

Roel Konijnendijk, Cezary Kucewicz and Mathew Lloyd (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Greek Land Warfare Beyond the Phalanx*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021. 360 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-50172-0.

The subject of phalanx warfare is a well-ploughed field, making this study on Greek warfare beyond the phalanx a welcome addition. This book both fills in a gap in the literature and says something new and important.

A good example of a topic outside the norm is the role of women in warfare. Jennifer Martinez Morales challenges the traditional view that women's participation in war as unusual, that it happened only in extreme emergencies, and was a breach of gender boundaries. She argues instead that women's involvement in war was not that extraordinary; women were present in both emergencies and non-emergencies, and that although gender boundaries existed in war, they were not enforced in the same way as in peacetime. It seems only sensible that when an enemy invaded a city and the livelihood of the community was at stake that everyone, irrespective of gender, would tackle the threat collectively. There was no one area to which women's contributions were restricted. They could be found on city walls, in houses, in military garrisons, or by city gates. So, although ordinary women never fought or took to the battlefield, this did not make them detached from the world of warfare. After all, war was a social activity, and it affected the entire society of which half happened to be female.

Another kind of warfare that differed from infantry fighting is war on horseback. Cavalrymen in ancient Greece have always been traditionally treated as being too few, too technologically impaired, and too primitive in tactics to defeat hoplites and, therefore, could not affect the outcome of major engagements. Cavalry have been seen as minor support troops and have not featured in our popular image of Greeks at war. Scholars believed that it was the Macedonians who created the first genuine shock cavalry allowing horsemen to become the decisive force on the battlefield. Roel Konijnendijk challenges this view and the commonly-held notion of cavalry being ineffective against hoplites. He attacks the old idea that the geography of Greece restricted the use of cavalry, and that the lack of stirrups and saddles made Greek horsemen ineffective in combat. He examines the various Greek city-states and shows why some developed cavalry and some did not. Contrary to what the *communis opinio* has been, K. believes that the presence of cavalry decided battles and wars. While horsemen were never numerous, the influence that cavalrymen had on the battlefield was far out of proportion to their numbers. Horsemen played a major part of the forces fielded by Greek communities in many sections of the Greek world; they were neither marginal to Classical Greek warfare nor functionally limited to a small number of specialist tasks. Hoplites were acutely aware of their own vulnerabilities and relied heavily on cavalry to help them win. The use of cavalry shaped new strategic and tactical situations in which mounted forces were able to play additional roles, including mobile defense, pursuing fleeing enemies, covering flight by hoplites, controlling open ground. Finally, K. shows the role cavalry played in winning pitched battles. The best

way for a hoplite army to protect itself against enemy cavalry was to field cavalry of its own. Classical literature has never been mined for reference to the terror that cavalry inspired in other warriors. K. gives a survey of these passages and uses them to discuss ways in which cavalry was effectively used at a strategic and tactical level. He knows when the arguments are speculative, but he marshals the evidence in a way that makes a strong case for his argument that Greek warfare was never purely defined by heavy infantry.

Cezary Kucewicz, Matthew Lloyd, and Roel Konijnendijk take on the topic of light-armed fighters from the tenth to fourth centuries. These are the men who fought with long-range weapons like bows, slings, and javelins and wore little armor. Such mobile fighters can be found in texts, images, and archaeological evidence throughout the Greek world during the 10th – 4th centuries, but there is a great deal of contention over the reason for their use, especially after hoplites appear. Light-armed fighters tended to be overshadowed by the evidence for their more heavily-armed comrades, and historians are obliged to explain their marginalization. The ancient sources already had an ideological agenda since they were written by and for the upper classes, who had no interest in the military activities of their social inferiors. Plato, for example, reacted violently against the idea that there could be honor in the hit-and-run fighting style of amphibious and light-armed forces. A further ideological distortion of the evidence has been created by the modern obsession with pitched battles rather than the reality of war in the Classical period.

