paean, whereupon they immediately deployed for battle (Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.19).

53. Pritchett (1974, II, pp. 276–290) has assembled the evidence for *aristeia*.

matter of individual choice in the Archaic period, shield devices tended to become standardized in the 5th and 4th centuries: a *lambda* for the Lakedaimonians, a *sigma* for the Sikyonians, a *mu* for the Messenians, the club of Herakles for the Thebans, the trident of Poseidon for the Mantineians.[54] This stress on the similarity of hoplites goes ideologically hand in hand with the exclusion of other troops from the phalanx.

Third, dedications of armor at panhellenic sanctuaries, extremely common in the Archaic period, decline in the 5th century. At Isthmia excavators have found none after the destruction of ca. 470–450, at Olympia few after the 430s, at Delphi few after the spoils sent by Tegea and Mantineia in 423.[55] This change in offering patterns anticipates Plato's advice that Greeks should not dedicate armor and weapons if they want to preserve good relations among Greeks (*Resp.* 469e–470a).[56] We have here a new military protocol designed to ameliorate warfare.

Finally, in Xenophon's summary of the Eleians' refusal to let Agis pray for victory in war, the Eleians cite an "old custom" (ἀρχαῖον νόμιμον, *Hell.* 3.2.22) that Greeks not consult an oracle about a war against other Greeks. This alleged protocol does not appear on Ober's list, presumably because the assertion is so flagrantly untrue for Archaic warfare. Herodotos, for instance, relates that the Lakedaimonians once misinterpreted a Delphic oracle and ended up confined in the chains they had brought for their intended Tegean prisoners (1.66).[57] The Eleians are not necessarily inventing the prohibition they cite. It fits with the previous decline in panoply offerings at panhellenic sites. But "old" cannot mean more than one generation, since the Lakedaimonians consulted Delphi in 432 about going to war with Athens (Thuc. 1.118.3).

It is of course true that we have less—much, much less—information about Archaic than about Classical warfare. The fact that extant literary sources do not attest a practice until the 5th century does not disprove its existence earlier. But the material evidence supports the conclusion that some military protocols came late rather than early. If we can find a coherent theory to explain this late development, we ought to accept it.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK WARFARE

I suggest the following alternative model for the development of hoplite warfare. Although they improved their equipment, Archaic Greeks continued to fight in the way Homer describes. The fighting was "mass" fighting, but not "massed" fighting.[58] That is, battles were not simply fought by champions in front of nameless, and unimportant, followers. The mass of men mattered. But they did not deploy in a tight formation, massed together. Rather, they advanced, retreated, and advanced again in a formation loose enough to allow horses, perhaps even chariots, to approach the killing zone and withdraw again. Brave men moved forward; tired men, frightened men, wounded men moved back. In exceptional circumstances, such as a struggle over a fallen warrior or a break in a wall, a group of men might bunch together. Stones, javelins, and arrows flew, thrown and shot by some of the same men who dared to advance and fight hand-to-hand,

54. Anderson 1970, pp. 17–20.

55. Jackson 1991, pp. 246–247, and 1992. His volume on the arms and armor found at Isthmia is in preparation.

56. Hanson (1995, p. 344 note) dismisses the decline in panoply dedications by suggesting that hoplite battles became less common. But Connor (1988, pp. 6–8) argues that scholars have overestimated the frequency of Archaic wars. For a plausible argument that a specific dedication at Olympia led to a ruthless reprisal at Sepeia in 494, see Jackson 2000.

57. Connor (1988, p. 9) includes the consultation of an oracle in his description of a typical Archaic military campaign.

58. On fighting in Homer, see Snodgrass 1993 and van Wees 1994 against Pritchett (1985, IV, pp. 7–44), who accepts Latacz's 1977 argument that Homer describes phalanx warfare.

as well as by less courageous men who hung back. This kind of fluid battle
had no single turning point.

