

Roel Konijnendijk, *Classical Greek Tactics: A Cultural History*. (Mnemosyne, Supplements 409). Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018. Pp. viii + 261. \$120.00. ISBN 978-90-04-35536-1 (hardback).

Scholarly *othismos* over the character of hoplite battle and Classical Greek warfare continues. A recent head-on clash of opposing views, essentially a dialogue of the deaf, resolved nothing.¹ The work here reviewed, a University of London D.Phil. thesis (2015), directed by Hans van Wees (readers: Peter Krentz, Simon Hornblower), purports, in a radical reassessment, to raise a *tropaion* over traditionalist views (“hoplite orthodoxy”). Only *tirones* and the naïve will be deceived. Students of the controversies can divine the direction of the arguments before opening the book. Dazzling is a true believer’s devotion to the absolute correctness of revisionist views disseminated as “gospel” (e.g., pp. 3, 22–23, 109, 154, 216). Just as in the Roman strategy debate, where deniers often boast of “victory,” here, too, strident criticisms of revisionist views are either ignored or cherry-picked.² A more biased propagation of one school’s “spin” on controversial issues can hardly be imagined. Indeed, publication in a series edited by the *Doktorvater* should raise eyebrows.

Konijnendijk (hereafter “K”) envisions a wargamer’s fantasy, a Clausewitzian “absoluter Krieg” without checks on violence. Rather than a free-for-all beginning in the 5th c. from the collapse of conventional norms under the threat of non-Greek actors and the expansion of major powers’ strategic aims, 5th– 4th c. tactical developments (for K) aimed at enhancing the means to greater violence, as slaughter of the enemy is supposed the chief goal of Greek warfare (pp. 2, 224–26). Hence K (unwittingly) returns to Eli Sagan’s “lust to annihilate” devoid of its Freudian base.³ Curiously, K’s emphasis on slaughter as the *telos* follows his earlier rejection (pp. 11–12) of 19th-c. German scholars, allegedly under Clausewitz’s influence (only Delbrück is cited), seeking to re-concile Greek developments with Clausewitz’s emphasis on annihilation of the enemy.

For K (pp. 3, 38), tactics—strategy is ignored—exists in isolation with its own “culture” distinct from larger political, social, intellectual, religious, and economic contexts. No need to treat institutions or ideology, since the revisionists have already clarified all such issues (p.3).⁴ K’s radical form of “drums and trumpets” military history

¹ D. Kagan/G. Viggiano, eds., *Men of Bronze: Hoplite Warfare in Classical Greece* (Princeton 2013); cf. my review in *The Historian* 77.2 (2015) 393–94. All dates here are B.C., unless otherwise noted.

² E.g., unknown is E.L. Wheeler, “Greece: Mad Hatters and March Hares,” in L. Brice/J. Roberts, eds., *Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World* (Claremont 2011) 53–104 with bibliography.

³ E. Sagan, *The Lust to Annihilate: A Psychoanalytic Study of Violence in Ancient Greek Culture* (New York 1979).

⁴ Besides Krentz and van Wees, other favored revisionists are: J. Dayton, *The Athletes of War: An Evaluation of the Agonistic Elements of Greek Warfare* (Toronto 2005); F. Echeverría, “Taktikè technè: The Neglected Element in Classical ‘Hoplite’ Battles,” *AncSoc* 41 (2011) 45–82; on Dayton cf. Wheeler (*supra* n.2) 80 n.96: remarks also applicable to Echeverría. K’s *laudatio* (p.23) of the 2011 paper need not be shared.

flies in the face of all we thought we knew about both war and society and war as a product of its cultural milieu, not to mention the Greek view that war is part of politics (Pl. *Prt.* 322b–c; Arist. *Eth.Nic.* 1.2, 1094a26–b11). Clausewitz, whose war as a continuation of politics had Hellenic roots, and the Greeks (but apparently not K) knew that the “absoluter Krieg” did not occur in practice. Killing had to have a larger purpose. Further, K would deny (e.g., p. 224) Greeks any expected standards of conduct: an “all’s fair” mentality without restraints on behavior. From a broader historical perspective, however, war has been a normative phenomenon with circumscriptions of conduct, even if not always observed. Nevertheless, deeper knowledge of military history and even actual military experience must not intrude on K’s imaged tactical Greek culture.⁵ K the academic Lehnstuhlfeldherr knows best, although Polybius (12.25g.1–2) would disagree about the value of an historian’s personal military experience.

