

HOPLITES AND HEROES: SPARTA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE TECHNIQUE OF ANCIENT WARFARE

I

At the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 most Greeks believed that, if Sparta led her allies by land to ravage Attika, Athens would be unable to hold out for more than three years at the most (Thuc. vii 28.3; *cf.* iv 85.2; v 14.3). Admittedly the majority of Athenian citizens—and perhaps even the senior Spartan king and general Archidamos—did not share this belief. But since the Persian Wars of 480/79 it had been dogma, both inside and outside the Spartan alliance, that such an invasion was the most potent means of compelling Athens to fulfil her enemies' will.¹ Yet the few concrete precedents—of the late sixth century and 446—were at best inexact, at worst frankly discouraging; and in the event Spartan strategy, in so far as it was determined by the dogma, was shown to have been null and void *ab initio*.² The Spartan alliance was of course ultimately victorious, but victory was postponed for close on a generation and was achieved even then only through massive Persian subventions (Pritchett I 47 f.; II 119 n. 19). Above all, it was secured at sea, where the Athenians had been the undisputed masters (Pritchett II 225–7), while in Attika itself the new technique of *epiteichismos* proved far more devastating than the time-honoured *esbolai*.

Thus the Peloponnesian War with its heavily ironical outcome marks a watershed in the history of Greek military practice, truly the 'end of a chapter' (Snodgrass 1967, 107). It is therefore an appropriate moment to turn back to the beginning of the chapter and review one of the most portentous innovations of Greek antiquity, the hoplite 'reform'. I have concentrated my gaze on the Spartan contribution, partly because until her definitive defeat at Leuktra in 371 Sparta remained the *doyenne* of developed hoplite warfare, a status she had by then enjoyed for nearly two centuries;³ and in part because historians of Sparta have tended to allow their interest in the intricacies of the fifth/fourth-century organisational

This article began life as an undergraduate essay for Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, who persuaded me that the ideas were worth developing further. Its second incarnation was as an appendix to my unpublished doctoral dissertation (see n. 99), in which form it was heavily criticised by J. K. Anderson, Henry Blyth, John Boardman (my former supervisor), John Salmon and Anthony Snodgrass. The version presented here is, I hope, much improved, but I alone am entirely responsible for the errors of doctrine and fact that remain. At the editor's suggestion I have inserted cross-references to points of agreement and disagreement in John Salmon's companion paper, which he generously discussed with me at all stages of its composition.

Abbreviations Adcock: F. E. Adcock, *The Greek and Macedonian Art of War* (1957); Anderson: J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (1970); Detienne: M. Detienne, 'La Phalange: Problèmes et Controverses' in J.-P. Vernant (ed.), *Problèmes de la Guerre en Grèce Ancienne* (1968) 119–42; Finley: M. I. Finley, 'Sparta' (1968), *The Use and Abuse of History* (1975) 161–77; Greenhalgh: P. A. L. Greenhalgh, *Early Greek Warfare: Horsemen and Chariots in the Homeric and Archaic Ages* (1973); Lorimer: H. L. Lorimer, 'The Hoplite Phalanx with special reference to the Poems of

Archilochus and Tyrtaeus', *BSA* xlii (1947) 76–138; Pritchett I, II: W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* I (1971, 1974), II (1974); Snodgrass 1964: A. M. Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons*; Snodgrass 1965: 'The Hoplite Reform and History', *JHS* lxxxv. 110–22; Snodgrass 1967: *Arms and Armour of the Greeks*.

¹ Apart from Sparta herself (probably 478/7, *c.* 465, 457, 446, 433/2 and 432/1), attested believers include Thasos (*c.* 465), Persia (*c.* 457) and Poteidaia (433/2).

² P. A. Brunt, 'Spartan Policy and Strategy in the Archidamian War', *Phoenix* xix (1965) 255–80, esp. 264–70; but *cf.* G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (1972) 100, 151 f., 206–8.

³ A debunking case could be made (starting from the factor of numbers noted in Plutarch, *Pelopidas* xvii 5) for assigning the reputation to the Spartan 'mirage' (for which see n. 8 below). What impressed, cowed and so helped to defeat other Greeks was Spartan professionalism in a world of amateurs: see e.g. Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* x 8; Lysias xvi 17; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1338b 24–9; while Adcock 72 rightly notes the skilful Spartan use of diplomacy to preserve untarnished the prestige of the army—by avoiding a fight! However, Finley esp. 172–4 properly emphasises that Sparta was not wholly militaristic *stricto sensu*.

reshuffles to deflect them from the problem of Sparta's role in the crucial formative period.⁴

The available evidence, however, is lamentably thin and unreliable, for three main reasons. Warfare in general was at all times conceptually indissociable from Greek society as a whole, and its details and underpinnings were normally taken for granted.⁵ Secondly, the archaeological record is lacunose and insecure: apart from the familiar occupational hazards of excavation and survival, armour and weapons by their very nature tend not to be lightly discarded;⁶ and visual artists, despite their interest in the warrior as a subject, had no professional concern to represent his equipment or exertions with photographic fidelity, even when they possessed the requisite technical skill.⁷ Finally, the literary evidence for any aspect of early Greek history is barely worth the papyrus it was written on and, in our case, is further devalued both by the well-known 'mirage spartiate' and by what might fairly be termed the 'mirage messénien'.⁸ It is therefore necessary to take account of evidence that originates in or relates to other periods: for still more obvious reasons caution must be the watchword here too.