Then the Mede came. At Marathon in 490, the Athenians confronted
a larger Persian force.[59] They knew how the Persians fought, from their
experience during the Ionian Revolt a few years earlier when they were
routed in a battle at Ephesos (Hdt. 5.102). They knew the Persians liked
to soften the enemy with a barrage of arrows before closing. At Thermopylai
ten years later, the Greeks were told that the Persians shot so many arrows
that the shafts hid the sun—leading to Deinekes' famous remark that this
news was good because the battle would take place in the shade (Hdt.
7.226.2). The Athenians decided to arm entirely with hand-to-hand weap-
ons (Herodotos says they had no cavalry or archers, 6.112.2) and charge at
a run (Herodotos also reports that they were the first Greeks to run against
the enemy, 6.112.3). The effect must have been something like what hap-
pened in Cilicia, when Cyrus the Younger arranged his Greek mercenaries
four deep for a parade and had them charge, wearing their bronze helmets,
crimson chitons, greaves, and shields. They went faster and faster, finally
breaking into a run toward the camp, and frightened away the Cilician
queen and the people in the market, who left everything behind as they
fled (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.2.16–18). So, at Marathon, the Athenian charge routed
the Persian wings, once and for all.

The experience encouraged the Athenians to behave more like foxes
than hedgehogs. They realized the physical and psychological power of a
massed infantry charge, and continued to exclude nonhoplite forces from
their phalanx. But they also appreciated the value of organized contin-
gents of horsemen and archers. They soon established a larger cavalry force
and started an archery contingent, with some success at Plataia, where an
archer killed the Persian cavalry commander Masistios (Hdt. 9.22.1). By
431 they even had Persian-style mounted archers, a remarkable instance
of "Perserie."[60]

Athenian hoplites, on the other hand, especially after Salamis and the
growth of the Athenian navy, remembered Marathon as the essence, the
model, of what warfare should be.[61] "We know," writes Nicole Loraux,
"that in the 5th century a whole ideological structure was built up around
Marathon at the expense of Salamis, the victory of the oarsmen people."[62]
In his *Laws* Plato argued not only that the infantry battle of Marathon
began the salvation of Greece and that of Plataia finished it, but also that
these battles made the Greeks better, while the naval battles of Artemision
and Salamis made them worse (707c). We can trace this idealization of
Marathon back to the 420s, when Aristophanes spoke of the *Marathono-
machai* (*Ach.* 182, *Nub.* 689), to the 450s, when Aeschylus's epitaph men-
tioned his courage at Marathon, and to the 460s, when the Athenians
erected a marble monument at the battle site.[63] Perhaps it was also in the
460s, at the instigation of Miltiades' son Kimon, that a few lines honoring
the Marathon fighters were added to an inscribed epigram honoring the
men who fought at Salamis.[64] Hoplites made sure that Salamis did not
eclipse the memory of Marathon.

As for the Lakedaimonians, they visited the battlefield at Marathon
and, no doubt, asked the Athenians how they did it. To judge by Herodotos's

59. Marathon continues to produce
controversy. For two good recent stud-
ies, see Evans 1993 and (even better)
Lazenby 1993, pp. 45–80.

60. See Miller 1997 for a study of
how profoundly Persian culture in-
fluenced the Greeks, who professed to
despise oriental luxury.

61. On the paradigmatic function of
Marathon in Athenian ideology, see
Prost 1999 with literature cited. On the
hoplite ideal, see also Hanson's excel-
lent brief summary (2000a, pp. 219–
222). Of the sixteen passages Hanson
cites (p. 229, n. 32) denigrating cavalry
and light-armed troops, only one,
Il. 11.385–387, was written before the
second half of the 5th century.

62. Loraux 1986, p. 161.

63. Aeschylus, the great Athenian
poet who fought in the battle of
Salamis and described it in his *Persians*
(472), wrote an epitaph for himself that
mentioned neither tragedy nor Salamis,
but said that the grove at Marathon
and the Persians who landed there
witnessed his courage (Paus. 1.14.5).