The work consists of six chapters and a conclusion: (1) a “Prussian” model of hoplite battle, (2) training and discipline, (3) where and when to fight, (4) deployment, (5) battle tactics, (6) the rout and the *tropaion*. Ch. 1, a selective survey of bibliography (1852 to the present) includes Germanophone work to the 1920s (Köchly/Rüstow, Droysen, Bauer, E. Lammert, Delbrück, Beloch, Kromayer), British 1911–57 (Grundy, Adcock), and American from 1970 (Anderson, Pritchett, Hanson, Ober). Important French work of structuralists and *Annalistes* in the 1960s and 1970s is deemed irrelevant; no mention of Italians and others. Thankfully, since 1989 an epiphany of revisionists (Cawkwell, Krentz, van Wees, Rawlings, Dayton, Echeverría) has demonstrated the true path to enlightenment.⁶ Pre-revisionist views of hoplite warfare (regardless of language or date) are lumped into a supposed “Prussian” model:⁷ formal pitched hoplite battles with observance of a ritualistic code defined Greek warfare; such battles, usually a direct clash of rival phalanges formed in rectangular units eight files deep with the commander located on the right flank, occurred in an open plain and involved little or no cavalry and light infantry; possession of the battlefield and the opponent’s dead determined victory; abandonment of “the rules” began with the Persian Wars (or the Peloponnesian War: Grundy) and Epaminondas’ victory at Leuctra, the end of an era, foreshadowed Philip II’s reforms.

In portraying the early “Prussians” as presentists applying contemporary practices to the Greek, K ignores a long tradition from the Renaissance into the Napoleonic era: efforts to find practical utility in ancient military texts and from actual experience to analyze them (cf. Delbrück’s *Sachkritik*). Dubious contentions (e.g., pp. 3, 11–12, 15) of “Prussian” selective manipulation of the sources but the revisionists’ “truth” reflect a believer’s faith in an unassailable new “gospel.” More importantly, K forsakes an accurate

⁵ Note (p.7) K’s ridicule of Johannes Kromayer’s assertion that personal military experience matters.

⁶ Cf. the detailed and more balanced (although predominantly Anglophone) survey in Kagan/Viggiano (*supra* n.1: 1–56), which begins with Grote.

⁷ It is conceded (pp.7 n.5, 17, 18) that Adolf Bauer was Austrian and J.K. Anderson, characterized as more “Prussian” than the real Prussians, was an Oxford educated Scot with an American job. K’s knowledge (p.7) of real Prussians is imperfect: Delbrück’s *Geschichte der Kriegskunst...* is in four volumes, not three.

status quaestionis in preference for erecting his “Prussian model” as a straw man to be repeatedly pummeled and dismembered in succeeding chapters. For example, the Peloponnesian War’s generation of a “military revolution” has been questioned since at least Lonis (1979), but (as indicated above) French bibliography is largely absent.⁸ Other supposed dogmata of the “Prussian” model are also incorrectly portrayed as absolutes, as will be shown.

For the uninitiated some clarification of K’s method and approach would be useful. Different definitions of Greek warfare distinguish the “Prussians” from the revisionists. “Prussians” emphasize major field battles between rival hoplite phalanges, in which the hoplite ethos, stressing *arête* in an open trial of strength (amply attested in literary sources), prevails, although such battles in the 5th and 4th c. are relatively rare in comparison to raids and smaller scale operations. Hoplite practices are assumed the product of primarily minor border wars with limited aims between mainland Greek poleis. In contrast, revisionists, preferring an anthropologically generic to an historical view, characterize Greek warfare as all violent acts of armed forces regardless of size, location, and context. Hence indiscriminate citations of skirmishes, raids (including naval operations), and minor battles disprove the “Prussian” traits of large-scale hoplite battles and any protocols in Greek warfare.⁹ Honor, *agon*, and a “fair fight” have no role. K’s rare responses with special pleadings to both “Prussian” compartmentalization of types of battle and criticisms of the revisionists’ disregard of scale fail to rebut objections to revisionist views (pp. 32 with n.121, 105).

