

## SINGLE COMBAT IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC\*

In his discussion of Roman military institutions Polybius described how the desire for fame might inspire Roman soldiers to heroic feats of bravery, including single combat: (6.54.3–4) τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, οἱ νέοι παρορμῶνται πρὸς τὸ πᾶν ὑπομένειν ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν πραγμάτων χάριν τοῦ τυχεῖν τῆς συνακολουθούσης τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τῶν ἀνδρῶν εὐκλείας. πίστιν δ' ἔχει τὸ λεγόμενον ἐκ τούτων. πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐμονομάχησαν ἐκουσίως Ῥωμαίων ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ὅλων κρίσεως κτλ. Modern scholars, however, have taken little notice of this remark and some have tried to belittle the importance of single combat at Rome. Thus G. Dumézil alleged that the Romans fought few single combats and that this was significant for their outlook upon war,<sup>1</sup> while R. Bloch described the duels in the seventh book of Livy as 'un mode de combat absolument étranger à la tradition romaine, mais auquel les Romains ont été contraints par les habitudes et par les défis des Celtes'.<sup>2</sup> W. V. Harris is the only scholar to have understood the importance of monomachy in the Roman Republic, but even he has not assembled all the evidence necessary for an accurate assessment of the phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> This essay is intended to provide a full treatment and thus to make some contribution in a limited but interesting area to our understanding of Roman attitudes to warfare. I have included a list and discussion of all instances of single combat from the Roman Republic which I have discovered and have argued that the custom continued from prehistoric times at least to 45 B.C. Then the function of single combat at Rome is compared with its function in various primitive societies and in Ancient Greece. This makes clear some peculiarities in the Roman evidence and allows one to argue that a correct understanding of single combat can help to illuminate the wider theme of the relative importance of corporate solidarity and individual initiative in the Roman army. Finally, there is a discussion of single combat from the point of view of the individual.

The main concern of this essay is with those formal situations in which a champion from one army challenges one of his opponents to a duel and in which the two armies are not normally engaged in fighting at the time and thus watch the spectacle. That the Romans placed in a different category those duels which came about as a result of a challenge is shown by e.g. Val. Max. 3.2.24 'sex et xxx spolia ex hoste retulisse, quorum in numero octo fuisse <eorum>, cum quibus inspectante utroque exercitu ex prouocatione dimicasset' and Gell. 2.11.3 'spolia militaria habuit multiuga, in his prouocatoria pleraque'. The well known Biblical story of David and Goliath provides a precise model. It is important to emphasise that there is a fundamental difference between this kind of conflict and the situation where two noted warriors clash in the

\* My interest in single combat was first aroused by reading Livy, but the stimulus to write on this topic came from a suggestion of Professor W. V. Harris (see *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327–70 B.C.* [1979], 39 n. 1). An earlier version of this paper was read by Mr M. H. Crawford, Dr T. J. Cornell, Professor Harris, Dr J. G. W. Henderson and Dr P. C. Millett. I am grateful to them for their helpful suggestions (and also to all others who have discussed single combat with me), but it should not be assumed that they agree with all that I have written. I am especially indebted to Dr Henderson for the loan of his own copy of his unpublished D.Phil. thesis.

<sup>1</sup> *La Religion Romaine Archaïque* (1966), 212 = *Archaic Roman Religion* [trans. P. Krapp] (1970), i. 210 'single combats are exceptional'.

<sup>2</sup> J. Bayet and R. Bloch, *Tite-Live Histoire Romaine Tome vii* (1968), 109.

<sup>3</sup> *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327–70 B.C.* (1979), 38–9.

course of battle as, for instance, in Livy's account of the death of C. Flaminius.<sup>4</sup> The boundaries, however, should not be drawn too firmly since in some battles champions have sought out each other deliberately and allowed themselves to be separated from the main course of the fray. Keegan's comment on Agincourt is perceptive and also relevant to Roman battles: 'For it is vital to recognise if we are to understand Agincourt, that all infantry actions, even those fought in the closest of close order, are not, in the last resort, combats of mass against mass, but the sum of many combats of individuals'.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the distinction between the formal duel and the chance encounter is still meaningful.

We may turn now to the examples of single combat from the period of the Roman Monarchy and from the Republic. The opportunity is taken to discuss the reliability of the evidence and to make comments on some interesting features of the individual duels. Harris argued that 'combat-by-champions was an important tradition at Rome which was still alive in the second century. Scipio Aemilianus is the last known monomachist'.<sup>6</sup> Yet it will be shown not only that single combat was thriving in the second century but also that it continued for over a century after Scipio's fight at Intercatia.

(1) In Roman legend Tullus Hostilius agreed with Mettius Fufetius, the king of Alba Longa, that their states should combine. To decide which state should be master the three brothers Horatii and the three brothers Curiatii fought in triple combat. Livy states that it was uncertain which family came from which state.<sup>7</sup> The Romans were victorious and after a few mishaps Alba became Roman. This story cannot be regarded as historical because of the folk-tale motif of the triple combat and because Alba Longa probably never existed.<sup>8</sup>

(2) L. Siccus Dentatus (tribune of the plebs in 454 B.C.) is alleged to have fought eight or nine duels in the early fifth century. The career of Siccus is related at length by Dionysius, and though one may suspect that the detail is no more than plausible invention on the part of various annalists, Siccus himself may well have existed, and the accounts of his exploits may be used to illustrate later Roman attitudes.<sup>9</sup>

(3) At 3.60.3 (449 B.C.) Livy writes 'hostes medium inter bina castra spatium acie instructa complebant, prouocantibusque ad proelium responsum nemo reddebat'. It is unlikely that these details have any authentic basis in fact, but they may be used to show how Livy visualised a battle scene and the singular 'nemo' coupled with 'prouocantibus' strongly suggests that he was thinking of single combat.

(4) Some authorities believed that in 431 B.C. A. Postumius Tubertus killed his son because he left the line of battle. Though the language of Livy and Diodorus is ambiguous, it is possible that they envisaged the younger Postumius leaving the ranks to fight a duel. The whole story is of very doubtful authenticity, and the similarities with the story of the *imperia Manliana* have made scholars at least from Livy onwards suspicious.<sup>10</sup>

(5) At 5.19.9 (396 B.C.) Livy writes 'Inde ad Veios exercitus ductus, densioraque castella facta, et a procursationibus quae multum temere inter murum ac uallum fiebant, edicto ne quis iniussu pugnaret, ad opus milites traducti' and at 7.12.12 (358) 'His consiliis dictator bellum trahebat grauemque edixerat poenam, si quis iniussu in hostem pugnasset'. Again one should have no confidence in these details, but it does look as though Livy was thinking in terms of single combat.

(6) T. Manlius Torquatus. In an exploit variously dated to 367 or 361 Manlius slew a Gaul

<sup>4</sup> 22.6.2-4.

<sup>5</sup> J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (1976), 100.

<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit. above.

<sup>7</sup> 1.24.1 'tamen in re tam clara nominum error manet, utrius populi Horatii, utrius Curiatii fuerint'.

<sup>8</sup> On the Horatii and Curiatii see in particular F. Münzer, *RE* iv. 1830-1 and viii. 2321-7 and also Ogilvie on Liv. 1.24.1-26.14. Apart from Livy there is a long narrative at Dion. Hal. 3.13.1-22.10.

<sup>9</sup> See DH 10.37.3, Val. Max. 3.2.24, Plin. *nat.* 7.101, Gell. 2.11.3 and Fest. 208 L.; also Münzer, *RE* ii<sup>A</sup>. 2189-90 and the discussion below.

<sup>10</sup> See Diod. 12.64.3, Liv. 4.29.5-6, Gell. 1.13.7, 17.21.17; also A. M. Snodgrass, *JHS* 95 (1965), 119-20.

in single combat. This tale seems to be authentic. Although it is conceivable that it arose as a false explanation of the *cognomen* 'Torquatus', the story is deep-rooted and is also the most probable explanation of the name.<sup>11</sup>

(7) M. Valerius Corvus. In 349 Valerius defeated another Gaul in single combat and it was alleged that because he received assistance from a raven which pecked the face of his opponent he adopted the name *Coruus*.<sup>12</sup> It need not be doubted that Valerius really did kill a Gaul, but one may question whether the annalists have told the story correctly. For Gallic helmets regularly had animals or birds on top<sup>13</sup> and the capture of one of these might have led easily to the *cognomen* *Coruus*. The story of the raven will then be a facile secondary tradition of a kind not uncommon in the works of the annalists.<sup>14</sup> There is, however, an alternative explanation which though less likely cannot be eliminated. In the museum at Florence there are urns<sup>15</sup> carrying representations of a bird pecking out the eye of a warrior dressed in Greek hoplite armour. Furthermore, Vergil's description of the descent of the Dira at the end of the *Aeneid* has thematic similarities to the story of Valerius and the Gaul: (12.865–8) 'hanc uersa in faciem Turni se pestis ob ora fertque refertque sonans clipeumque euerberat alis. | illi membra nouus soluit formidine torpor, | arrectaeque horrore comae et uox faucibus haesit'. Thus it may be that a theme from Italian legend has been attached to the exploits of Valerius. Yet this hypothesis seems rather too involved.<sup>16</sup>

(8) T. Manlius Torquatus. Riled by the abuse of the Latin Geminus Maecius, this son of the first Torquatus is supposed to have fought in single combat with the Latin. His father, however, killed him for breaking ranks against orders. One might feel that it is suspicious to have both father and son engaging in monomachy, but this story is also deep-rooted and the legend of the *imperia Manliana* must have come from somewhere.<sup>17</sup>

(9) The origin of the name Drusus is explained at Suet. *Tib.* 3.2 'Drusus hostium duce Drauso cominus trucidato sibi posterisque suis cognomen inuenit'. It is possible that the first Drusus gained the name for killing the Gallic chieftain in the normal course of a battle, but a single combat seems more probable. The date of the exploit cannot be ascertained, though one should think perhaps of M. Livius Denther, consul in 302 B.C.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The principal sources for the exploit of Manlius are Quadr. fr. 10 (Peter), Liv. 7.9.6–10.4, DH 14.12, Zon. 7.24. Others are listed by T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* [henceforth *MRR*] (1951), i. 119. On the duels of Torquatus and Valerius Corvus with their respective Gauls see Bayet-Bloch, op. cit. (n. 2), 108–17 (to be used with caution) and J.-P. Neraudeau in *Mélanges... J. Heurgon* (1976), 685–94, who discusses Manlius in connection with the *iuuentus* in the Early Republic. The accounts of Livy and Quadrigarius have often been compared; in addition to Neraudeau see for example R. Heinze, *Die Augusteische Kultur* (1930), 97–102 = E. Burck (ed.), *Wege zu Livius* (1967), 378–9, K. Büchner, *Römische Literaturgeschichte*<sup>3</sup> (1962), 360–5 = Burck, op. cit., 380–2, T. J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History* (1977), 224–6 and J. P. Lipovsky, *A Historiographical Study of Livy Books Six to Ten* (1981), 95.