In the next section I have catalogued the elements of hoplite warfare as they were constituted about the time of the 'Battle of the Champions' between Sparta and Argos (Hdt. i 82: c. 545), when old-style hoplite equipment and tactics appear to have attained their fullest development.⁹ In so doing I have taken the opportunity of making a comprehensive collection of the literary evidence (and a partial citation of the archaeological) bearing on Spartan practice.¹⁰ Against this backdrop I discuss in Section III why, when, where and how hoplite warfare was introduced and retained in Greek lands. In the concluding section I focus once more on Sparta's role.

II

Armour

(a) Shield (*aspis*)¹¹ The cardinal item of hoplite equipment was the large round

⁴ See e.g. K. M. T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta: a re-examination of the evidence* (1949) ch. 10; H. Michell, *Sparta* (1952) ch. 8; W. G. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta 950-192 B.C.* (1968) 131-7. The only real exception is A. J. Toynbee, *Some Problems of Greek History* (1969) 365-404; but see my criticisms in n. 109. The charge cannot of course be levelled at Anderson 225-51: see n. 9.

⁵ See generally D. Loenen, *Polemos* (1953); cf. A. D. Momigliano, 'Some observations on causes of war in ancient historiography' (1954), *Studies in Historiography* (1966) ch. 7, esp. 120 f.; Pritchett I 82 and n. 194; Y. Garlan, *La guerre dans l'antiquité* (1972) 3-5; K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality* (1975) 313-5. Ancient descriptions of battles (the one aspect of war on which Greek authors did elect to dwell) are often most unsatisfactory, for the reasons given by N. Whatley, 'On Reconstructing Marathon and other Ancient Battles', *JHS* lxxxiv (1964) 119-39, esp. 122 f.

⁶ In the more advanced areas of Greece warrior-graves generally—and not, I imagine, coincidentally (cf. Finley 171 f.)—died out by c. 700: Snodgrass 1967, 48; for a Spartan or Messenian example of c. 725 from Nichoria, see W. A. McDonald—G. R. Rapp, Jr (eds.), *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition* (1972) 238. Spoils, however, were regularly dedicated to the gods, most conspicuously as a tithe of booty at Delphi or Olympia: Pritchett I ch. 5. But the Spartans, although they were not of course averse to spoliation (esp. Hdt. i 82.5) and even appointed specialist booty-auctioneers (*laphuropōlai*: Pritchett I 90-2), reputedly scrupled to dedicate such arms and armour in their own sanctuaries: Plutarch, *Mor.* 224B (18), 224F (4).

⁷ For the same point in relation to ships, see J. A. Davison, 'The First Greek Triremes', *CQ* xli (1947) 18-24, at 23 f.

⁸ F. Ollier, *Le mirage spartiate* (1933, 1943; repr. in one volume, 1973) coined the phrase to describe the distorted view propagated chiefly by non-Spartans of what they wanted Sparta to be, to stand for and to have achieved; for its continuation to recent times, see E. Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought* (1969). For an evaluation of the evidence for pre-370 B.C. Messenian history, L. Pearson, 'The Pseudo-History of Messenia and its Authors', *Historia* xi (1962) 397-426; but he has missed P. Treves, 'The Problem of a History of Messenia', *JHS* lxiv (1944) 102-6.

⁹ For the 'Age of Xenophon' (and many aspects of the intervening period), see also the excellent work of Anderson, which is concerned 'to investigate Spartan military techniques, the art of drilling hoplites and handling them on the battlefield, and the way in which their own skills were finally turned against the Spartans' (9).

¹⁰ I have deliberately refrained from citing the 'Lakonian' bronze warrior-figurines, whose *floruit* is the third quarter of the sixth century, because stylistic considerations frequently outweighed fidelity to nature and their attribution is in many cases uncertain: see now M. Jost, 'Statuettes de Bronze Archaiques provenant de Lykosoura', *BCH* xcix (1975) 339-64, at 355-63.

¹¹ *Tyrtaios fr.* 11.4, 24, 28, 31, 35; 12.25 (bossed); 19.7, 15 West (whose edition I cite throughout); Plutarch, *Mor.* 220A (2) (cf. n. 20).

shield (invented by 700) from which, according to Diodoros (xv 44.3; cf. xxiii 2.1), the heavy-armed infantryman (*hoplitēs*) took his name.¹² Its distinguishing characteristics were a flat offset rim (*itus*),¹³ gently convex section and two interior handles. The basic material was usually wood, only the rim being of bronze, but by 425 at the latest Spartan shields were entirely faced with a thin bronze sheet, an attention to detail typical of all Spartan military procedure.¹⁴ The *porpax* was a detachable central armband through which the left arm was thrust up to the elbow so that the left fist gripped the *antilabē*, normally a leather thong, at the rim.¹⁵ Thus the size of the shield was more or less determined by the length of the bearer's forearm, not only by his strength.¹⁶ But it could be much more firmly gripped than single-handled types, and the *porpax* both relieved the weight and perhaps also made it possible to carry a spare spear.