Revisionists also assert continuity of practices from Homer into the 4th c. Cavalry and light infantry, for revisionists omnipresent and the new “queens of the battlefield” (despite the sources’ frequent silence), should replace the “Prussian” hoplite-centric warfare (pp. 97, 105–6). But the phalanx did not appear simultaneously in all parts of the Greek world and in some parts not at all. Geography and socio-economic structures favored cavalry and light infantry (but not hoplites) in some areas (e.g., Thessaly, Aetolia, and Boeotia to some extent).¹⁰ Revisionist generalizations disregard local

⁸ R. Lonis, *Guerre et religion en Grèce à l’époque classique* (Paris 1979) 17–21, 283–94, 318. K’s negative view of military revolutions (p.36) seems inspired (but unacknowledged) by this reviewer’s position (“Land Battles,” in P. Sabin *et al.*, eds., *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare* [Cambridge 2007] I, 187); likewise on the same page (*CHGRW* I, 187) this reviewer is made to appear as an advocate of face-of-battle studies, of which he has been a critic for thirty years.

⁹ An assertion (p.4) that K will exclude attack/defense of fortresses/camps/cities and navies is frequently violated: preliminary clashes to attacks on or in defense of such sites, which are hardly formal pitched battles, are cited as examples besides naval deployments as proof about terrestrial (e.g., pp.33, 131–32).

¹⁰ Cf. M. Verčák, “Marathon without Phalanx?” – Die Entstehung der Phalanx und ihre Bedeutung für die Polis aus der Sicht der Archäologie,” in P. Pavúk *et al.*, eds., *EYΔΑΙΜΩΝ: Studies in honour of Jan Bouzek* (Prague 2018) 161–78: a fresh archaeological look at the phalanx’s evolution devoid of revisionist influence; Anthony Snodgrass’ “gradualist” approach to development of the phalanx need not mean an endorsement of the revisionists’ view of Archaic combined arms and a phalanx with wide file intervals based on controversial interpretations of vase paintings. K foregoes discussion of the Archaic period and the phalanx’s development, since the revisionists have already solved all the problems (cf. pp.154, 216).

specificities and traditions of troop types. Further, non-observance of “rules” in colonial areas (e.g., Magna Graecia, Sicily, the Chalcidice, Thrace, etc.) and against non-Greeks disproves, for revisionists, the existence of such “rules,” although it remains unclear whether Greeks judged in-group norms of the mainland applicable in colonial areas. Transfer of the more fluid battle and combined arms of the Greek periphery to the mainland center in the 5th and certainly the 4th c. could belong to the many changes, which revisionists deny, in that period, when engagements became increasingly battles of encounter rather than formal set-piece affairs. Likewise, revisionists ignore whether a war has been properly declared or the normal “rules” have been suspended as in a *stasis* and a “war without herald” (*polemos akeryktos*), of which the Peloponnesian War became an example (Thuc. 1.146; 2.1). In sum, “Prussians” and revisionists differ less in what actually happened in the 5th and 4th c. than in the “spin” assigned to various elements: “Prussian” new developments (e.g., broken “rules”) vs. revisionist continuity and universals (p. 224: total rejection of a developmental model).

Ch. 1 concludes with an attack on the “Prussian” emphasis on Leuctra and Epaminondas’ tactical genius. The discussion excludes political significance of the battle and Epaminondas as strategist, although K (pp. 25–26) concedes even disagreement among “Prussians.” Precedents for the left as the primary attack wing are not K’s new discovery and the validity of K’s examples (p. 33 n.127) can be disputed. A broader perspective on an oblique order of battle, well attested in tactical writers and historians, and preference for a single-wing attack by Alexander, the Successors, and sometimes even Romans are omitted.¹¹ A survey of interpretations of Leuctra finds all faulty. The cause lies not in scholarly incompetence—source problems are not considered—but in erroneous method, a false “Prussian” basis for evaluating the issues (pp. 24–36). An assertion that an explanation of Epaminondas’ tactical greatness and the problems of Leuctra are unsolvable (p. 34) is later contradicted in K’s own supposedly definitive interpretation of the battle (pp. 169–72 with disputable interpretation of the sources). The promised great improvement over others’ views is disappointing.¹² A chapter aimed at exposing “Prussian foibles” actually attests K’s own.

¹¹ K’s denial (p. 27) that the Spartan crescent formation at Leuctra, unique to Diod. 15.55.2–65.2, was known in the “classical world” is later corrected (p.30 n.110) by reference to Onas. 21.8–9; numerous other sources could be cited. K believes that Diodorus (d. c.30 B.C.) and Onasander (fl. 49 A.D.) were contemporaries, an error falsely attributed to J.K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1970) 207–8.