<sup>12</sup> See *MRR* i. 129. The main sources are Liv. 7.26.1–10, DH 15.1.1–4, Zon. 7.25 and Gell. 9.11.1–10 = Quadr. fr. 12 P (which, however, should not be ascribed to Quadrigarius). N. Terzaghi, *St. Etr.* 8 (1934), 157–64, argued that in earlier versions of the story the bird was not made to peck the Gaul and that the references to this in the fragment ascribed wrongly to Quadrigarius are interpolations by Gellius from a later account. Since there are no inconsistencies to be explained away this is all special pleading. Still more incredible is his attempt to link Rutilius Rufus with the formation of the story.

<sup>13</sup> See Diod. 5.30.2 *κράνη δὲ χαλκᾷ περιτίθενται μεγάλας ἑξοχὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἔχοντα καὶ παμμεγέθη φαντασίαν ἐπιφέροντα τοῖς χρωμένοις· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ πρόσκειται συμφυῆ κέρατα, τοῖς δὲ ὀρέων ἢ τετραπόδων ζῶων ἐκτετυπωμένοι προτομαί*. Sil. 5.132–6 describes animals on a Gallic helmet (on this passage see J. Nicol, *The Historical and Geographical Sources Used by Silius Italicus* [1936], 156). Note also R. Bloch, *REL* 47 bis (1969), 165–72 and L. J. F. Keppie, *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy 47–14 B.C.* (1983), 30.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. E. Gabba, *JRS* 31 (1981), 61.

<sup>15</sup> Nos. 74–232 and 75–509; illustrations in Bayet-Bloch, op. cit. (n. 2), figs 1 and 2 and Terzaghi, op. cit. (n. 12), 163. For further discussion in the context of the legend of Aeneas and Turnus, see J. P. Small, *AJA* 78 (1974), 49–54 and *Studies related to the Theban Cycle on Late Etruscan Urns* (1981), 116–21.

<sup>16</sup> Rightly rejected by Terzaghi; the idea was developed by Bloch, op. cit. (n. 2), 113–17.

<sup>17</sup> The main sources are Liv. 8.7.1–22, App. *Samn.* 3, Dio fr. 35.2, Zon. 7.26; see further *MRR* i. 136–7, F. Münzer, *RE* xiv. 1187–8 and R. G. M. Nisbet, *CQ* 9 (1959), 73–4.

<sup>18</sup> See F. Münzer, *RE* xiii. 853–4.

(10) Plutarch stated that the great M. Claudius Marcellus (cos. I 222 B.C.) fought many single combats (on his *spolia opima* see below)<sup>19</sup> and Silius made Marcellus challenge Hannibal to single combat during his famous victory at Nola; this is fanciful (see nos. 12 and 13 below on Silius).<sup>20</sup>

(11) M. Servilius Geminus Pulex (cos. 202) claimed to have fought no fewer than twenty-three duels; presumably these were in the twenty-five years or so before his consulate.<sup>21</sup>

(12) In his account of the Ticinus, Silius Italicus made P. Cornelius Scipio, the consul for 218, engage the Gallic chieftain Crixus in single combat.<sup>22</sup> Obviously this is not historical, but in many ways the duel is narrated in a fashion more reminiscent of Livian than epic duels and it may be used as further evidence that such encounters (particularly with Gauls) were believed by Roman writers to have been standard in the Middle Republic. Indeed no Roman writer had a more sensitive feel for the traditions of his fatherland than Silius.<sup>23</sup>

(13) Later, during his description of the Ticinus, in a recreation of the fight between the Horatii and the Curiatii, he records the clash of three Italian and three Spartan brothers.<sup>24</sup>

(14) At Liv. 23.16.4 the *codex Puteaneus*, our sole authority, reads 'proelia hinc parua inter urbem castraque et uario euentu fiebant, quia duces (sc. Hannibal et Marcellus) nec prohibere paucos temere procantis nec dare signum uniuersae pugnae uolebant'. If one follows the Oxford text in adopting 'prouocantis', a conjecture in the Medicean codex, then there is another reference to single combat here. Luchs, however, conjectured 'procursantis', and this is probably what Livy wrote. For though 'prouocantis' is diplomatically easier (*saltus oculi* because of the two 'o's) it does not give entirely apt sense. 'Procursantis' is excellent in this respect; compare in particular 5.19.9 'procursationibus quae multae temere inter murum ac uallum fiebant' ('temere' goes far less well with 'prouocantis'). 22.16.2, 23.40.9, 27.2.11 and 41.5 are also closely parallel.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, it may be that Livy envisaged single combat when he wrote 'procursantis'; certainly it was in contexts like these that single combat occurred.

(15) In 215 Claudius Asellus was challenged by the Campanian Cerrinus Vibellius Taurea to single combat. The Campanian, however, lost his nerve and fled.<sup>26</sup>

(16) A fragment of Quadrigarius<sup>27</sup> appears to refer to a fight between the same Taurea and a Roman or Latin called Artorius: 'Artorius Taureae dextrum humerum sauciat atque ita resiliuit'. This encounter need not have taken place in the formal context of a duel, but it does seem probable that Quadrigarius was describing another instance of single combat involving Taurea.<sup>28</sup>

(17) T. Quinctius Crispinus killed his *hospes* (for the significance of this see no. 21 below), the Campanian Badius, after he had been challenged to a fight outside Capua in 211.<sup>29</sup>

(18) Appian states that many single combats were fought around Capua in 211 (though he may only have had evidence for the duels of Claudius and Quinctius).<sup>30</sup>

(19) In an entirely fanciful episode Appian made Scipio Africanus and Hannibal engage in single combat at Zama in order to settle the outcome of the battle. The attempt was abortive.<sup>31</sup>

(20) In 151/50 Scipio Aemilianus, then a military tribune, defeated an enemy chieftain at Intercatia in single combat.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Marc. 2.1 Μάρκελλος δὲ πρὸς οὐδὲν μὲν ἦν μάχης εἶδος ἀργὸς οὐδὲ ἀνάσκητος, αὐτὸς δ' ἐαυτοῦ κράτιστος ἐν τῷ μονομαχεῖν γενόμενος οὐδεμίαν πρόκλησιν ἔφυγε, πάντας δὲ τοὺς προκαλεσαμένους ἀπέκτεινεν. <sup>20</sup> 12.197–8.

<sup>21</sup> See Liv. 45.39.16, Plut. *Aem.* 31.2, M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (1974), i. 289.

<sup>22</sup> 4.264–310. Note also 5.137–9 (referring to the helmet of Flaminius): 'nobile Gargeni spoliū, quod rege superbus | Boiorum caeso capiti illacerabile uictor | aptarat, pugnasque decus portabat in omnes'. This may provide further evidence for Silius' understanding of the nature of the Gallic wars.

<sup>23</sup> However, the view of Nicol, op. cit. (n. 13), 155 that the abuse spoken by Crixus at 279–81 represents Silius' ethnographical research (in the passage cited below Diodorus records this Gallic boasting and it was probably to be found in Poseidonius) seems fanciful, since such invective is regular in epic. Does the reply of Scipio (286–8) come from ethnographical research?

<sup>24</sup> 4.355–400.

<sup>25</sup> 22.44.4, 25.9.7 and 28.33.3 are somewhat less close.

<sup>26</sup> See Liv. 23.46.12–47.8, Sil. 13.142–78 and App. *Han.* 161 (who dates the episode to 211).

<sup>27</sup> 56 P.

<sup>28</sup> See also C. Nicolet, *MEFRA* 74 (1962), 495.

<sup>29</sup> See Liv. 25.18.4–15. The story is told differently by Val. Max. 5.1.3.

<sup>30</sup> *Han.* 160.

<sup>31</sup> *Lib.* 188–9.

<sup>32</sup> For the sources see Walbank on Pol. 35.5.1–2 and A. E. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus* (1967), 46 n. 4.