However, since the shield was relatively hard to manoeuvre, afforded only partial coverage on the flank and could not be slung round to protect the back, it was better adapted to use in close formation, preferably as close as comfort and safety would allow.¹⁷ Even so there was still a tendency for the line to edge to the right, as each man sought to place his vulnerable right flank under the protection of his neighbour's shield (e.g. Thuc. v 71.1).¹⁸ It was imperative in this style of fighting to know at a glance who stood on either side of you and to be able to tell friend from foe almost automatically. So another differentia of the hoplite shield was the painted or bronze blazon, probably at first a decorative or personal emblem, later supplemented or replaced by an alphabetic badge of state.¹⁹ The practical and symbolic value of the shield is nicely encapsulated in the official Spartan attitude to men who lost or abandoned theirs (*rhipaspidēs*)²⁰ and in the curt admonition of the quintessential Spartan mother to her son to return from battle with it—or on it (Plutarch, *Mor.* 241F [16]).

¹² Cf. *peltastes* from *peltē* (the use of 'peltā' in connection with the 'Battle of the Champions' in *Anth. Pal.* vii 430.2 is of course strictly anachronistic). But in Attic prose only Thucydides (vii 75.5) uses 'hoplon' specifically for 'shield' (applied to both cavalrymen and infantrymen). The Thebans are said to have used 'hoplon' for 'breastplate': see n. 100.

¹³ Xenophon, *Anab.* iv 7.12; and, *pars pro toto*, (Tyrtaios) *fr.* 15.3. The rim-fragments from Sparta and Amyklai, like the wholly preserved example cited in the next note and the Olynthos shield cited in n. 78, bear the standard guilloche-pattern: Snodgrass 1964, 232 n. 105.

¹⁴ Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* xi 3, illustrated by the sole surviving example, which originally served one of the two hundred and ninety-two Lakedaimonians captured on Sphakteria in 425 (only one about hundred and twenty were Spartan citizens: Thuc. iv 38.5). It was taken to Athens, inscribed in *pointillé*, covered with pitch and then hung in the Stoa Poikile (Pausanias i 15.5); but it had found its way into a cistern by 300 B.C.: T. L. Shear, *Hesperia* vi (1937) 347 f., figs. 10–12; id., *Arch. Eph.* (1937) I 140–3; Snodgrass 1967, 105, pl. 19. Somewhat ovoid in shape, it measured 95 cm by 83 cm, close to the upper limit of all but one of those found at Olympia (Snodgrass 1964, 231 n. 99).

¹⁵ According to the arch-'Lakonizer' Kritias (*fr.* 37 Diels-Kranz), the *porpax* was removed in the house in case the shield 'fell' into the wrong (helot) hands; cf. Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* xii 4 (slaves barred from arms-dump in camp). But the removable *porpax* was by no means unique to Sparta: see e.g. V. Karageorghis, *Salamis* v (1973) 193 f.

¹⁶ Pritchett I ch. 12 summarises the evidence, but see Snodgrass, *CR* n.s. xxiv (1974) 248 f.

¹⁷ This account of the merits and demerits of the

hoplite shield owes most to Greenhalgh 69–73, but I cannot agree that it was 'easily manipulated' or even 'more easily manipulated' (than its one-handled predecessors). Nor is it, I think, an argument in favour of its manoeuvrability to point out (Snodgrass 1965, 111 n. 4) that multiple-handled shields were used in non-hoplite formations by non-Greeks: composition, structure and the circumstances of adoption—in the Greek case, invention—are the crucial variables. (I return to this question in Section III.) For the space normally left between each hoplite in the file, see Pritchett I ch. 12.

¹⁸ There are some sensible comments on this passage in A. W. Gomme, 'Mantineia', *Essays in Greek History and Literature* (1937) 134 f.; but he exaggerates the tactical aspect of the rightward drift.

¹⁹ See generally Snodgrass 1964, 61–3; 1967, 54 f. I know two possible Spartan attached bronze blazons: *BSA* xxvi (1923–5) 266–8, pl. 21 (gorgoneion, c. 530–20?: now in the National Museum, Athens, Inv. 15917); A. Greifenhagen, *Antike Kunstwerke*² (1966) 6, no. 4; 43 (disc-protome from Tegea or more probably Olympia, c. 650). The most esoteric choice of a personal blazon, attributed to a humorous Spartan (Plutarch, *Mor.* 234C [41]), is a life-sized fly! On badges of state, perhaps not introduced before the fifth century, see L. Lacroix, *Etudes d'archéologie classique* I (1955–6) 89–115, esp. 104 and n. 1 (the Spartan Pasimachos' expedient of using Sikyonian shields to disconcert the Argives in 392: Xenophon, *Hell.* iv 4.10; Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1117^a 26–8); and Anderson 262 n. 24.