¹² K (p.27 with n.90) disposes of Anderson’s interpretation of Leuctra (*supra* n.11: 198–220, 400–403), not because it is wrong, but because others rejected it. But rejection is not refutation and citing “majority opinion” violates proper rules of evidence in scholarly argumentation. In contradiction, however, K (pp.175–76) admires Anderson’s argument that Xenophon used Cyrus the Great’s battle plan at the fictitious Battle of Thymbrara (Xen. Cyr. 7.1.5–40) to evaluate 4th c. tactical issues (deep vs. thin phalanges); Xenophon on Thymbrara was the basis of Anderson’s view of Leuctra. A claim (p.27) that “practically no one” has accepted Anderson’s view overlooks W.K. Pritchett’s endorsement: “The General’s Exhortation in Greek Warfare,” in *Essay in Greek History* (Amsterdam 1994) 71.

Subsequent chapters can be treated more briefly. Ch. 2 addresses training. For K, Greek phalanges (Spartans and mercenaries excepted) were essentially armed mobs without discipline, subordinate officers, and training in use of arms, drill, and unit formation (pp. 151–53). Hence performance in battle was unpredictable. Throughout, K conflates poor field performance with lack of training and discipline—apparently unaware that even veteran units can lose their nerve under pressure. Xenophon and Plato’s advocacy of military training and drill supposedly proves that such practices did not exist, although such themes are a motif of nearly every writer on military affairs, ancient and modern. Athletic training is dismissed (pp. 60–65) and Xenophon and Plato’s ridicule of the *hoplomachoi* is taken at face value (pp. 45, 66–68). Similarly, anecdotes of Iphricates’ training and disciplining his troops in later sources can be summarily discarded (p. 51 n.43), as if Diodorus, Nepos, and Polyaeus were not reproducing 4th c. material. For K (pp. 39, 50–51, 69), Greeks, although aware that an efficient army required drill and training, refused both.

A detailed critique is not possible here. The sources’ general omission of training and drill in non-Spartan armies has always challenged the “Prussian” view, and unit drill at the polis level is unattested before the Hellenistic era in Boeotia. Yet K’s effort to deny it to Epaminondas’ army at Second Mantinea (pp. 52–54) hardly convinces. K seems not fully to grasp the meaning of the technical expression *paragein epi kerōs* (Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.22), and his view of Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.23 is not definitive. Nor does an attempt to argue away Athenian march formations succeed (e.g., Nicias’ square in the retreat from Syracuse: p.57). Xenophon (*Resp.Lac.* 11.8), however, surely implies that some *hoplomachoi* instructed in unit drill. The *hoplomachoi*’s later instruction in the *ephebeia* at Athens and similar Hellenistic training programs elsewhere, when some were called *taktikoi*, contrasts with Xenophon and Plato’s disdain. Such does not indicate that all were inexperienced amateurs. Surely Phalinus of Zachynthos in Tissaphernes’ employ at Cunaxa (Xen. *Anab.* 2.1.7; cf. *Cyr.* 6.43.1; Diod. 14.25.1; Plut. *Artax.* 3.3–4) was not the buffoon of Plato’s *Laches*. For weapons training K ignores the probable instruction of fathers to sons, who inherited the family’s hoplite armor, and the long tradition of the gymnasium and the palaestra as sites of military training.

A concession that archers, slingers, and javelin-throwers had specialist training (pp. 40–41) does not absolve them (and the cavalry) from an even greater lack of organization than the hoplites (p.71). But Athenian archers, even if not permanent units, had officers (*IG I³* 138, pre-434) and Athenian archers at Plataea and elsewhere do not necessarily refute Thucydides’ denial (4.94.1) of Athenian *psiloi* before 424 (pp. 40–41). Thuc. 4.94.1 is an old crux, but *psiloi* need not indicate archers, which tend to be specifically identified when present.¹³ Denial of subordinate officers in non-Spartan armies, thus precluding any real command and control, exemplifies K’s deceptive

¹³ For a recent treatment of Athenian archers, see D. Pritchard, “The Archers of Classical Athens,” *G&R* 65.1 (2018) 86–102; cf. J.-C. Couvenhes, “L’introduction des archers scythes, esclaves publics à Athènes: la date et l’agent d’un transfert culturel,” in B. Legras, ed., *Transfers culturels et droits dans le monde grec et hellénistique* (Paris 2012) 99–118.

waffling: an initial absolute statement (“no such”) later compromised by concession. An assumed absence of file-leaders in non-Spartan armies (p.52; cf. pp. 184–85: a denial of *ouragoi* with dubious arguments), later becomes a denial of any officer hierarchy (p. 140), and Athenian taxiarchs and *lochagoi* (amply attested) are only conceded even later (p. 186). Plato’s *trittyarchos* (*Resp.* 5.475a) is ignored. So, too, here *no* Greek training (p. 40) becomes *few* trained (p.70). K’s case for no training and drill, speciously watertight, is not seaworthy: the sources are too poor and ambiguous for absolute views.