(21) Q. Occius Achilles, a legate in Spain in 143, fought at least two duels.<sup>33</sup> In one he killed his opponent, but in the other he spared the noble Tyresius and agreed to enter into *hospitium* with him when peace was restored. This was most unusual, and is the only instance in the Roman evidence of a defeated champion being spared. The new ties of *hospitium* are also of interest: in the story of Quinticius Crispinus and Badius (no. 17) we find precisely the reverse, where both Livy and Valerius Maximus stress how Badius went out of his way to make a formal renunciation of his *hospitium*.<sup>34</sup> There are some illuminating parallels from other cultures: on two occasions in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle-Raid of Cooley*) friendship has to be renounced before Cú Chulainn can be fought in single combat,<sup>35</sup> and the former bond between Ferdia and Cú Chulainn makes their great fight all the more moving. In the *Iliad* Hector and Ajax exchange gifts at the end of their indecisive duel,<sup>36</sup> whereas Diomedes and Glaucus<sup>37</sup> refuse to fight because of their ties but rather exchange gifts and become guest-friends.<sup>38</sup>

(22–3) Plutarch suggests that Marius fought in single combat in his youth.<sup>39</sup> Later, however, he found it prudent to decline a challenge from one of the Teutones.<sup>40</sup>

(24) In 101. L. Opimius killed one of the Cimbri in single combat.<sup>41</sup>

(25) Appian records how in 89 while Sulla was assaulting Nola a large champion came forth from the contingent of Gauls aiding the rebel insurgents and challenged someone from the Roman army to fight him. The challenge was accepted by a Mauretanian, who killed the Gaul.<sup>42</sup> It has been argued that some fragments of Sisenna refer to this duel.<sup>43</sup> This thesis is attractive and may be true, but there is insufficient evidence to establish it.

(26) There are three known instances of single combat or proposed single combat in the Sertorian war. Sertorius himself challenged Metellus Pius to fight but without success.<sup>44</sup>

(27) The remarkable son of the gladiator Tritanus, who was serving in Pompey's army, challenged a barbarian and did not bother to use arms but frog-marched him back to the Roman camp.<sup>45</sup>

(28) A humorous poem of Phaedrus records another instance of single combat where a *cinaedus* in Pompey's army proved to be an unexpected hero.<sup>46</sup>

(29) In 51 B.C. during the Gallic War C. Volusenus Quadratus and Commius of the Atrebatas fought on horseback in what almost amounted to a formal duel.<sup>47</sup>

(30) The last recorded instance of single combat occurred in the Munda campaign of 45 B.C. when the Pompeian Antistius Turpio and the Caesarian Q. Pompeius Níger fought inconclusively.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See Val. Max. 3.2.21 and Liv. *ep. Oxy.* 53–4 (slightly divergent) and, for discussion, E. Kornemann, *Die neue Livius-Epitome* (1904), 59–60 and Münzer, *RE* xvii. 1763. There is, however, no need to believe that these stories about Occius were invented under the influence of the career of Siccius Dentatus (no. 2): such influence is more probable from the historical figure to the legendary.

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. Liv. 25.18.9 'si parum publicis foederibus ruptis dirempta simul et priuata iura esse putet, Badium Campanum T. Quinctio Crispino Romano palam duobus exercitibus audientibus renuntiare hospitium'.

<sup>35</sup> See Kinsella, *op. cit.* (n. 79), 130 and 181 'Then they bitterly reproached each other and they broke off their friendship'.

<sup>36</sup> 7.299–307.

<sup>37</sup> 6.119–236.

<sup>38</sup> I am grateful to Mr G. Herman, who is writing a book on guest-friendship, for discussing this material with me.

<sup>39</sup> *Mar.* 3.2.

<sup>40</sup> Frontin. *strat.* 4.7.5.

<sup>41</sup> Ampel. 22.4 'Lucius Opimius sub Lutatio Catulo consule in saltu Tridentino prouocatore Cimbrium interfecit'.

<sup>42</sup> *Civ.* 1.50.219–20.

<sup>43</sup> See G. Barabino in *Studi Noniani*, ed. F. Bertini and G. Barabino (1967), i. 138–41 and E. D. Rawson, *CQ* 29 (1979), 339. The relevant fragments are 70, 96, 121 P; cf. also 71 and 72.

<sup>44</sup> Plut. *Sert.* 13.3–4.

<sup>45</sup> See F. Münzer, *RE* vii<sup>A</sup>. 241, for the sources, which stem from Varro, who served with Pompey. Pliny describes the incident thus: (*nat.* 7.81) 'atque etiam hostem ab eo ex prouocatione dimicantem inermi dextera superatum et postremo correptum uno digito in castra tralatum'.

<sup>46</sup> *Per.* 8. By far the best treatment of this incident is to be found in the unpublished Oxford doctoral thesis of J. G. W. Henderson, *Anecdote and Satire in Phaedrus* (1976), 370–85. This is also the best treatment of the Latin literary sources for single combat, and I owe much to it. Henderson has no difficulty in demolishing on pp. 372–3 the fantasy of L. Havet, *RPh* 22 (1898), 177–8, that this tale is based upon the story of the son of Tritanus.

<sup>47</sup> Hirt. *Gall.* 8.48.1–7.

<sup>48</sup> [Caes.] *Hispan.* 25.3–5.

(31) Finally, in a declamation of the imperial age ascribed to Quintilian, the *declamator* has concocted a law insisting that all challenges to single combat be accepted and a situation in which a commander refused to accept a challenge from his own son, who had deserted to the enemy.<sup>49</sup>

As was noted at the outset, the main concern of this essay is with duels where there was a formal challenge. Thus the examples of duels involving the *spolia opima* are excluded as formally distinct. For Cossus did not kill Tolumnius<sup>50</sup> nor Crassus Deldo<sup>51</sup> in a formal duel. Marcellus killed Britomarus in a more exposed fight, but again the duel was informal.<sup>52</sup> From the unreliable accounts of early Roman history in Livy one might add, for example, his accounts of the death of the first Brutus, of the behaviour of the Fabii before the Allia and of Q. Aulus Cerretanus at Satricula.<sup>53</sup> The heroic fight of M. Aquilius against the slave leader Athenion and the challenge of the Lucanian M. Lamponius to P. Licinius Crassus also appear to belong here.<sup>54</sup> This is not to deny that notice was taken of heroic feats in combat outside the formal duel: they too illustrate the military ethos of the Romans, but are less relevant to an assessment of monomachy.

The passages collected above prove that single combat was far more common at Rome than has been generally realised, but it is difficult to ascertain precisely how common it was. Though the evidence is not decisive, a coherent argument can be constructed to support the view that in the Middle Republic, at least, single combats occurred each year. If Marcellus fought many at the end of the third century and Servilius Geminus fought twenty-three, it would be surprising if others did not indulge themselves in this way several times over. We hear only of Artorius, Claudius Asellus and Quinctius Crispinus, but there must have been many others. Moreover, Livy tells us that when there was a shortage of senators after Cannae it was agreed to recruit from various categories, including those 'qui spolia ex hoste fixa domi haberent'.<sup>55</sup> One reason for having *spolia* was to have fought successfully in single combat.<sup>56</sup> There is also some evidence from Plautus, who amongst much other military language uses the imagery of single combat; note *Bacch.* 966–8 'poste cum magnifico milite, urbis uerbis qui inermis capit, | confluxi atque hominem reppuli; dein pugnam conserui seni: | eum ego adeo in uno mendacio deuici, uno ictu extempulo | cepi spolia', *Trin.* 722–4 'at aliquem ad regem in saginam eru' †sese coniecit† meus, | credo ad summos bellatores acrem fugitorem fore | et capturum spolia ibi illum qui meo ero aduersus uenerit' and *Truc.* 524 'spolia capiat'.<sup>57</sup> Thus it is conceivable that the period of the Hannibalic War saw several single combats each year. For other periods our evidence is less full, but it would again be surprising (particularly in the years in which the Gauls and Ligurians were fought) if single combats did not occur with regularity. At any rate it is clear that Harris was wrong to believe that Scipio Aemilianus was the last

<sup>49</sup> [Quint.] *decl. min.* 317 (pp. 246–9 Ritter).

<sup>50</sup> Liv. 4.19.1–6 (almost certainly annalistic reconstruction). However, Propertius (4.10.23–38) describes the exploit of Cossus in terms of a formal duel and Valerius Maximus does the same for Romulus (3.2.3; contrast Liv. 1.10.4 and DH 2.33.2).

<sup>51</sup> Dio 51.24.4; see also E. Groag, *RE* xiii<sup>1</sup>. 276–7.

<sup>52</sup> See the graphic description at Plut. *Marc.* 6.1–8.6, which may well go back to an eye-witness account.

<sup>53</sup> 2.6.6–9, 5.36.6–7 and 9.22.4–11 (where Livy's whole account should be rejected as unhistorical; see e.g. G. De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani* [1907], ii. 318–23 and E. T. Salmon, *Samnium and the Samnites* [1967], 233–36).

<sup>54</sup> Diod. 36.10.1 and 37.23; see also J. Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (1974), 77–8.

<sup>55</sup> 23.23.6.

<sup>56</sup> See below n. 141.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. also *Men.* 184–8, *Poen.* 470–3 and *Truc.* 621–9.

known monomachist. It should be noted, however, that after Aemilianus only one *nobilis* (L. Opimius, no. 24) is known to have fought in single combat. Perhaps this should be connected with the changing attitude to warfare amongst the Roman aristocracy for which Harris has argued.<sup>58</sup> The reasons why single combat was so prevalent at Rome will be discussed later; here a few remarks may be made about the origins of the practice.

Since single combat was common in the time of the Middle Republic both at Rome and in Campania<sup>59</sup> and since it is a feature of primitive warfare (see below), it is hard to escape the conclusion that the tradition of single combat at Rome went back far into prehistory. Thus the view of Bloch (quoted on the first page of this essay) that it was a custom adopted from the Gauls seems strange and implausible.

Examination of the ancient ritual of the *spolia opima* may reveal something about this earliest period. As was noted above, our sources record that the *spolia opima* were deposited in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius only three times (by Romulus, Cossus and Marcellus), though they were claimed by Crassus. The interpretation of Fest. 202-4 L. (the only useful evidence for the ceremony) is controversial, but the purpose of the ritual was probably to purify the *spoliator* from blood-guilt.<sup>60</sup> It was suggested long ago that the ceremony of the dedication of the *spolia opima* was the earliest form of Roman triumph,<sup>61</sup> and Picard and Bonfante Warren have provided fascinating reconstructions of the ritual. Yet the evidence may be pressed still further. As will be shown below, Republican Rome differed from many societies which used the institution of single combat in that it did not allow the outcome of wars to be decided by champions. Here, it may be argued, in the dedication of the *spolia opima* one finds evidence for a time in Rome's history when her wars *were* decided by her champion fighting an enemy champion. When the Roman was victorious he won the *spolia opima*: for it is inconceivable that the ceremony was performed only once in the period between Romulus and Marcellus.