This classical prejudice and its modern followers did not exist before the 8th century when light-armed fighters were high status individuals. As heavy armor was slowly introduced, however, light-armed troops saw their social status decline. The authors carefully sift through all the evidence from archaeological sites, vase painting (which is, in itself, controversial) and the relevant literary texts to show that all social groups played a part in ancient Greek warfare. It was the prevailing social and political pressures that determined who counted for something and who was dismissed as marginal, not the needs of warfare. Two things need to be remembered: Greek history is not solely Athenian or Spartan history. There were many lesser Greek *poleis* that fought with what they had and in ways that suited their terrain. Not all Greek *poleis* could afford to field a phalanx and not all warriors in a city-state could afford the armor. This left them to decide how they would participate in the defense of their homes.

There are certain types of fighting that require specialized troops that are not heavily-armed infantrymen. Cavalry was needed for their mobility when ravaging the countryside. Archers, slingers, and peltasts led the way in siege assaults, the defense of city walls attacks on enemy cavalry, and the defense of mountain passes. Thus, light-armed soldiers appear in all periods of Greek history and in larger numbers than they are usually credited with. No Greek city-state would ignore their effectiveness when specialized troops were exactly what was needed.

Fernando Echeverría's contribution re-conceptualizes siege warfare. Sieges are traditionally treated as a separate branch of military operations and a "passive" form of warfare — still another distorted result of the "hoplite mirage." It has been traditionally argued that Poliorcetics must be secondary and less important because they did not involve heavily-armed hoplites. Once we shed the nonsense about codes of honor and repugnant irregular fighters, we can visualize poliorcetics in the early Classical period not in connection to the phalanx but in the context of Greek material culture and mentality. The Greeks had many good reasons to attack a town: as a way to collect the spoils of war and pay the army, as retaliation for previous aggression, or from fear. These are exactly the motivations Thucydides lists in 1.76.2. Greater resources were the key to successful war-making, and assaults were the mark of powerful states. Power is the supreme source for military action. Attacking enemy towns was ideologically legitimate and prestigious and was not done accidentally or incidentally. It was a fundamental part of Greek war strategy. Urban centers were the targets of military expeditions on a regular basis. Echeverría's calculations clearly show that the relative frequency of captures and assaults of settlements in Archaic and early classical Greek warfare was much more frequent than has been commonly assumed. A standard Greek military campaign was conceived strategically as little more than an invasion of enemy territory because, once there, Greek commanders enjoyed a high level of autonomy and initiative and, being far from home, they had to improvise on the spot. Part of that improvisation could always include attacking a settlement. As a result, attacking enemy towns, when it was considered ideologically legitimate and prestigious, was not an accidental action but a fundamental part of Greek war strategy. Towns could be the center of a military campaign even when the strategic objectives were not explicitly stated. Echeverría documents both the examples and the context in which the process took place. Whether wars were for territorial conquest, predatory raids, or just border disputes, they were fought through a number of individual campaigns that followed a consistent pattern of invasion of enemy territory. The Greek approach to strategy was broad, open, and flexible because, in the course of those campaigns, anything from battles to assaults could happen. Pitched battles were, in fact, not more relevant or significant than any other operations and conversely "siege warfare" was not a separate branch of war. Battles and sieges were part of the same dynamic, complementary mechanism to defeat the enemy and they were fought by the same troops in the course of the same actions.

Joshua Brouwers attacks the Euro-centric view of a Greek military culture created, more or less, in isolation from outside influences. Brouwer places Archaic Greek warfare in a wider cultural context showing how widespread Greek contacts abroad influenced their weaponry and fighting techniques. Greek warfare rose out of complex interactions between peoples in the Aegean and Western Anatolia. He even goes so far to suggest that "Greek culture," as conceived by modern commentators, did not exist in the Archaic period. The use of certain equipment or tactics by one another group was not the result of slavish emulation but as a pathway toward expressing that group's

identity. The idea that the hoplite panoply was something that set the Greeks apart from other peoples appears to be wholly an invention of modern scholarship. Greeks in the Archaic period came into contact with organized armies in Anatolia by fighting as mercenaries. In the end, it is impossible to disentangle different peoples in an ethnic or cultural sense. Speakers of Greek, Lydian, and other languages fought side by side in Anatolia and we have no way of knowing how they identified themselves. Many communities in Anatolia were bilingual. This examination of Anatolian warfare seems to confirm that elements long held to be unique to the ancient Greeks more likely arose out of the complex interplay between different peoples.