²⁰ Plutarch, *Mor.* 220A (2) (unlike the breastplate and helmet, the shield is worn, not for individual protection, but for the line as a whole); *Mor.* 239B (34); and generally *Pelopidas* i 5; Diod. xii 62.5. Speaking of the Germans, Edward Gibbon, *The*

(b) Breastplate (*thōrax*)²¹ The 'bell'-breastplate consisted of two bronze plates fastened together at the shoulders, modelled and decorated to reproduce schematically the anatomy of the torso. Just above the hips the plates were swung sharply outwards in a flange designed to facilitate movement and perhaps also to give added protection against a spear thrust at the vulnerable abdomen. Though weighty and hot,²² it was effective, and so held the field for some two centuries (c. 700–500) before considerations of mobility dictated its replacement by composite versions.²³

(c) Helmet (*kranos, kuneē, korus*)²⁴ The earliest and most widespread hoplite type ('Corinthian') was commonly raised from a single bronze sheet in a process that demanded a high level of technical skill; a felt or leather cap was sewn in for comfort.²⁵ The helmet's function was to protect the largest possible area of the head and neck without unduly restricting sight or breathing; but hearing was severely impaired, until the importance of trumpet-signals for manoeuvres necessitated modifications.²⁶ A horse-hair crest (*lophos*), either lying directly along the crown or raised on a slight stilt and fitted in a holder, satisfied demands that were at least partly psychological or aesthetic. In the fifth century the Spartans (and others) may have brought their headgear into line with their lighter breastplates by adopting the *pilos*. This was often just a stiffened felt cap, though bronze examples are known.²⁷

(d) Other Body-Armour Bronze greaves (*knēmides*) antedated hoplite warfare and naturally became a regular component of the hoplite panoply, their fully developed form being shaped to the musculature of the calf and so gripping it merely by the elasticity of the metal.²⁸ Surprisingly, however, abdominal guards appear to have been confined to Crete;²⁹ elsewhere foot-, ankle-, knee-, thigh- and arm-guards were optional extras (Lorimer 132 f.; Snodgrass 1964, 240 n. 54).

Weapons

(a) Spear (*doru, aichmē, enchos, meliē*)³⁰

Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, I² (ed J. B. Bury 1909) 249, writes: 'the wretch who had lost his shield was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen'.

²¹ Tyrtaios *fr.* 12.26; 19.17; Plutarch, *Mor.* 220A (2). (Also the name of a friend of Lysander: V. Ehrenberg, *RE* viA (1937) s.v. 'Thorax (6)'). For a sixth-century Spartan votive miniature, W. Lamb, *BSA* xxviii (1926–7) 91 f., no. 22, pl. 8.

²² This gives added point to the quip in *Hdt.* vii 226.2, uttered when the all-metal breastplate had been widely abandoned (see n. 23).

²³ Snodgrass 1967, 90–2; Anderson 20–4. On the advantages of an exact fit, Xenophon, *Mem.* iii 10.9–15. According to the third-century B.C. (?) Nymphodoros (*FGrH* 592 F 15), the Spartans called the breastplate 'aigis'.

²⁴ Plutarch, *Mor.* 220A (2); Tyrtaios *fr.* 11.32; 19.20 (?).

²⁵ So far as I am aware, the only *in corpore* Lakonian finds (all sixth-century) are a 'Corinthian' fragment dedicated to Olympian Zeus: M. Comstock—C. C. Vermeule, *Greek, Roman and Etruscan Bronzes in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston* (1971) 408, no. 583; and three others of uncertain type dedicated to Amyklaian Apollo: L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (1961) 190, n. 3, 199, no. 9. 'Corinthian', but undated, is the helmet of a miniature bronze vase: Snodgrass 1964, 26 and n. 86. However, a fragmentary sixth-century cheek-piece from the Spartan akropolis is not of this type: Snodgrass 1964, 33 and

The spear was to offence what the shield

n. 113 (Cypriote?); *cf.* the open-faced helmets on a few of the earliest (second half of the seventh century) lead figurines: Snodgrass 1964, 19; *cf.* 27.

²⁶ For a fine early-fifth-century Spartan bronze figurine of a trumpeter, see *BSA* xiii (1906–7) 146 f., fig. 3.

²⁷ Thuc. iv 34.3; Arrian, *Takt.* iii 5; Dio Chrysostom xxxv 12. A late-fifth-century Attic gravestone depicts a fallen Spartan (?) wearing the *pilos*: Anderson 29–32, pl. 10; but Anderson 275 n. 90 is wrong to attribute the *pilos* to Athens N.M. 7598 (sixth-century bronze warrior-figurine from Kosmas in Lakonia). To the actual bronze examples from Dodona cited by Anderson 30 and no. 90, add now H. Hoffmann, *AA* 1974, 59 f., fig. 12 (Sicily, late Archaic).

²⁸ 'One of the finest and most costly greaves known' was dedicated by the Kleonaian at Olympia: E. Kunze, *Olymp. Berichte* viii (1967) 95 f., pls. 44.1, 46. A recent sporadic find from the same site illustrates an earlier (seventh-century?) stage of development: *Arch. Delt.* xxvi 2 (1971) 146, pl. 126a.

²⁹ H. Brandenburg, *Studien zur Mitra* (1966); but 'mitra' is the wrong word: Hoffmann, *Early Cretan Armors* (1972) 9 f. They were rendered obsolete at the end of the Archaic period by the elongation of the breastplate.