A more sophisticated stage of social organisation is represented by a state whose champion is not the supreme ruler; perhaps this stage at Rome may be discerned in the story of Tullus Hostilius and the Horatii. Thereafter the institution continued, though there is no evidence for wars having been decided by single combat. For in the period prior to the introduction of the hoplite phalanx battles must have been full of the *aristeiai* of individual aristocrats.<sup>62</sup> It is very significant that single combat was common in Campania in this period, as both the Roman evidence (see nos. 15-18 above) and the numerous depictions of duels on wall-painting from Campania and nearby Paestum make abundantly clear.<sup>63</sup> This suggests that the institution was quite

<sup>58</sup> Op. cit. (n. 3), 37-8 and 252.

<sup>59</sup> The Campanian evidence is discussed below.

<sup>60</sup> For the reconstruction of the primitive ritual, see G. Charles-Picard, *Les Trophées romains* (1957), 130-3 and, especially, L. Bonfante Warren, *JRS* 60 (1970), 50-7; *contra* H. S. Versnel, *Triumphus* (1970), 304-13.

<sup>61</sup> See e.g. W. Warde Fowler, *CR* 30 (1916), 153, Picard, Bonfante Warren and Versnel loc. cit. The antiquity of the ceremony was affirmed by K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (1960), 126.

<sup>62</sup> The literature on the change from the aristocratic mode of fighting to hoplite warfare is enormous; see e.g. A. D. Momigliano, *JRS* 53 (1963), 117-21, 56 (1966), 16-24, A. M. Snodgrass, *JHS* 85 (1965), 116-20 and G. V. Sumner, *JRS* 60 (1970), 67-78.

<sup>63</sup> This evidence is assembled and used to illuminate Campanian attitudes to warfare by C. Nicolet, *MEFRA* 74 (1962), 463-517, but he was wrong to argue that the artistic evidence pointed to a lost tradition of epic poetry. For a more sophisticated treatment of the Campanian cavalry placing them in their social setting, see M. W. Frederiksen, *DdA* 2 (1968), 3-31 (and cf. *Campania* [1984], 143-8).

widespread in Italy in archaic times and sets the scene for the evidence from the Middle and Late Republic collected above and analysed below.

Polybius stated that Romans fought in single combat both to win a reputation for bravery and to decide the outcome of a battle. This is paradoxical since if one leaves on one side Appian's story about Scipio Africanus (no. 19) and Silius' poetic fantasy about Marcellus and Hannibal (no. 10) there are no examples apart from the mythical story of the Horatii and Curiatii in which the outcome of a battle depended upon the outcome of a duel. This, however, is not surprising: one would not expect a city-state, especially one which had a successful army, to decide its wars in so hazardous a manner. Yet Polybius' remark would seem very apt were it made about several societies more primitive than Rome where single combat was practised. In what follows the function of single combat in a number of these societies will be discussed in order to show how Roman practice differed. Evidence from Greece will also be discussed in order to set up another paradox: whereas in Greece the hoplite reforms eventually put an end to monomachy, it survived comparable reforms at Rome.

One obvious function of single or limited combat was to save bloodshed by letting the outcome of a battle be decided by a limited number of contestants. This aspect has been emphasised by Davie in a very useful synthesis and discussion of the role of champions in primitive societies.<sup>64</sup> He compares the phenomenon with the sparing of women and children, the refusal to use poison, the prohibition of fraud, the recognition that some people might wish to stay neutral in a dispute, the granting of inviolability to ambassadors – all these are examples of the mitigation of war. Both aspects will be amply illustrated in the ethnographical material which follows, but it is also worth while to compare other spheres of human action. For the use of advocates in courts of law is a comparable example of an expert championing someone unable to help him/herself. This is particularly the case for the Middle Ages, where champions did decide many cases by fighting,<sup>65</sup> a practice also found amongst the Comanche Indians.<sup>66</sup>

It will become apparent that the practice is in no way confined to the Mediterranean basin or to the Middle East, whence it is most familiar to classical and Biblical scholars, but is found all over the world. The Botocudos of Brazil make a suitable starting point.<sup>67</sup> Amongst these folk the combats of champions fulfilled both the functions outlined above. For when one clan of Botocudos trespassed on territory which another clan believed to be its own the two parties tried to settle their dispute by using champions, though sometimes their duels degenerated into a free-for-all. As for the social position of the champion, Keane comments 'A successful champion often becomes the chief or headman of the community, but he enjoys little personal authority, nor is the office hereditary, so that it is difficult to conceive of a lower state of social organisation'.

The practice of the Maoris has been more extensively recorded and discussed.<sup>68</sup> For combat-by-champions was a very regular feature of Maori warfare. Best has written

<sup>64</sup> M. R. Davie, *The Evolution of War: A Study of its Role in Early Societies* (1929), 176–95 (especially 177–9). The following paragraphs draw heavily upon this work.

<sup>65</sup> See H. C. Lea in P. Bohannon (ed.) *Law and Warfare: Studies in the Anthropology of Conflict* (1967), 233–53.

<sup>66</sup> E. A. Hoebel in Bohannon, op. cit., 195–201.

<sup>67</sup> See A. H. Keane, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 13 (1884), 207.

<sup>68</sup> See E. Best, *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (henceforth *JPS*) 12 (1903), 37–9, 13 (1904), 75, *The Children of the Mist* [Memoirs of the Polynesian Society 6] (1925), 334–5, E. Tregear, *The Maori Race* (1904), 368–70, T. W. Downes, *JPS* 38 (1929), 164, P. H. Buck, *The Coming of the Maori* (1950), 399, L. G. Kelly, *Taimui: The Story of Hoturoa and his Descendants* [Memoirs



When two hostile forces met on the field of war it often occurred that a chief would step forward and challenge some noted *toa*, or brave, of the enemy to single combat. It sometimes happened that a noted warrior would thus vanquish in succession several of the enemy, and that the latter would then retreat, leaving their foe in possession of the field; thus the main body of both sides would have taken no part in the fray.<sup>69</sup>

Though some duels may have been fought chivalrously with the challenger giving the choice of weapon to the challenged,<sup>70</sup> in many cases it seems that anything was allowed such as pulling hair<sup>71</sup> or throwing sand into an opponent's face.<sup>72</sup> Maori champions gained great repute amongst both their own folk and the enemy. Thus the champions of opposing groups would seek out each other to see who was the more proficient<sup>73</sup> – a practice which is also found in the Roman evidence. The following description of a siege by Best<sup>74</sup> is a good example of a typical incident involving Maori champions:

The fort was besieged by a force of Rongo-whakaata and Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti. This was about the beginning of the nineteenth century. The siege began just after the *kumara* crop was planted, and was not raised until the crops were fit for eating. Poriro, one of the garrison, sallied forth one day, and engaged in single combat with Mou, chief of the attacking force. Mou caught his opponent by his long hair and was taking him away when a sister of his captive attacked him and struck him down with a stone.

The Thlinket tribes of Alaska used monomachy to settle disputes both between two tribes and between two members of the same tribe.<sup>75</sup> When stronger groups of Eskimo met each other, champions were chosen and the losing side gave way. These fights, however, did not run to bloodshed.<sup>76</sup> Nor amongst the Australian Aborigines was blood always shed.<sup>77</sup> They used trial by single combat both in criminal cases and also when a conflict developed between different groups. Dawson described their practice as follows: 'Quarrels between tribes are sometimes settled by single combat between the chiefs, and the result is accepted as final'. He also described how instead of using one person as a champion each side might select an equal number of warriors. These were painted and dressed in special clothes. Genuine fighting, however, rarely took place unless the contestants were urged on by the women who had assembled to watch. Even then the result was only that individuals would come forward and duel. After that the women themselves would fight, often very viciously.

Monomachy was also practised by the Celts. Many of the known instances of single combat involving Romans were fought against Gallic or Iberian Celts (nos. 6, 7, 9, 12, 20, 21, 25, 27–9 above), and the custom is noted in the Gallic ethnography of Diodorus, which is usually held to be a selection from the personal observations of Poseidonius (5.29.2–3):

κατὰ δὲ τὰς παρατάξεις εἰώθασιν προάγειν τῆς παρατάξεως καὶ προκαλεῖσθαι τὸν ἀντιτεταγμένων τοὺς ἀρίστους εἰς μονομαχίαν, προανασεύοντες τὰ ὄπλα καὶ καταπληττόμενοι τοὺς ἐναντίους. ὅταν δὲ τις ὑπακούσῃ πρὸς τὴν μάχην, τὰς τε τῶν προγόνων ἀνδραγαθίας ἐξυμνοῦσι καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀρετὰς προφέρονται, καὶ τὸν ἀντιταττόμενον ἐξονεοῦσι καὶ ταπεινοῦσι καὶ τὸ σύνολον τὸ θάρσος τῆς ψυχῆς τοῖς λόγοις προαφαιροῦνται.

of the Polynesian Society 25] (1949), 157–8, A. P. Vayda, *Maori Warfare* [Polynesian Society Monographs 2] (1960), 65–7 = Bohannon, *op. cit.* (n. 65), 370–1.

<sup>69</sup> *JPS* 12 (1903), 37.

<sup>70</sup> Downes, *loc. cit.*, believed this to be the general rule.

<sup>71</sup> See Best quoted below.