Cezary Kucewicz examines the Spartan *polyandria*, *i.e.*, the practice of burying the dead on or near battle sites. At first, the Spartans buried their elites back home in tombs along the roadsides within the city. Others, of lower status, were buried in communal cemeteries located on the edge of Sparta. In the Archaic period, a new custom of battlefield burials arose. Following Sparta's military successes in the mid-sixth century and the establishment of the Peloponnesian League, the practice of bringing home the bodies of the war dead was succeeded by a system of battlefield burials for all. The change is worth studying because commemoration of the war dead offers a glimpse into the nature and organization of Archaic Sparta. It also tends to reflect wider institutional development within the military forces of other Greek *poleis*. The state's appropriation of the bodies of fallen warriors was arguably among the first steps in the process of army institutionalization which reflected the growth and professionalization of the Spartan militias of the late Archaic period and their professed egalitarian mindset.

Alexander Millington takes us off the battlefield and into the world of Ares, the religious figure who personified both war and the warrior-archetype. Ares' name was synonymous with war as its anthropomorphic personification and, also, its divine ruler. Ares was responsible for all deaths on the battlefield but also for the survival of those who walked away. He allowed the Greeks to engage with the idea of war as an independent force with a distinctive character. All the Greeks had to do was find enough courage and wisdom and piety to please the god and victory would come. The Greeks came to realize that war was fundamentally unpredictable and destructive and, as Ares was unreliable, so was war. Though Ares' cult, the Greeks were able to form a relationship with this dangerous force; Ares was the patron of all hoplites. All Greek cities had a sanctuary to Ares somewhere within their territory, usually small shrines and altars in rural areas. This was a widespread but low-key cult for a god most cities chose not to celebrate extravagantly but were fearful of neglecting outright. The Greeks came to worship this unique deity as a divine figure who represented a realistic conception of war — a terrifying force that was often necessary but always painful.

The last and longest contribution is by Hans van Wees who traces the use of Greek mercenaries in Egypt after 645. With the collapse of the Assyrian Empire in the 620s, both Egypt and Babylon exploited the power vacuum and mounted imperial campaigns of their own. Greek mercenaries begin to make their appearance, as evidenced by

Eastern Greek pottery appearing in Egypt and the Levant in the context of forts. The Egyptians needed soldiers who were available for long campaigns and who could serve in permanent garrisons in occupied territories. Although we are poorly informed about the armament and tactics of the troops deployed by Egypt, Babylon, and their neighbors van Wees does his best with the meagre evidence to describe the Greek and Carian soldiers who fought overseas. This trend lasted only a century from 625–525 BCE and van Wees shatters the long-held belief that they were hired in the tens of thousands. He concludes that Babylonians, Medes, and Persians made little or no use of hired foreign soldiers, and thus opportunities for Archaic Greek mercenaries were limited both geographically and chronologically. We have no reason to believe they were sought out for their arms and armor or combat tactics. This puts another dagger into the “men of bronze” theory so central to the hoplite myth.

In short, the authors take on the myths surrounding the hoplite phalanx and marshal a great deal of evidence to show the error of the standard views. The only *lacuna* I could find was an inadequate discussion of surprise attacks as a war tactic. Although there is an occasional mention of deceitful military strategies, even by women, there is no mention of ambush, only brief references to Wheeler (1988) and Krentz (2000). Missing are references to night attacks and surprise sorties and ambushes that could easily have filled another chapter. They have been conveniently collected in *Ambush* (London: Frontline, 2012), and would have provided 300-plus examples that would have bolstered their arguments. That minor quibble aside, however, this is a book that is long overdue because the stereotypes that the chapters demolish have stood for too long. This beautifully written and produced volume should take its place on the bookshelf of every military historian without delay.

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