³⁰ Tyrtaios *fr.* 11.20, 25, 29, 34, 37; 12.36; (15.4); 19.9. Plutarch (*Agésilaios* xix 6) describes Agésilaios' spear, which he claims to have seen, as a 'lonchē'.

was to defence: Aeschylus (*Pers.* 817; *cf.* [239 f.], 278, 729, 926) represented the Persian Wars as a victory of the Dorian spear over the Asiatic bow, and Tyrtaios (*fr.* 5.6; 19.3) could refer to the Spartan army simply as 'spearmen'.³¹ The weapon measured about 2–3 m overall,³² the smoothed ashen shaft³³ being fitted with a heavy iron head and a butt (*sturax*, *saurōtēr*) that was useful for stabbing an enemy or fixing the spear upright in the ground as well as for protecting the shaft against decay.³⁴ The spear was hard to wield at close quarters after the initial thrust,³⁵ and the shaft was by no means unbreakable (e.g. *Hdt.* vii 224.1; *Eur. HF* 193 f.).

(b) Sword (*xiphos*, *machaira*)³⁶ Owing to the limitations of the spear, the sword was an indispensable supporting weapon. The nature of the sixth-century Spartan variety is uncertain, but its standard classical form—strictly, perhaps, a dirk—was straight-edged and unusually, indeed proverbially, short.³⁷

Uniform

Underneath his breastplate the hoplite wore a tunic (*chitōniskos*) probably of linen. The short cloaks worn by all members of the Spartan army, regardless of rank or political status, were dyed red (hence *phoinikis*), perhaps because the colour was manly, magical and/or disguised bloodstains, but surely also because of the availability of the dye.³⁸

No less of a uniform and no less of a distinctively Spartan trait was the long hair grown specifically for its military function.³⁹

Tactics and Training

Warfare between massed phalanxes (*phalanges*)⁴⁰ was not a graceful or imaginative affair, but required above all disciplined cohesion and unyielding physical and moral

³¹ Note also 'the fame of their spear' (Pindar, *Py.* i 67); 'doristephanos' applied to Sparta in Diog. Laert. i 73 = *Anth. Pal.* ix 596; and the 'Spartan spear' of the Leuktra epigram (*IG* vii 2462.4).

³² Kromayer in J. Kromayer—G. Veith, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung der Griechen und Römer* (1928) 51 inferred from vase-paintings that it was normally one and a half times the height of its bearer; certainly it was long in comparison to Persian spears: *Hdt.* v 49.3; vii 224.1. No actual hoplite example survives, but see Snodgrass 1967, 38 (from Verghina).

³³ Smoothed by a spokeshave, which Anderson, *JHS* xciv (1974) 166 would identify with the puzzling Spartan *xuēlē* (Xenophon, *Anab.* iv 7.16; 8.25; *cf.* *Cyropaedia* vi 2.32; Hesychios and *Suda* s.v.).

³⁴ *Sturax*: Xenophon, *Hell.* vi 2.19 (Pritchett II 242); Plato, *Laches* 183E; *cf.* Xenophon, *Kyn.* vii 5 (name suitable for a hunting-dog). *Saurōtēr*: *Hdt.* vii 41.2. The aggressive use of the butt (Polybius vi 25.9), unavoidable if the head broke off, is well portrayed in Anderson pl. 10; *cf.* Snodgrass 1967, 56, 80.

³⁵ If vase-paintings are an accurate guide, this was delivered overarm at the vulnerable neck. An alternative thrust, perhaps reserved for a tight corner, was aimed underhand at the abdomen and genitals (*cf.* Tyrtaios *fr.* 10.25). The natural 'southpaw', incidentally, was at a considerable disadvantage in the phalanx: see the protest of Plato (*Laws* 794D–795D) discussed with other passages by P. Lévêque—P. Vidal-Naquet, *Historia* ix (1960) 294–308, at 297 ff.; *cf.* Pritchett II, ch. 10, at 192.

³⁶ Tyrtaios *fr.* 11.30, 34; Plutarch, *Agesilaos* xxxv 1; *Lykurgos* xix 2; Pollux x 144. For the *xuēlē*, see n. 33.

³⁷ Perhaps represented in Anderson pl. 10 (the relevant *bons mots* are cited in Anderson 38); for the terminology, Snodgrass 1964, 104. The dominant Greek sixth-century type had been the 'stout slashing-sword with cruciform handguard and swelling blade': Snodgrass 1967, 97; *cf.* 84 f. That Spartan swords in 480 were of a then fairly recently introduced slashing type (Snodgrass 1967, 98) is an unwarranted inference from *Hdt.* vii 224.1.

³⁸ Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* xi 3; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 1140; Aristotle, *fr.* 542 Rose; Plutarch, *Mor.* 238F (24); Schol. Aristophanes, *Ach.* 320; Aelian, *VH* vi 6; Val. Max. ii 6.2; *Suda* s.v. 'kataxainō'. The Spartan warrior could be buried in a *phoinikis*: Plutarch, *Lykurgos* xxvii 1. The dye was obtained by processing the mucous secretion of the murex (about sixty thousand molluscs to make one pound of dye): J. P. Robinson, Jr, 'Tyrian Purple', *Sea Frontiers* xvii 2 (March–April 1971) 76–82; J. N. Coldstream—G. L. Huxley (eds.), *Kythera: excavations and studies* (1972) 36 and n. 4.