<sup>72</sup> Kelly, *loc. cit.* (n. 68).

<sup>73</sup> Buck, *loc. cit.* (n. 68), has a description of one such incident.

<sup>74</sup> *JPS* 13 (1904), 75.

<sup>75</sup> See H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (1875), i. 105–6.

<sup>76</sup> Davie, *op. cit.* (n. 64), 178.

<sup>77</sup> See J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* (1881), 77, A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South East Australia* (1904), 332, Davie, *op. cit.* (n. 64), 178.

Though no. 29 is the nearest one gets to a battle of champions in the *de bello Gallico*, further evidence for Celtic practice may perhaps be sought in Irish saga.<sup>78</sup> Single combat occurs regularly in many of the tales, but nowhere more often than in the most famous of them all, the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, where Cú Chulainn fights innumerable duels at various fords and elsewhere.<sup>79</sup> The Germans were linked closely in culture to the Celts and also practised the custom, as Tacitus attests<sup>80</sup> and as is clear from the Roman fighting against the Cimbri and Teutones (see nos. 23–4 in the list above).

There can be no doubt, however, that the story of David and Goliath as told in *I Samuel* 17 is the most interesting parallel to the Roman evidence. For here we have a story which has been transmitted by means not dissimilar to those which brought the stories of Manlius Torquatus and Valerius Corvus to Livy.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, there are also striking similarities between the narrative of *I Samuel* 17 and Livy's description of how Manlius slew the Gaul. These similarities will be discussed at various points below. Apart from the story of David and Goliath there are further instances of single combat recorded at *II Samuel* 21.18–21:<sup>82</sup>

Some time later war with the Philistines broke out again in Gob: it was then that Sibbechai of Hushah killed Saph, a descendant of the Rephaim. In another war with the Philistines in Gob, Elhanan son of Jair of Bethlehem killed Goliath of Gath, whose spear had a shaft like a weaver's beam. In yet another war in Gath there appeared a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty four in all. He too was descended from Rephaim; and, when he defied Israel, Jonathan son of David's brother Shimeai killed him.<sup>83</sup>

Benaiah also engaged in single and double combat (*II Sam.* 23.20–21):

Benaiah son of Jehoiada, from Kabzeel, was a hero of many exploits. It was he who smote the two champions of Moab, and who went down into a pit and killed a lion on a snowy day. It was he who also killed the Egyptian, a man of striking appearance armed with a spear: he went to meet him with a club, snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own weapon.<sup>84</sup>

Y. Yadin has argued that the contest at the pool recounted at *II Sam.* 2.12–16 refers to combat between twenty-four men (twelve on each side) in an unsuccessful attempt to settle the outcome of a battle.<sup>85</sup> These instances show that the single combat was one place where a Jew could gain the reputation for valour which he needed for political power; it is not surprising that Benaiah rose to be commander of the Kereithites and Pelethites,<sup>86</sup> nor that David became king of Israel. Unfortunately the

<sup>78</sup> I am aware that the historicity of events described in these sagas is the subject of debate. In using the sagas as evidence for the ancient Celtic attitude to monomachy I have adopted a position close to that of e.g. K. H. Jackson, *The Oldest Irish Tradition: A Window on the Iron Age* (1964), especially 30–1, and P. MacCana, *Études Celtiques* 13 (1972/3), 61–119.

<sup>79</sup> See pages 4–5, 27, 28, 32, 37–8, 40–5, 73, 88–101, 111–12, 114, 119–42, 164–7, 168–205 in the translation of T. Kinsella entitled *The Tain* (1969).

<sup>80</sup> Tac. *Germ.* 10.3.

<sup>81</sup> Biblical scholars have tended to concentrate their energies on elucidating the complexities and problems of the tale rather than in considering the function of single combat in Jewish society at the time of Saul and David. For discussion of the story of David and Goliath see e.g. H. W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* [trans. J. W. Bowden] (1964), 142–55, S. J. De Vries, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973), 23–36, H. Jason, *Biblica* 60 (1979), 36–70. A notable exception is R. de Vaux, who has discussed single combat in the *Old Testament* in an article variously reprinted: *Biblica* 40 (1959), 495–508 = *Bible et Orient* (1967), 217–30 = *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* [trans. D. McHugh] (1972), 122–35. I cite the English translation, to which I owe much.

<sup>82</sup> Quotations from the *New English Bible* (1970).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *I Chron.* 20.4–8.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *I Chron.* 11.21–5.

<sup>85</sup> See *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 21 (1948), 110–16.

<sup>86</sup> *II Sam.* 8.18, 20.23.

evidence is not good enough to allow one to argue that single combats were used solely to decide battles or that they were also used, in the Roman manner, as a side-show mostly irrelevant to the outcome of the battle where an individual might display his prowess. Other nations in the Middle East adopted the practice (the Biblical examples involve Philistines, Moabites and Egyptians), and it must have been quite widespread.<sup>87</sup> De Vaux has noted that the Arabs still proposed it when faced with French aggression in Algeria.<sup>88</sup>

The evidence from Ancient Greece is of especial interest because of the close cultural links between Greece and Rome.<sup>89</sup> The most famous examples of single combat in the Greek world are all to be found in the *Iliad*. Indeed in some respects almost all the fighting in the *Iliad* is relevant to the theme of this essay as most battles in the poem consisted of a series of individual clashes between heroes. However, the clash between Paris and Menelaus in Book three is rather different. Here one finds a champion striding out in front of the line of battle challenging a champion of the enemy to come out:

οἱ δ' ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες  
 Τρωσὶν μὲν προμάχιζεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής  
 παρδαλέην ὤμοισιν ἔχων καὶ καμπύλα τόξα  
 καὶ ξίφος, αὐτὰρ ὁ δοῦρε δύω κεκορυθμένα χαλκῷ  
 πάλλων Ἀργείων προκαλίζετο πάντας ἀρίστους  
 ἀντίβιον μαχέσασθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δημοτῇ. (Il. 3.15–20)

and, eventually, after Paris tries to avoid the fight because Menelaus has taken up the challenge it is agreed that the outcome of the war will depend upon the duel. Aphrodite saved Paris and so the war went on, but this should not obscure the fact that the situation is parallel to that in many of the primitive societies discussed above. Also comparable, though the outcome of the war does not depend upon it, is the scene at 7.44–91 where Hector challenges one of the Achaeans to battle. After some hesitation Ajax takes up the challenge, but the single combat is not decisive (92–312). The final clash between Hector and Achilles in Book 22 is rather different, though Homer has invested it with considerable symbolic importance for the outcome of the war.

Examples from later Greek history are comparatively sparse. This is not surprising as the change to hoplite tactics from the aristocratic style of warfare practised in the Dark Age and reflected in Homer did not encourage individualism.<sup>90</sup> According to Armstrong<sup>91</sup> single combat was in regular use in the Dark and Archaic Ages as a means of arbitration. He has listed various instances: the well known duel of Eteocles and Polyneices to decide who was to be king at Thebes, the fight between Hyllus, a Heraclid prince of the Dorians, and Echemus, brother-in-law of Helen,<sup>92</sup> the duels of Oxylus the Aetolian and the Epean Degmenes<sup>93</sup> and of Melanthus and Xanthus.<sup>94</sup> Closer to historical times is the challenge of Phrynon the Athenian to Pittacus to settle the

<sup>87</sup> See de Vaux, *op. cit.* (n. 81), 127–9.

<sup>88</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 81), 129.

<sup>89</sup> There is no synoptic treatment of single combat in Ancient Greece. Note, however, A. M. Armstrong, *GR* 19 (1950), 73–9, J. J. Glück, *AC* 7 (1964), 25–31, B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* [Historia Einzelschriften 21] (1968), V. Ilari, *Guerra e diritto nel mondo antico* (1980), i. 54–5. Hellenistic examples are well discussed by J. Hornblower, *Hieronimus of Cardia* (1981), 194–6.

<sup>90</sup> Much has been written on this change; see e.g. A. M. Snodgrass, *JHS* 85 (1965), 110–22, P. Cartledge, *JHS* 97 (1977), 11–27 and J. B. Salmon, *ibid.* 84–101.

<sup>91</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 89).

<sup>92</sup> See Hes. *fr.* 23 and 176 M-W, *Hdt.* 9.26.3–5, Paus. 1.41.2, 44.10, 4.30.1, 8.5.1, 45.3 and 53.10.

<sup>93</sup> Strab. 8.3.33, Paus. 5.4.2–3.

<sup>94</sup> Strab. 9.1.7, Frontin. *strat.* 2.5.41, Paus. 2.18.9, Polyæn. 1.19.

dispute between Athens and Mytilene over Sigeum and Achilleum by single combat.<sup>95</sup> However, the best known instance for Archaic Greece was the clash of the three hundred Argives and Spartans to decide which state should possess Thyreatis. Herodotus<sup>96</sup> tells us that of the six hundred men two Argives and one Spartan were left at dusk, but that the Spartans claimed victory because their man Othryades did not retire from the field before erecting a trophy. The Argives did not accept this and a full battle ensued, which the Spartans won. This contest stayed long in the consciousness of the Argives, who proposed a rematch during the Peloponnesian war.<sup>97</sup> Somewhat later Herodotus<sup>98</sup> records another instance of single combat during a war between the Perinthians and Paeonians in which a man fought a man, a horse a horse and a dog a dog. The details are self-evidently incredible but the account may be based on enough reliable material to allow the observation that the duels did not settle the dispute. One further example, noted but not given full weight by Armstrong,<sup>99</sup> shows that in Archaic Greece single combat was not used just to settle disputes but was also a practice that allowed individual warriors to gain a reputation for valour: in the war between Athens and Aegina the Argive mercenary Eurybates was successful in three single combats but was killed by the Attic Sophanes in a fourth.<sup>100</sup>

Though one may doubt whether the mythical examples adduced by Armstrong can be given much value as evidence, the quasi-historical examples are of great interest in that they contrast sharply with the evidence from the fifth and fourth centuries – the heyday of the hoplite phalanx –, where there is no evidence for single combat. Thus it does look as though single combat played some role both in limiting warfare and in allowing men to gain a reputation for valour in the pre-hoplite era and in the early days of hoplite warfare. This poses the interesting question of why single combat was not eliminated by the introduction of hoplite warfare in Italy.