64. ML no. 26, with Amandry
1960.

account of Thermopylai in 480, the Lakedaimonians continued to use a fluid fighting style effectively. They repeatedly pretended to flee, only to turn on the barbarians when they pursued in disorder (7.211.3). The struggle over Leonidas's body sounds truly Homeric, with the Greeks routing the Persians four times before they were able to drag the corpse away (7.225.1). But at Plataia in 479 it is clear that the Lakedaimonians admired Athens' way of fighting, for the Lakedaimonian king Pausanias asked the Athenians to switch places with the Lakedaimonians and oppose the Persians, since the Athenians had the experience of Marathon (Hdt. 9.46.2–3). Later he asked for the aid of the Athenian archers (Hdt. 9.60). In the battle, the Persian archers shot from behind a fence of wicker shields until the Greeks charged. Unable to get away—probably there were too many of them too close together—the Persians threw away their bows and tried to fight hand-to-hand, rushing out individually or in small groups (Hdt. 9.62). The Greeks won, then, by charging *en masse* to close quarters, just as the Athenians had done at Marathon.[65] These great victories, Marathon and Plataia, won by hard hand-to-hand fighting, loomed large in the collective memory of hoplites.

After Xerxes' retreat, the Greeks soon launched counterattacks as far away as Cyprus and Byzantion (Thuc. 1.94.2). With the growth of the Athenian empire, war became much more destructive than it had been in the Archaic period. Earlier, as Thucydides points out (1.15), neighbors fought most wars without coalitions of allied forces, except in the shadowy Lelantine War. As Classical Athens accumulated a monetary surplus through campaigns against enemies and taxes from allies, the nature of warfare changed. Athens sent out expeditionary forces that remained in the field much longer than Archaic campaigns had lasted. As early as the 460s, the Athenians sustained the siege of Thasos for more than two years (Thuc. 1.101.3).

By the time Herodotos wrote Mardonios's speech, hoplites had idealized the Archaic way of war as a ritualized *agôn*, or contest. The story of the mantis Tisamenos makes it unlikely that the term *agôn* was in general use for "battle" before the Persian invasions. When Tisamenos asked the Delphic oracle about a child, the Pythia predicted that he would win five *agônes*. So he trained for the pentathlon, and almost won at the Olympics (he lost in wrestling). The Lakedaimonians then realized that the oracle meant five battles, and persuaded Tisamenos to become their seer. He then helped the Lakedaimonians win five victories, beginning with the battle of Plataia in 479.[66] The earliest text to use *agôn* in the sense of "battle," Aeschylus's *Eumenides* (914), dates to 458.[67]

The Archaic way of war was not a single, head-on collision of hoplite phalanxes, excluding cavalry and projectile weapons, commemorated by a battlefield trophy. The idea of agonistic warfare matters—it helps to explain why the Classical Greeks fought big battles such as Mantineia, Koroneia, and Leuktra. But we should not treat the Classical *agôn* as a debased form of an Archaic way of war that never existed. Despite changes in armor and weapons, Archaic Greeks fought according to the conventions found in Homer. Greeks invented the hoplite *agôn* in the mid-5th century.

65. In describing the Greek formation, Herodotos says that 35,000 light-armed helots protected the 5,000 Spartiates, seven stationed with each man (περὶ ἄνδρα ἕκαστον ἑπτὰ τεταγμένοι, 9.28.2), and that the other Greeks had one light-armed soldier for each hoplite. These troops all fought in the battle (9.61.2), and since Herodotos says lack of armor hurt the Persians because they were fighting against hoplites (9.63.2), Hunt (1997) has plausibly suggested that the Spartiates formed only the front line, with the less heavily equipped helots behind them, making the phalanx eight-deep.

66. Pritchett asserts that "the extension of the word [*agôn*] from 'agora' (Homer) to either an athletic contest or a military one seems to have developed more or less simultaneously" (1974, II, p. 284, n. 28), and finds the oracle's ambiguity in the numeral five. But the earliest evidence he can find of *agôn* in a military sense is Aesch. *Pers.* 405, dated to 472.

67. Harrison (1971) argues persuasively that the word in the "Kallimachos epigram" (*IG* I³ 784 = ML no. 18), inscribed before 480, refers to an agonistic victory rather than to the battle of Marathon. Korres (1994, p. 174) gives a reconstruction drawing of this monument, including the base, the Ionic capital, and the Nike statue (Acr. 690) that stood atop the column.

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