³⁹ *Hdt.* i 82.8; vii 208.3; Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* xi 3 (*cf.* xiii 9); Plato *Comicus fr.* 124 Kock; Plutarch, *Lykurgos* xxii 1; *Lysander* i; *Mor.* 189E (1) = 228F (29); 230B (2); and esp. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1367a 27–31. This custom undoubtedly had magical or religious connotations; it has been adopted by other warlike peoples, e.g. the Zulus.

⁴⁰ In Xenophon the word is regularly used of an army deployed in battle-line: Anderson 106 and n. 32; it first attained general currency when applied to the Macedonian version: Adcock 3 n. 5. See generally Pritchett I ch. 11.

strength. In time a few set manoeuvres were devised and accorded special names (e.g. the 'Lakonian *exelignos*'),⁴¹ but fighting consisted chiefly of a concerted shoving (*ōthismos*) akin to the tight scrummaging of modern rugby football.⁴² The role of the general, who himself fought in the *mêlée*, was 'nearly exhausted with the choosing of a battle-ground to suit the phalanx' (Snodgrass 1967, 62; cf. Pritchett II 206), and customarily 'the first shock of battle decided the issue' (Anderson 71). However, one area of demonstrable Spartan superiority was their careful observance of rhythm: in sharp contrast to their opponents' pell-mell rush, the Spartans advanced to the fray to the accompaniment of 'flutes and soft recorders' (Milton's translation of *auloi*).⁴³ Another was their system of subordinate command (esp. Thuc. v 66).

The battle itself was but the culmination of a process of preparation, but the latter was generally kept very brief. 'It is hard to conceive of a method of warfare that, in peace, made a more limited call on the time and effort of most citizens of most communities' (Adcock 4; cf. generally Pritchett II ch. 11). The Spartans, however, were 'technitai tōn polemikōn' (Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* xiii 5; cf. Plutarch, *Pelopidas* xxiii 4; Plato, *Laches* 182E–183A), professionals who practised the craft (*technē*) of war, not as a spare-time relaxation nor as a painful interruption of ordinary life, but as a full-time occupation. This was only possible because they were not *autourgoi* (Thuc. i 141.6; contrast iii 15.2): that is to say, their helots freed them from the labour of procuring subsistence. But it was a freedom on which they were constrained to impress a military stamp.

From the age of seven the Spartan male was herded in a pack (*ila, boua*) with others of his age-class and subjected to the rigorous discipline of a comprehensive state education—or, better, a process of socialization—known as the 'agōgē'.⁴⁴ He was obliged to participate in a series of competitions called collectively the 'paidikos agōn',⁴⁵ success in which postulated three of the qualities no less essential for success in hoplite warfare—a sense of rhythm, physical fitness⁴⁶ and unflinching toughness.⁴⁷ Stress on individual emulation, however, was tempered by the feeling of collective enterprise and responsibility engendered by the age-class system and the public (and homosexual) way of life. At twenty or twenty-one the now adult male was elected to a common mess (*andreion, pheidition*), thereby becoming a

⁴¹ Arrian, *Takt.* xxiii 1,3; xxiv 2 (not of course confined to the Spartans any more than the 'Corinthian' helmet was a Corinthian preserve); cf. Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* xi 8–10 (unclear account of Spartan tactics generally); and Vegetius, *Epit. Rei Militaris* iii 17 (manoeuvre first attested at Mantinea in 418).

⁴² E.g. Hdt. vii 225.1 (Thermopylai); ix 62.2 (Plataia). Cf. Pritchett II 175. Roman warfare differed little in this respect: 'In the legionary scrum, the heavier packs would carry the day': K. Wellesley, *The Long Year A.D. 69* (1975) 66.

⁴³ Thuc. v 70 (the manner in which T. goes out of his way to explain that the function of the *auloi* was secular is eloquent of the prevalent ignorance of hoplite fundamentals); other references are given in the Loeb edition of Plutarch, *Mor.* 238B (16). The Chigi olpe (n. 69) and a vase-painting from Perachora (Lorimer 93–6, fig. 7) suggest that 'flautists' had been considered important in seventh-century Corinth (cf. Salmon 89f. and n. 21). But presumably it was only in Sparta that the profession was ever hereditary (Hdt. vi 60) and a passport to the king's council of war (Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* xiii 7).

⁴⁴ Polybius i 32.1; Plutarch, *Agésilaios* i (heirs-apparent were seemingly *ex officio* exempt); *Mor.* 235B (54): see now C. M. Tazelaar, 'Παιδες και Έφηβοι: some notes on the Spartan stages of youth', *Mnemosyne* 4 xx (1967) 127–53; R. R. Bolgar, 'The training of élites in Greek education' in R. Wilkinson (ed.), *Governing Elites* (1969) 23–49, at 30–5. (I touch on

the occasion of its general introduction in Section IV.)

⁴⁵ Regrettably the evidence is largely restricted to the Roman period, when the 'Lykurgan' regime was reimposed in a misguided attempt to restore Sparta's halcyon days: Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta* ch. 3, with A. M. Woodward, *Historia* i (1950) 617–20, 631–3.