The institution reappears in the Hellenistic age. Though he did not fight any formal duels, Alexander the Great often exposed himself to danger in battles, and the narratives of Diodorus and Curtius show us how his exploits grew in the telling. His successors, especially Pyrrhus and Demetrius (who went so far as to use epic invective), indulged themselves in aping the heroic manner. Pyrrhus even engaged in formal duels.<sup>101</sup> This behaviour has been studied penetratingly by Hornblower and there is no need for a detailed discussion here.<sup>102</sup> One piece of evidence, however, should be added: Hiero of Syracuse regularly fought single combats in the third century.<sup>103</sup>

The paucity of examples of single combat from Greece makes an interesting contrast with the abundance of examples from Rome. It is true that the Roman maniples were more flexible than the hoplite phalanx and thus allowed more room for individual initiative. Yet most examples of monomachy are found in the preludes to battles, and there is *a priori* no reason why hoplites should have been excluded absolutely from issuing challenges. Thus one may conclude this survey of comparative evidence from other societies by noting that the Romans differed from others because they did not

<sup>95</sup> Hdt. 5.94.1–2, Strab. 13.1.38, Plut. *mor.* 858a–b, Diog. Laert. 1.74, Polyæn. 1.25.

<sup>96</sup> 1.82.1–8.

<sup>97</sup> In 420 B.C.; see Thuc. 5.41.2. The original contest should be placed at some point in the middle of the sixth century.

<sup>98</sup> 5.1.1–2.1; the date is uncertain but must be before the campaign of Melabazus against the Perinthians.

<sup>99</sup> Op. cit. (n. 89), 78.

<sup>100</sup> Hdt. 6.92.2–3.

<sup>101</sup> Plut. *Pyrrh.* 7.4–5, 24.1–4; 16.8–10 and 30.5–6, though they illustrate Pyrrhus' temperament, are somewhat different.

<sup>102</sup> Op. cit. (n. 89).

<sup>103</sup> See Iust. 23.4.12 'Denique aduersus prouocatores saepe pugnauit semperque uictoriam reportauit'.

use single combat to settle disputes or wars and differed from the Greeks in continuing to employ the device after the end of the age of aristocratic warfare and the introduction of hoplite reforms. It remains to try to explain this.

A plausible explanation may emerge if one considers the problem of the tension in Roman society between the demands of *disciplinamilitaris* and of individual initiative.<sup>104</sup> French scholars have paid most attention to this theme, and long ago G. Dumézil developed his ideas on the opposition of *furor* and *disciplina* in Roman warfare.<sup>105</sup> The ideas of Dumézil were further developed by R. Bloch,<sup>106</sup> who argued that the challenges of the Gauls presented the disciplined Romans with a phenomenon which they had not previously encountered. In consequence the Romans had to adopt something of Gallic individualism when fighting the Gauls. This argument, however, is unlikely to be sound, because, as was observed above, Bloch, like Dumézil, was unaware that single combat existed as a tradition at Rome in its own right, quite independent of the behaviour of the Gauls.<sup>107</sup> The recent thoughts of J.-P. Neraudeau are of greater interest.<sup>108</sup> Neraudeau has argued forcefully for the importance of age grades for our understanding of archaic Roman society, which, he believes, was characterised by a structural polarisation between youth (representing *furor*) and old age (representing *disciplina*). This tension has left its mark on various episodes in Roman history and works of literature; consider for instance the great conflict between L. Papirius Cursor and Q. Fabius Rullianus in 325/4 or the emphasis on *furor* in the *Aeneid*. However, as Roman society developed, the ardour of youth became harnessed: 'le passage de la guerre héroïque à la guerre hoplitique... est clairement exprimé par la tradition latine comme le passage de la règne du *furor* à celui de la *disciplina*'.<sup>109</sup> It is in this context that Neraudeau has discussed single combat. He sees the tales of the two Manlii, father and son, and of Valerius Corvus as illustrating Roman discipline and un-Roman behaviour (represented by the younger Manlius as well as by the Gauls).<sup>110</sup> The story of the younger Manlius shows these tensions well. This is brought out clearly by Livy, who mentions the anger of the *iuuentus* at the behaviour of the elder Manlius.<sup>111</sup> The closeness of the champion to other members of his age group is also brought out, Neraudeau argues, in Livy's adaptation of Quadrigarius for his account of the duel of the elder Manlius.<sup>112</sup> When Livy made Manlius ask permission to fight he showed once more an awareness of this tension.<sup>113</sup> Neraudeau believed that the arrival of the Gauls tightened the bond between the members of the Roman *iuuentus* and made them revert to a more individualistic mode of behaviour.<sup>114</sup>

This thesis demands serious attention, but there are weaknesses in the argument. For instance, Neraudeau, like Dumézil and Bloch, has failed to see that single combat existed at Rome outside the context of the Gallic Wars. Furthermore, his analysis of

<sup>104</sup> For an interesting discussion of this tension in Spartan society, see S. Hodkinson, *Chiron* 13 (1983), 239–81.

<sup>105</sup> *Horace et les Curiaces* (1942), 11–33.

<sup>106</sup> See e.g. Bayet–Bloch, op. cit. (n. 2), 109–13 and *REL* 47 bis (1969), 166–8.

<sup>107</sup> See above.

<sup>108</sup> See 'L'Exploit de Titus Manlius Torquatus' in *Mélanges... J. Heurgon* (1976), 685–94 and *La Jeunesse dans la Littérature et les Institutions de la Rome Républicaine* (1979), especially 249–58.

<sup>109</sup> (1979), 249.

<sup>110</sup> (1979), 249–50.

<sup>111</sup> 8.12.1 'cui uenienti seniores tantum obuiam exisse constat, iuuentutem et tunc et omni uita deinde auersatam eum execratamque'. See (1976), 688.

<sup>112</sup> (1976), *passim*. Note 7.10.1 'diu inter primores iuuenum Romanorum silentium fuit', 10.5 'armant inde iuuenem aequales', 10.12 'Romani alacres ab statione obuiam militi suo progressi... ad dictatorem perducunt'.

<sup>113</sup> 7.10.2–4.

<sup>114</sup> See (1976), 692: 'ensuite l'arrivée des Gaulois suscite des héroïsmes et le retour à des pratiques guerrières fondées sur le *furor* et la magie'.

Livy is flawed. To use the details of the historian as evidence for fourth-century history presupposes that Livy understood that era. If Livy had no good evidence, a structural analysis based primarily on his text is valid only as an interpretation of his writing and not of the history of the fourth century. Neraudeau is aware of the problem but tries to side-step it.<sup>115</sup> In fact it seems likely that the adaptations of Quadrigarius have no basis in historical fact but are designed to make Livy's narrative more arresting as literature. For the introduction of bystanders was a common technique in the description of duels.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, Livy's interest in *disciplina* may be the product not of an intuitive understanding of the structures of archaic Roman society but of a desire to point a moral for his own day.<sup>117</sup> The suggestion that it was the introduction of hoplite warfare which laid the foundations of Roman military discipline is interesting. Yet even here one might have doubts: the exploits of the warrior bands led by the Fabii, Porsenna and others suggest that social cohesion may not have been reached even by the beginning of the fifth century, and it is paradoxical that in sharp contrast to Greece the hoplite reform failed to eliminate single combat – a typical characteristic of the *iuuenis furiosus* in the scheme of Neraudeau.

By using the evidence somewhat differently it is possible to analyse the conflict between the demands of group solidarity and the ambition of the individual in such a way as to take account of all the evidence for single combat. The practice of one man fighting on behalf of the state (the relics of which are to be found in the institution of the *spolia opima*) was abandoned early and instead the theme of the individual bearing the burdens of the whole state is found in other institutions. The idea of *devotio* is important here.<sup>118</sup> For though the actions of the Decii and others were rather different from those of champions in single combat the notion of the individual representing the state is very much present.

Nevertheless the competitive nature of Roman politics demanded that aspiring leaders proved themselves to be valiant warriors, and to fight in single combat was one way in which this might be done. Furthermore, it seems that similar conditions prevailed in other contemporary societies, such as at Capua, and indeed amongst the more primitive Celts single combat still played a major functional role in deciding battles.<sup>119</sup> Thus one might argue that single combat was institutionalised at Rome (and perhaps also at Capua) as a means for the individual to win some glory for himself and, as will be suggested, to perform some services for the state.

In this context the connection which the French scholars observed between single combat and *disciplina militaris* is well worth pursuing.<sup>120</sup> In two instances a father

<sup>115</sup> See (1976), 692–4 and (1979), 255–6.

<sup>116</sup> See e.g. DH 3.19.1–2.

<sup>117</sup> See Lipovsky, op. cit. (n. 11), 102–31 for this theme in Livy Books 6–10.

<sup>118</sup> On *devotio* see now the wide-ranging and suggestive essay on substitutionary sacrifice by H. S. Versnel in *Le Sacrifice dans L'Antiquité* [Fondation Hardt Entretiens Tome 27] (1981), 135–94.

<sup>119</sup> Enemy forces would sometimes flee after the death of their champion; see Liv. 7.11.1 and amongst other societies the practice of the Maoris (for which see E. Best, *JPS* 12 [1903], 37, L. G. Kelly, op. cit. [n. 68], 158 'The enemy became panic stricken at the unexpected and sudden end of their leader, and took to flight', Vayda, op. cit. [n. 68], 367), the flight of the Philistines after Goliath's death (*I Sam.* 17.51) and also e.g. Plut. *Pyrrh.* 24.4, Arr. *an.* 4.24.4–5.