Ch. 3 on the time and place of battles, expanding an earlier article,¹⁴ displays K’s best combat techniques against a straw man. The (semi-legendary) notion of a pre-arranged time and place for battle (“battles by appointment”), found in Herodotus and Polybius (besides other sources unmentioned by K) and often associated with *monomachia* to decide border disputes, becomes an easy target when assessing 5th and 4th c. warfare, in which battles of encounter, larger strategic aims, and frequent smaller scale operations prevailed (cf. p. 89: a false conclusion). K’s exclusion of honor and *agon* from Greek warfare leads to a muddled, perverse discussion of the process of challenging an enemy to fight and “offering battle,” a practice well attested in Hellenistic and Roman warfare. Generally, battles do require mutual consent, unless one side has maneuvered the other into an unfavorable position or the political situation demands battle. The absence of a known *terminus technicus* for battle by mutual consent before Polybius does not prove the concept’s non-existence. Here and throughout, K assumes that a much more sophisticated theoretical framework of Greek military thought in practice antedated written theory’s attempts to clarify concepts (e.g., p. 214: an *argumentum e silentio*). Theory often lags behind or imperfectly describes actual practice. Few military treatises discuss strategy. Further, stratagems (e.g., surprise, am-bush, deceit, etc.), a chief characteristic of pre-state warfare, derive their character in ancient state-level warfare from unwritten expectations of conduct: sometimes permitted and sometimes not. An erroneous claim (p. 78) that ruses had universal approval ignores a whole intellectual and legal tradition opposing and/or qualifying them.¹⁵

Further, a questionable argument (pp. 80–81) disposes of a “Prussian” view that Greeks only learned the tactical advantage of topography in the Persian Wars. But the issue is misconceived. Topographical advantage is (again) known in pre-state warfare. Nor can one claim that local border defense (e.g., the collapsed Phocian wall at Thermopylae; context unknown) disproves the “Prussian” argument. Greek defense at choke points in 480 involved strategy, not tactics, and the issue of the scale of the war is unappreciated. One can agree that Greeks did not suddenly discover stratagems or topographical advantage in the Persian Wars. The real issues, however, are when such are appropriate and war in a larger cultural context, which K reduces to the fantasy of

¹⁴ “Mardonius’ Senseless Greeks,” *CQ* 66 (2016) 1–12: discussion of *Hdt.* 7.9β.1, where literary analysis is preferred to historical.

¹⁵ Cf. E.L. Wheeler, *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery* (Leiden 1988): unknown to K; cf. on the ancient traditions about stratagems, *idem*, “Polyaenus: *Scriptor Militaris*,” in K. Brodersen, ed., *Polyainos. Neue Studien—Polyaenus. New Studies* (Berlin 2010) 7–54.

“absoluter Krieg.” For K, Greeks fought in plains to have a better opportunity to kill each other and not because of the hoplite phalanx’s tactical limitations or the honor of a fair fight. Again, the real issue is strategy, not tactics. Periclean strategy of refusing battle and waging a war of exhaustion discredits the argument. Battles are not strictly tactical decisions devoid of a strategic context.

Finally, Table I (“Surprise, deception, and terrain advantage in pitched battles,” (pp. 88–89), purports to summarize K’s argument. Indiscriminate citation of evidence on use of surprise and topographical advantages to disprove any existence of “rules” is applied to situations, in which such “rules” were irrelevant and inapplicable. A check of the references reveals that 22 of the 28 examples do not support K’s contentions, as they show small scale operations, sieges, amphibious operations, or misrepresentation of the sources, not pitched battles.¹⁶ Much the same could be said of K’s Tables 2–5: specious assemblages of examples, valid only if K’s “spin” on what they show is accepted.

Ch. 4 on deployment initially rehearses revisionist positions (and exaggerations) on the omnipresence of light infantry and cavalry with the continuity of combined arms (e.g., pp. 109, 115–16, in contrast to the “Prussian” view of combined arms as a new development). Despite Thuc. 6.69.2, that historian’s only attestation of a skirmish of light infantry as the prelude to a pitched hoplite battle, such preliminary light infantry action (standard in the Hellenistic era) is assumed a universal in the 5th and 4th c. Consistent with revisionist assumptions, light infantry (not in the sources) is invented (p. 106) for Sogyeia and Tegyra. Here and elsewhere K pays little attention to whether the light infantry is mercenary. K even advocates (p. 113) use of light infantry behind the hoplite phalanx to overshoot the formation despite Onasander’s warning (17) of the danger of “friendly fire” casualties. Perhaps desperation causes K’s conversion into light infantry of the stone-thrower artillery (Polyaen. *Strat.* 2.38.2), shooting from heights on the flanks, not from the rear.