⁴⁶ This no doubt partly accounts for the well-known string of Spartan victories in running events at the early Olympiads: but see also de Ste. Croix, *Origins* 354 f.; Pritchett II 218 n. 39. According to one tradition (Thuc. i 6.5, with Gomme), the Spartans introduced the practice there of competing stark naked: J. C. Mann, *CR* n.s. xxiv (1974) 177 f. For the possible connection between hoplites and gymnasia, see Detienne 123; add now S. C. Humphreys, 'The Nothoi of Kynosarges', *JHS* xciv (1974) 85–95, at 90 f.; Pritchett II 219 n. 44; and generally on gymnastic training for warfare, Pritchett II 213 ff.

⁴⁷ On discipline and cowardice generally, see C. G. Starr, 'Homeric Cowards and Heroes', *Fest. H. Caplan* (1966) 58–63, at 58–60; Pritchett II ch. 12; cf. G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (1969) 117 f. Spartan cowards were known technically as 'tre-sants' ('tremblers') and never allowed to forget it: Ehrenberg, *RE* s.v. 'τρέσαντες'. Fear, literally and figuratively, was elevated into a cult: P. H. Epps, 'Fear in Spartan Character', *CPh* xxviii (1933) 12–29; but see Michell, *Sparta* 270–3. On Spartan discipline, Pritchett II 235 f. (esp. Thuc. v 9.9), 243.

full-fledged citizen-warrior.⁴⁸ Centrifugal tendencies were still officially combatted (he was forced to live simply and forbidden to cohabit with his wife before he was thirty), but the diet of drill and weapon-training might now be varied by the recreational, though kindred, discipline of hunting, which besides served to provide the fresh meat that was essential for developing physical strength.⁴⁹ His sense of rhythm was educated by marching songs and by the energetic dances performed at the annual round of religious festivals.⁵⁰ Altogether, then, it would have been surprising to find the Spartans unprepared when the time for warfare was deemed to have arrived.⁵¹ (Perioikic hoplites, however, are in this respect a different kettle of fish, as are the helots, 'Brasideioi' and ex-helots who fight as hoplites from the 420s onwards.⁵²)

Furthermore, Spartan professionalism was not restricted to perfecting what counted when battle was actually joined. Xenophon's phrase, 'craftsmen in military matters', was in fact provoked by the meticulous attention the Spartans (like Xenophon himself) paid to the religious factor (*Lak. Pol.* xiii 2-5). Before embarking on a campaign they solicited the favour of the gods, especially Delphic Apollo; further trials of the divine will were conducted at the frontier (sacrifices called *diabatēria*, apparently peculiar to the Spartans) and in camp; finally, supplicatory and propitiatory oblations were made on the battlefield immediately prior to combat.⁵³ Logistics were generally a weak point of Greek hoplite strategy (Adcock ch. 5; Pritchett I ch. 2). But the Spartan kings—presumably *qua* generals—had special responsibility for public highways (*Hdt.* vi 57.4), and by the fourth century the Ephors had apparently been given charge of commissariae (*Xen., Lak. Pol.* xi 2). Since an army marches on its stomach, the profession of cook (*mageiros*, *zōmopoios*) was hereditary and highly esteemed—much to the amazement (and chagrin) of foreigners; and a type of drinking-cup (*kōthōn*) was designed, or at least found especially suitable, for campaigns.⁵⁴

If there was one chink in the Spartans' armour, it was their consistent failure (or, rather, refusal) to solve the problems of siege-warfare. But this defect only became marked in the fifth century and really serious only in the fourth; and if the Spartans were inflexible at that date, then this was by no means a Spartan prerogative in the first two centuries of hoplite warfare.⁵⁵ Indeed one could almost say that inflexibility had been built into the hoplite model, a point to which I shall return.

⁴⁸ *Andreion*: Alkman *fr.* 98.2 Page. *Pheidition*: esp. Plutarch, *Mor.* 714B. The generic term for such communal messes was 'sussition': *Hdt.* i 65.5 (unclear, but specifically military denotation); Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* v 2 ff.; Plutarch, *Lykurgos* x, xii.

⁴⁹ According to Aristotle (*Pol.* 1256^b 23-6), hunting is part of the art of war; cf. Xenophon, *Hipp.* viii 10 (horsemanship); *Kyn.* xii 1, xiii 11; Plato, *Laws* 823B-824C. On Spartan hunting, see esp. Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* iv 7 (keeps older men alert and fit); vi 3-5 (communalism in dogs and horses); *Kyn.* x 1,4 (the specially bred 'Lakonian' hound recommended for boar-hunting and as a scenter: the boar was a favourite motif of sixth-century Lakonian art). F. Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800* (Fontana ed., 1974) 68 quotes the Greek proverb that 'the eaters of barley-gruel have no desire to make war'; cf. Watson, *Roman Soldier* 126.

⁵⁰ Marching-songs: (Tyrtaios) *fr.* 15 (anapaests); Athenaios xiv 630F; cf. D. A. Campbell, 'Flutes and Elegiac Couplets', *JHS* lxxxiv (1964) 63-8, at 65. Among dances note esp. the warlike *pyrrichē*: G. R. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (1960) 358-62 (*Laws* 816B and other sources); E. K. Borthwick, *JHS* lxxvii (1967) 18-23 (Euripides, *Andromache* 1129-41); cf. Pritchett II 216 and n. 32.

⁵¹ The Spartans even had a word for the condition of being under military discipline (*taga*): J. Chadwick, 'ταγά and ἀταγία', *Studi linguistici in onore di V. Pisani*

i (1969) 231-4, at 234.