<sup>120</sup> There is a good collection of passages illustrating the Roman view of their military discipline by Fiebigler at *RE* v. 1176–83; see also L. R. Lind, *TAPhA* 102 (1972), 252–3 and note amongst the *obiter dicta* of ancient authors e.g. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.2 'quid loquar de re militari? in qua cum uirtute nostri multum ualuerunt, tum plus etiam disciplina', Liv. 2.44.10, Val. Max. 2.7 *praef.* 'uenio nunc ad praecipuum decus et ad stabilimentum Romani imperii, salutari perseuerantia ad hoc tempus sincere et incolume seruatum, militaris disciplinae tenacissimum uinculum'.

punishes a son for fighting without permission (nos. 4 and 8). In other examples Livy stressed how a consul forbade fighting in single combat (no. 5). It is quite clear that if a Roman soldier wished to engage in single combat he needed the permission of his commanding officer, and the theme of asking for permission is regular in the literary sources.<sup>121</sup> On one level it is probably true that as a result of the story of the *imperia Manliana* Livy and others thought it necessary to stress that all other monomachists obtained permission to fight, and that in this way the idea became a *τόπος* of scenes of single combat. For one can observe how in the story of Manlius and the Gaul he adapted Quadrigarius to make just this point.<sup>122</sup> Yet that does not mean that in real life a potential monomachist did not need the permission of his commanding officer. Indeed Valerius Maximus thought it noteworthy that on one occasion Q. Occius fought without the permission of Metellus Pius.<sup>123</sup> Thus there seems to have been a certain tension between the requirements of *disciplina* and the desire of the individual for glory as manifested, for instance, in monomachy.

The requirement for Roman soldiers to ask permission to fight in single combat shows how far the Romans had institutionalised and regulated the practice, still allowing their soldiers moments of glory but controlling them in a way to which more primitive societies never aspired. This channelling of violence into more easily controlled activities may be paralleled elsewhere in the Roman outlook upon war. In particular one might compare their technique of sacking cities, upon which Polybius commented.<sup>124</sup> The Roman soldiers were not allowed to plunder until they had indulged in an extraordinary display of slaughter, killing both inhabitants and their animals. To the victims this must have seemed like a terrifying madness, but in fact it was controlled, often being carefully orchestrated by the commanding officer. This is in sharp contrast to the behaviour of e.g. Oscans or Old Testament Jews when they captured cities. The Roman army in the *Gallic War* of Caesar displays many of the same traits: there are instances of heroism and individual initiative, but they rarely get out of hand, and tend to be localised in place and time. Consider the bravery of the *signifer* of the tenth legion after Caesar's arrival in Britain,<sup>125</sup> the defiant challenge of the centurions under Q. Cicero to the besieging Gauls,<sup>126</sup> the brief *aristeia* of T. Pullo and L. Vorenus, who forayed into the ranks of the enemy during the same battle,<sup>127</sup> the death of P. Sextius Baculus,<sup>128</sup> and the initiative of the centurions at Noviodunum.<sup>129</sup> Only at Gergovia did things get out of hand – and there Caesar suffered a sharp reverse.<sup>130</sup> W. S. Messer<sup>131</sup> counted the known instances of mutiny in the Roman army and tried to cast doubt upon the traditional doctrine of Roman discipline; but though a list of mutinies has some uses, one cannot argue such a matter by quantification from incomplete sources. What matters is the role of *disciplina* in the Roman national myth. Messer claimed that these mutinies give evidence of the free-thinking of Roman soldiers and that it was upon this free-thinking that Roman

<sup>121</sup> See Liv. 7.10.2–4, 26.2, 23.47.1, 25.18.12, Phaedr. *Per.* 8.18–25 (where Henderson aptly compares the '*licet*' of Phaedrus with Liv. 23.47.1 '*percontaretur liceretne extra ordinem in prouocantem hostem pugnare*'), Sil. 13.153–6. Liv. 25.18.12 '*itaque tantum moratus dum imperatores consuleret permitterentne sibi extra ordinem prouocantem hostem pugnare*' is remarkably similar in phrasing to 23.47.1. This shows that Livy thought of these scenes in a formulaic manner.

<sup>122</sup> See conveniently P. G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (1961), 71.

<sup>123</sup> 3.2.21.

<sup>124</sup> 10.15.4–6.

<sup>125</sup> 4.25.3–5.

<sup>126</sup> 5.43.6–7.

<sup>127</sup> 5.44.1–13.

<sup>128</sup> 6.38.1–4.

<sup>129</sup> 7.12.6.

<sup>130</sup> 7.47–51.

<sup>131</sup> *CPh* 15 (1920), 158–75; cf. G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (1969), 118.

success was based. The free-thinking was important, but it is hard to see how mutiny and lack of professionalism have ever helped any army. Rather the initiatives of the Roman soldiers should be seen in the context of there being room to manoeuvre within the confines of *disciplina militaris* in order to allow for individual aggression and heroism. The study of monomachy helps our understanding of this aspect of Roman warfare.

The connection between single combat and discipline may be taken further. For though the Romans prided themselves on their *disciplina*, the skill with which they turned a collection of individuals into a truly formidable fighting force, it might be objected that as warriors the Romans were less proficient than men from other nations which used corporate tactics with less success but placed more emphasis on individual prowess. The combat between champions was one area where this might be refuted. It seems that the idea of explaining single combat along these lines also occurred to Livy; see the following extract from the speech which he gave Manlius Vulso before his battle with the Galatians: (38.17.8–9) ‘non legionibus legiones eorum solum experti sumus, sed uir unus cum uiro congregiundo T. Manlius, M. Valerius, quantum Gallicam rabiem uinceret Romana uirtus, docuerunt’. It would not have been conducive to morale to refuse challenges from the enemy. For the duel might be held to represent in microcosm the strengths of the two armies and to foreshadow the results of the battle or war. There is some evidence that the Romans themselves looked upon single combat in this way, and believed that the honour of their country was at stake. Note in particular Quadr. fr. 10 P ‘id subito perdolitum est cuidam Tito Manlio, summo genere gnato, tantum flagitium ciuitati adcidere, e tanto exercitu neminem prodire’, Liv. 7.10.4 “‘macte uirtute” inquit “ac pietate in patrem patriamque, T. Manli, esto. perge et nomen Romanum inuictum praesta”’,<sup>132</sup> Phaedr. *Per.* 8.30–31 ‘corona, miles, equidem te dono libens, | quia uindicasti laudem Romani imperi’, App. *Ib.* 224–5 ... θαμινὰ δέ τις τῶν βαρβάρων ἐξίππενεν ἐς τὸ μεταίχιμον, κεκοσμημένος ὅπλοις περιφανῶς, καὶ προυκαλεῖτο Ῥωμαίων ἐς μονομαχίαν τὸν ἐθέλοντα, οὐδενὸς δ’ ὑπακούοντος ἐπιτωθάσας καὶ τῷ σχήματι κατορχησάμενος ἀπεχώρει· γιγνομένου δὲ τούτου πολλάκις ὁ Σκιπίων ἔτι νέος ὢν ὑπερήλγησέ τε καὶ προσηδῆσας ὑπέστη τὸ μονομάχιον, εὐτυχῶς δ’ ἐκράτησεν ἀνδρὸς μεγάλου μικρὸς ὢν.

This passage introduces another, related theme. The Romans had a complex about their short stature when compared to the Celts or the Germans.<sup>133</sup> Victory in a duel showed that a small Roman could still prove himself a better fighter than a large opponent. This theme is common in our accounts of single combat in the Roman Republic and manifests itself in various ways. If single combat was a regular feature in Roman warfare (and the evidence assembled earlier suggests that it was), then Romans who fancied themselves as champions must have been able to initiate duels. Yet the sources consistently portray Romans as accepting challenges but not initiating them. There are only three exceptions, two of them in Silius (nos. 10 and 12); the third is Pliny’s reference to the son of Tritanus (no. 27). Furthermore, our sources never record the death of a Roman in single combat (with the exception of the two Horatii), although it is hard to believe that this never happened in a period of four centuries. Various explanations for this bias of the sources may be offered. On a superficial level,

<sup>132</sup> For Livy’s view of the matter see further 24.8.3–6.