Repeated emphasis on the effectiveness of cavalry comes with the glaring omission of never explaining the cavalry’s type: horse archers? (surely not), shock units? or javelin-throwers?¹⁷ Indeed a claim that Sparta created cavalry and archer units (Thuc. 4.55.2) against Athenian cavalry raids is simply wrong: they were for a speedy response of homeland defense against seaborne raids (p. 104; cf. p. 187 on Spartan cavalry in battle: likewise dubious). A standard “cascade charge” (successive assaults of cavalry, light infantry, hoplites) is invented to demonstrate deployment of cavalry and light infantry in front of a phalanx, but a qualification soon follows that components of a “cascade

¹⁶ Likewise, other examples (pp.79–80) not in Table 1 are dubious. Peisistratus’ surprise attack (Hdt. 1.63.1) occurs as part of a coup; the Phocian surprise of the Thessalians (Hdt. 8.77) occurs in an unknown context: a declared war? or a long-running “war without herald”? Aen.Tact. 16.7 (p.92) treats responses to invasion of the *chora* and attacking plunderers, not pitched battle. None of these examples prove the case against “battles by appointment” or battles by mutual consent.

¹⁷ K ignores a recent (questionable) argument that cavalry can smash through massed infantry: M. Sears/C. Willekes, “Alexander’s Cavalry Charge at Chaeronea, 338 BCE,” *Journal of Military History* 80.4 (2016) 1017–35.

charge” often varied. He even finds a “cascade charge” at Leuctra, although lacking light infantry (pp. 111–12, 170). Of examples listed in Table 2 (Leuctra is missing) none represent the implied pitched hoplite battle, but rather occur in surprise attacks near a camp or a city or against plunderers.

The remainder of the chapter addresses larger battle and phalanx issues. A tactical reserve is taken as standard practice rather than a 5th c. innovation without distinction of troops intentionally withheld from the beginning and units arriving later during the battle (p. 114; cf. p. 147). Next, three “Prussian” concepts are attacked: a general’s position on the right flank, eight as the standard depth of a file, and the rationale for excessively deep deployment. The case against a general’s posting on the right flank in a major battle (pp. 117–20) follows the revisionist methodology of indiscriminate citation of sources, mixing smaller clashes, attacks on cities, and even naval battles with major field battles. For battles of encounter K forgets that a general’s position could be fortuitous. Even the Persian king Artaxerxes II’s locus at Cunaxa in the center is cited. A Table 3 shows right 12, left 10, center 8, thus justifying a conclusion that location on the right was actually a minority, although apart from K’s mixing of apples and oranges to discuss fruit, many of these supposed loci of generals are conjectures.

Treatment of file depths (pp. 126–31) introduces K’s explanation for deep phalangeal deployment (pp. 133–38). Although variations of file depths are already widely acknowledged, K presents a standard depth of eight as part of his “Prussian” straw man. Consistent with his view of the non-Spartan phalanx as an armed mob, K denies any standard depth. But K’s Table 4 shows that eight is the most common depth attested and many others are multiples of four. Given K’s denial of march formations (p. 57) and assertion that presentation of an unbroken battleline before engagement was largely specious (p. 55), one wonders how any Greek general managed to deploy 1000s of men in a reasonable time, especially as K argues (questionably pp. 185–86) that hoplites had no assigned place in a file.¹⁸ Hence K’s explanation of phalanx depth becomes simply putting forth an armed mob as thick as possible to avoid a break through, to increase morale of the few fighters in the front ranks, and to intimidate the enemy.¹⁹ Table 5 purports to show that the deepest phalanx generally wins. Yet again, the cases are more specious than accurate. Thebes did not win at Delium and Leuctra because of a deep phalanx and Second Mantinea was indecisive. Some examples show urban contexts and defense of a pass. Greater depth as an aim to win by attrition is rejected, as is the fierce debate over *othismos*, for K a scholarly tempest in a teapot, since neither historians nor tactical writers explicitly connect depth and *othismos*.

In truth, no ancient source or theorist gives a rationale for depth. Greater depth puts fewer in the front ranks to fight. The Roman maniple, betraying its phalangeal origins,

¹⁸ Contrary to K (pp.185–86), Socrates says that he had an assigned place (Pl. *Apol.* 28d-e; cf. *Resp.* 8.556d; Thuc. 6.69.1; 7.3.3; Nep. *Iphic.* 11.2.2.

¹⁹ K (p.136) cites Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.4–5: a show of strength before Babylon, not a battle formation. At p.135 (“deep ranks”) K confuses ranks with files.

most probably deployed six deep and Arrian's defensive stance against the Alani (A.D. 135) was eight deep in a phalangal formation (*Acies* 15). Unknown to K, the debate over the virtues of thin vs. deep formations in Xenophon (*supra* n.12) reappeared in the 18th c. in reaction to the Chevalier de Folard's advocacy of a return to a phalangal attack column: *l'ordre profonde* vs. *l'ordre mince*. Details cannot be discussed here. But experiments demonstrated that depths beyond sixteen added no supplementary impulse to the thrust of a unit's charge. Much of this debate underlies the work of Ardant du Picq (the real father of "face of battle" studies) in the post-Waterloo reaction to Napoleon's deep columns of attack frequent late in his career. As Napoleonic and Restoration-era generals knew, psychological pressure in the rear ranks causes deep formations to collapse and disintegrate from behind.²⁰ The actual performance of ultra-deep formations does not support K's views.

Ch. 5 on battle tactics assumes that chs. 3-4 have shown—disputable for some readers—that Greeks had specific battle plans to exploit time and place and arranged to win by planned maneuvers (p. 139). Essentially a survey of the known describes a Greek general's limited ability to exert command and control. Table 6 catalogues cases in which a general did make adjustments during battle or the initial clash entered a second phase. K does not distinguish phases of a battle. Exceptions are generalized into a frequent practice. With typical revisionist imprecision, small is equated with large and some last-minute modifications to the initial deployment before engagement are included. Remarkably, a supposed Greek belief in the superiority of big armies becomes "a basic principle of Greek military thought" (p. 143), although this view contradicts "the Marathon paradigm," the motif in historians and military theorists that smaller can beat bigger armies.²¹

As known, by the 4th c. many states maintained at public expense special units of hoplite *epilektoi*, of which the Theban Sacred Band is the most prominent.²² For K, such units of better fighters compensated for the inadequacies of his armed mobs in phalanges, although K denies them (despite state support) better training or professionalization. The "Prussian" themes of the growing professionalization of war in the 5th and 4th c. and increased reliance on mercenaries—too developmental for a revisionist work—receive scant attention. But the ambiguous term *epilektoi* denotes both state-sponsored elite units (a 4th c. phenomenon) and *ad hoc* bands (often volunteers),

²⁰ C. Ardant du Picq, *Études sur le combat* (Paris 1978 [1903]) 15–16, 24–25, 27, 46, 48, 93–96; *idem*, *Battle Studies*, J. Greely/R. Cotton, trr., in *Roots of Strategy*, Book 2 (Mechanicsville, PA 1987) 78–79, 89, 113, 114, 116, 169–72.

²¹ See E.L. Wheeler, "Present but Absent: Marathon in the Tradition of Western Military Thought," in K. Buraselis/E. Koulakiotis, eds., *Marathon, the Day after. Symposium Proceedings, Delphi 2–4 July 2010* (Athens: 2013) 241–67.

²² Overlooked is: V. Alonso/K. Freitag, "Prolegomena zur Erforschung der Bedeutung der Eliteeinheiten im archaischen and klassischen Griechenland," *Gerión* 19 (2001) 199–219. K's claim that *epilektoi* could also include light infantry relies solely on Thuc. 6.100.1, where some light infantry are added to an *ad hoc* corps for a special operation.

which from Herodotus on could be called *logades*. Space precludes rebutting K's attempt with often dubious citations of evidence to forge a closer connection of *ad hoc logades* and *epilektoi* with the long-standing, state sponsored *epilektoi*.

Ch. 6 addresses the rout, pursuit, and the *tropaion*. A claim (p. 187) that the actual clash of rival hoplite phalanges has been inadequately treated ignores thirty years of "face of battle" studies. K chooses to emphasize factors of morale and panic (loosely understood) rather than the "blood and guts" approach of the "face-of-battlers."²³ Curiously, the revisionist view that the phalanx was an open formation with wide intervals between files, as opposed to the "Prussian" emphasis on a closed formation of narrow intervals, is studiously absent. For K, Sparta's reputation and appearance permitted use of terror as a battle tactic (pp. 181, 220) and laws punishing desertion, not enforced, did not deter flight, although such laws targeted individuals and not masses. Greeks were not Romans.