<sup>133</sup> Note especially Caes. *Gall.* 2.30.4 ‘nam plerumque hominibus Gallis prae magnitudine corporum suorum breuitas nostra contemptui est’. Further illustrative material is collected by Goodyear on Tac. *ann.* 1.64.2 and by A. N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (1967), 57–8; add Sil. 5.110–13 and Veg. *mil.* 1.1.



since a Roman needed permission from his commanding officer to fight, the annalists may have been reluctant to show a Roman soldier wishing to break ranks in order to fight a duel unless the enemy made the first move. At a deeper level, just as in their accounts of the outbreaks of wars the annalists were reluctant to portray Rome as the aggressor, so too in their accounts of monomachy they wished to show the champions of the enemy as confident and arrogant, while the Romans were concerned only to uphold the honour of their fatherland. Analogous evidence comes from the *Iliad*, where, in the words of Griffin, 'Trojans propose duels, Achaeans win them'.<sup>134</sup> This connects with a common theme of folklore in which the great is beaten (often surprisingly) by the small. Thus the enemy champions are often portrayed as being of gigantic stature. For this notion see especially Quadrigarius' description of Manlius and the Gaul, Livy's account of the same event, the annalistic description of the Gaul killed by Valerius Corvus, Plutarch's description of Britomaris,<sup>135</sup> Velleius' description of the Spaniard who opposed Scipio Aemilianus (1.12.4) and Appian's description of the Gaul killed by the Mauretanian in the Social War (no. 25). The idea is by no means limited to Rome but is found also in other cultures. One thinks especially of the story of David and Goliath, but the other descriptions cited above of Philistines being slain by Jews are likewise relevant; note also how Pyrrhus killed the Mamertine giant.<sup>136</sup> In Scottish lore a story was told of a single combat fought by a Scotch prisoner after Culloden and an English champion: 'They did not resemble each other in appearance. The Englishman was a big, stalwart man and seemingly very strong. The Highlander was but a chip of a slender, sallow stripling, very bare of flesh, but tough and brawny, and slightly under middle size.' Needless to say the smaller man won.<sup>137</sup> The resemblances between this story, the story of Manlius and the Gaul and the story of David and Goliath are remarkable:

The theme of the superiority of the weaker which pervades the world of folk narrative does not spring only from desire, from hope or self-deception; it is also the expression of all-embracing experience... The intelligence of the dwarfs, the stupidity of the giants, the victory of David over Goliath, of Odysseus over Polyphemus, of the clever peasant girl over the king, of Hänsel and Gretel over the witch, of the divine child over the monsters sent by his enemies... all this testifies to the same insight present in all types of folk narrative, fairy tales, legends, as well as in the farces and saints' legends, based upon faith and experience, and which tells of the possible victory of the small over the great, the weak over the strong.<sup>138</sup>

These basic themes of narrative have clearly influenced Livy and other Roman writers, but one may go further and argue that the Romans believed that the idea was acted out in their own experience of warfare. Hence the canonisation of the tales of Manlius Torquatus and Valerius Corvus.

It is necessary now to turn away from discussing the general function of single combat at Rome and consider briefly what it was that induced a soldier to fight as a champion. There is no need here to assemble again the evidence for Roman bellicosity<sup>139</sup> and the system of the *dona militaria* by which individuals were rewarded

<sup>134</sup> J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (1980), 4–5.

<sup>135</sup> *Marc.* 7.1.

<sup>136</sup> *Plut. Pyrrh.* 24.1–4.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted and discussed by R. M. Dawson in *Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies* [Essays... F. L. Utley] (1970), 305–21, especially 310–21.

<sup>138</sup> M. Lüthi, *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 4 (1967), 3–16. Also analogous are the tales of ill-equipped brigands defying the might of the Roman Emperor; see B. D. Shaw, *Past and Present* 105 (1984), 3–52 (esp. 43–52) for discussion and analysis from a different point of view.

<sup>139</sup> See Harris, *op. cit.* (n. 3), 9–53 and M. K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (1978), 25–37 for recent discussion.

for acts of bravery.<sup>140</sup> However, the evidence relating to Siccus Dentatus (no. 2) deserves more attention than it has been given, since it helps to show in what context monomachy should be viewed. His exploits are recounted at DH 10.36.3–37.5, Val. Max. 3.2.24, Plin. *nat.* 7.101–3 and Gell. 2.11.1–4. The passage from Valerius Maximus may be taken as typical:

quem centies et uicies in aciem descendisse tradunt...sex et XXX spolia ex hoste retulisse, quorum in numero octo fuisse <eorum>, cum quibus inspectante utroque exercitu ex prouocatione dimicasset, XIV ciues ex media morte raptos seruasse, V et XL uulnera pectore excepisse, tergo cicatricibus uacuo: nouem triumphales imperatorum currus secutum, totius ciuitatis oculos in se numerosa donorum pompa conuertentem: praeferebantur enim aureae coronae octo, ciuicae XIV, murales III, obsidionalis I, torques LXXXIII, armillae CLX, hastae XVIII, phaleræ XXV, ornamenta etiam legioni, nedum militi satis multa.<sup>141</sup>

The particular interest of texts like these lies in the lists of *spolia*, scars, single combats etc. rather than in the lists of the *dona militaria*. For while our sources (mostly imperial inscriptions) often give lists of a man's decorations, it is surprising to have in addition a list of the exploits for which he gained them. Now it would be unwise to believe that any of this detail about the legendary Siccus was literally true. However, even if it is a product of the fertile minds of the late annalists, it does show how Romans at the end of the first century might view the military honours which a man had received. For though the details are exaggerated beyond credibility, the form (constant in all four passages) is what matters. This shows a contrast between the official awards of *dona* made by the commanders under whom Siccus had served, which Valerius describes last, and the actual feats of bravery which led to many of the awards. Clearly a Roman did not boast just of his decorations but was also proud to relate the number of battles in which he had been,<sup>142</sup> the number of enemies whom he had stripped,<sup>143</sup> the number of citizens whom he had saved,<sup>144</sup> the number of scars on his front (and the absence of scars on his back),<sup>145</sup> the number of triumphs in which he had par-

<sup>140</sup> See the thorough survey of V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (1981).

<sup>141</sup> The four descriptions of the career of Siccus are remarkably similar. Pliny allows Dentatus thirty-four *spolia* as opposed to Valerius, who recorded thirty-six (though one set of manuscripts may be corrupt), and also records that he took ten prisoners and twenty-one oxen on one occasion and that he was rewarded with a bag of money. Gellius agrees exactly with Valerius. The account of DH, however, is much more extensive. In it one finds, for instance, that on one day Siccus received twelve wounds (37.2), but DH disagrees with Valerius in making Siccus fight nine duels and not eight. Perhaps all four depend ultimately upon Varro, who was cited by Valerius and was interested in such matters (cf. the son of Tritanus, no. 27), though Gellius cites the annalists as his source; see also Maxfield, *op. cit.* (n. 140), 43–5 for discussion of sources.

<sup>142</sup> Similarly commanders might keep a count of the number of battles in which they had fought; see Plin. *nat.* 7.92 (Julius Caesar compared with the great Marcellus).

<sup>143</sup> The standard discussions of *spolia* are by J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung* ii<sup>2</sup> (1884), 579–81, F. Lammert, *RE* iii<sup>A</sup>. 1843–6, K. Latte, *op. cit.* (n. 61), 129 and H. S. Versnel, *loc. cit.* (n. 60).

<sup>144</sup> Compare e.g. Liv. 6.20.8 and Plin. *nat.* 7.103.

<sup>145</sup> Honourable scars might be of use to a Roman both in his political career and if he was in danger of conviction. Note in particular Cic. 2 *Verr.* 5.3 'ipse [sc. M. Antonius] arripuit M.' Aquilum constituitque in conspectu omnium tunicamque eius a pectore abscedit ut cicatrices populus Romanus iudicesque aspicerent aduerso corpore exceptas; simul et de illo uulnere quod ille in capite ab hostium duce acceperat multa dixit eoque adduxit eos qui erant iudicaturi, uehementer ut uererentur ne quem uirum fortuna ex hostium telis eripuisset cum sibi ipse non pepercisset, hic non ad populi Romani laudem sed ad iudicium crudelitatem uideretur esse seruatus' (Antonius' speech was famous; cf. especially in this context Cic. *or.* 2.124, Liv. *per.* 70), Liv. 6.20.8 'nudasse pectus insigne cicatricibus bello acceptis' (cf. Plin. *nat.* 7.103 'XXIII cicatrices aduerso corpore exceperat'), 45.39.16–17 "'insigne corpus honestis cicatricibus

taken, the number of prisoners whom he had taken – and, of course, the number of successful single combats in which he had been involved. Success in single combat was obviously one of the more difficult exploits, comparable to being the first on an enemy wall and rarer than winning the civic crown for saving the life of a colleague. Apart from Siccius Dentatus, the only Romans recorded as having fought numerous duels are Marcellus and M. Servilius Geminus Pulex, who claimed to have fought in twenty-three single combats.<sup>146</sup> These two examples, however, are enough to show that the counting of duels was regarded as one of the unofficial ways to gain status and prestige, parallel to the official system of the *dona militaria*.

Thus single combat was more common in the Roman Republic than has been generally realised. The option of posing as a champion was almost a structural feature of the Gallic Wars, and for the Middle Republic the evidence may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that in many periods several single combats were fought each year. Though the study of single combat does not lead to a new understanding of Roman society and warfare, it nevertheless allows one to formulate several questions about the role of the individual in the Roman army which deserve to be answered. The carnage of the final years of the Republic and the limits imposed upon aristocratic individualism by the institution of the Principate combined to effect radical structural changes in the Roman outlook upon war. Much that had been characteristic of Republican warfare disappeared and the tradition of single combat died. With its origin in the mists of prehistory when Rome's wars were no more than raids on other local villages, its survival through the hoplite period, its heyday in the Middle Republic, its apparent decline in the middle of the first century and its failure to emerge again after the death of Augustus, this practice illustrates one aspect of the changing attitudes to warfare at Rome.

*Emmanuel College, Cambridge*

S. P. OAKLEY

#### ADDENDUM

The assertion that single combat was not a feature of warfare in the principate is incorrect. In a discussion of the stories of Manlius Torquatus and Valerius Corvus, L. A. Holford-Strevens, *LCM* 9 (1984), 147–8, has cited Jos. *bell. Iud.* 6.168–76, where a Jew called Jonathan killed a certain Priscus. Yet isolated incidents like this need not affect the main thrust of the argument. Holford-Strevens adopts a sceptical approach to the duels with the Gauls which has not convinced me.

omnibus aduerso corpore exceptis habeo". Nudasse deinde se dicitur' and Ter. *Eun.* 482–3 'neque pugnas narrat neque cicatrices suas ostentat'. Marius contrasted his scars with the *images* of the nobles (Plut. *Mar.* 9.2). For other passages mentioning scars see e.g. Liv. 2.23.4, 27.2, 4.58.13, 6.14.6, Val. Max. 6.2.8 and 7.7.1. On the mutilated M. Sergius see Plin. *nat.* 7.104–5.

<sup>146</sup> Nos. 10 and 11 above.