Limited pursuit is the next bodily member of the straw man attacked. "Prussians" generalize to all Greeks the attested Spartan prohibition of pursuit of the routed hoplites of a broken phalanx beyond the battlefield. Rather than possession of the battlefield and the dead of the defeated as the goal of battle, K believes slaughter the object and vigorous pursuit the means (p. 197).²⁴ As well known, more of the defeated are killed in flight than in face-to-face combat, when backs are turned and the cohesion of mutual support of comrades in line has vanished. A catalogue of pursuits (490–338), Table 7, betrays the same indiscriminate collection of cases noted for other Tables: inclusion of Greeks vs. non-Greeks, civil wars, sieges, etc., but with a concession that pursuits often ceased at the enemy's city or camp. Contentions about supposed long pursuits (p. 197 with n.40) suffer from imprecision of distance in the sources and Athenian pursuit of the Persians at Marathon (the Soros to the beach?) would hardly be considered "long." The acknowledged unsuitability of hoplites to pursue at length inspires a conjecture: cavalry and light infantry receive such infrequent references because they have been kept in reserve to pursue the defeated or defend hoplites in pursuit, if the enemy's cavalry and light infantry counterattack pursuing hoplites (p. 205). The whole argument smacks of desperation. Further, as a rebuttal of "Prussian" views K's misguided attack illustrates once again a tilt against a "Prussian windmill." Nearly all examples derive from the 5th and 4th c., when "Prussians" concede that the rules are being bent and broken.²⁵

²³ K is unaware of the sole extended treatment of panic in ancient armies: E.L. Wheeler, "Πολλὰ κενὰ τοῦ πολέμου: The History of a Greek Proverb," *GRBS* 29 (1988) 153–84.

²⁴ In support K cites (pp.195–96) the Spartan-Argive clash inside the Corinthian Long Walls (Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.12), more an instance of slaughter than pursuit. The inveterate hatred between Spartans and Argives is not mentioned. Another passage (Xen. *Hiero* 2.15–6) seems taken out of context: slaughter in pursuit is compared to a tyrant's delight in executing political opponents. Similarly, K (pp.204–5) excessively generalizes from Clearchus' emphasis on pursuit (Xen. *Anab.* 2.4.6), a remark relevant to a specific situation.

²⁵ For further comments on the revisionists' view of pursuit and "rules," see Wheeler (*supra* n.2) 81–82.

The chapter concludes with discussion of the *tropaion* and a truce for burial of the dead. For K, the *tropaion* symbolizes mass slaughter and the truce serves to compel the enemy to accept the humiliation of defeat; possession of the dead becomes a tool of leverage. No gracious concession to any “rules” occurred: the truce was a contrived display of power. An association of the *tropaion* exclusively with hoplites is denied. K follows the revisionist view (essentially an *argumentum e silentio*) that erection of *tropaia* began only in the mid 5th c. Factually, K offers little new in his now familiar equation of small with great engagements (e.g., p. 210 with nn.85–86) and exaggerations of the sources.

A conclusion summarizes K’s views. His model for hoplite battle (pp. 219–23) exaggerates the degree to which battles could be planned in advance. Too often the *ad hoc* and accidental become a sign of planning and K seems to assume that one side often had the luxury of adjusting its deployment after the opponent had exposed his. The time required to deploy phalanges of K’s “armed mobs” is also not considered. Further, K’s assumes that all sources are correct, even if contradictory, and can be combined with accuracy (e.g., p. 169). No development of the general from a warrior to a “battle manager” occurred. Greek commanders, however amateur, always seem to know what to do. In the end, K’s super-pragmatic Greeks in an “absoluter Krieg” of no restraints appear more Prussian and Clausewitzian than K’s “Prussians.” A final note dismisses Hanson’s “Western way of war” based on hoplite battle, as if a new discovery, yet others have been rejecting Hanson’s “Western way of war” for thirty years.

In sum, this book cannot be recommended as more than an example of how to construct and joust with a straw man. As noted, not even an accurate *status quaestionis* initiates the work. None of the views here presented compel this reviewer to contemplate revising his chapter on hoplite battle in the *CHGRW* (*supra* n.8). Seekers of an *objective* analysis should heed Dante (*Inf.* Canto III.9): “*Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch’intrat.*”

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