⁵² We are wholly ignorant of the provisions made for the training of *perioikoi*, but by the early fourth century (at the very latest) they were individually brigaded with Spartan citizens in the phalanx: see the works cited in n. 4. Since some, if not all, were drawn from the ranks of the *kaloi kagathoi* (Xenophon, *Hell.* v 3.9; cf. de Ste. Croix, *Origins* 93, 372), they presumably as a rule spent most of their time in their own *poleis*. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta* 287 f. properly stresses their economic indispensability (e.g. iron); cf. Kromayer (n. 32) 36 f. For helots and ex-helots as hoplites, see n. 110.

⁵³ The evidence is collected in H. Popp, *Die Einwirkung von Vorzeichen, Opfern und Festen auf die Kriegführung der Griechen im 5. und 4. Jht. v. Chr.* (Diss. Erlangen, 1957) 41-58. But see also Pritchett I 110 n. 3 (*mantis*), 113-5 (*diabatēria*, pre-battle sacrifices), 116 ff. (phases of the moon), 122 ff. (festivals).

⁵⁴ Cook: *Hdt.* vi 60 (cf. n. 43; the third hereditary profession, also military, was herald); Plutarch, *Lykurgos* xii 6; *Mor.* 218C (3), 223F (15). *Kōthōn*: Kritias *fr.* 34 Diels-Kranz; Plutarch, *Lykurgos* ix 4 f.; its identification with an attested shape is still controversial.

⁵⁵ On early siege-warfare in general, see Y. Garlan, *Recherches de Poliorcétique Grecque* (1974) 20-44. Not until the fourth century would Greek states risk heavy loss of life in an assault on a fortified position:

III

We are now in a position to tackle the questions raised at the end of Section I. The first—why was hoplite warfare introduced and retained in Greece?—is not as straightforward as seems usually to be assumed, for it was not the ultimate solution to a military brainteaser. If a hoplite is to keep in step and maintain his position in the phalanx, he needs a plain that is at once level and not conducive to ambush. If the phalanx is not to be outflanked nor put at a disadvantage by a slope, it requires a plain with hills to its rear. Yet Greece is not rich in plains of any description, let alone specimens of this ideal type, and is predominantly of mountainous relief. It is in short 'a land one would have thought made for mountain-fighting by quick-moving light-armed infantrymen'.⁵⁶ The paradoxical quality of the hoplite 'reform' can be expressed in other ways. To take just two examples, 'hoplites were developed to fight pitched battles on level ground. But most of Greece is not level and pitched battles were rare' (Anderson 111); or again, 'surprise is highly valued by all good judges of war . . . Yet surprises are not common in Greek . . . war by land' (Adcock 40 f.; cf. Pritchett I 105, 108; II chs. 8–9, esp. 173, 185). This first impression that the Greeks' invention of hoplite warfare⁵⁷ was not dictated by purely or even primarily military (in a narrow sense) considerations is apparently confirmed by the fact that there was no narrowly military reason why, once one state had 'gone hoplite', its competitors should automatically and necessarily have followed suit.⁵⁸ Besides, unlike missile warfare, heavy-armed hand-to-hand fighting might be expected to have entailed crippling and maiming for the victors almost as frequently as outright death for the vanquished. In sum, the hoplite 'reform' would seem to have been military only in the weak sense that the technological and social innovations occurred in the military sphere.

Shelving this paradox for the moment—and leaving open the possibility that the paradox may be merely apparent—we turn to the question of date. The evidence for Greek military practice is generally poor, for the reasons set out in Section I. But the situation is further complicated here because we are dealing both with the tail-end of the Greek Dark Age (c. 1100–700) and with 'Homer'. Our knowledge of immediately pre-hoplite warfare is derived largely from pictorial scenes on Late Geometric pottery (chiefly Attic and Argive), together with those Homeric descriptions which could have been inspired wholly or in part by conditions of the late Dark Age.⁵⁹ To be brief and dogmatic, fighting is loosely (if at all) organised, ranging the length as well as the breadth of the field. It is conducted pre-eminently by individual champions, opulent aristocrats who have the means to employ horse-drawn chariots as a form of transportation to and from the scene of combat.⁶⁰ Their equipment typically consists of a shield (of either the round 'Assyrian'

Adcock 58; but Sparta's reluctance even then was 'one of the chief reasons why (she) neither secured a permanent hold on Greece nor made lasting conquests in Asia': Anderson 140. Contrast above all Alexander the Great. It is not irrelevant that Sparta's own settlement remained unfortified down to the end of the fourth century: *Arch. Delt.* xxi 2 (1966) 155 (find of a section of possibly the oldest wall).

⁵⁶ A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* i (1945) 10. Gomme's observation was not entirely original: see Hdt. vii 9B.1 (speech neatly put into the mouth of Mardonios, though M. is of course concerned to maximise the Greeks' stupidity and H. to extract the full flavour from the dramatic irony of M.'s lethal miscalculations).

⁵⁷ It is perhaps necessary to stress that the Greeks did invent hoplite warfare, against those (ancients and moderns) who have been too impressed by the notion of Carian ingenuity: Snodgrass, 'Carian Armourers: the Growth of a Tradition', *JHS* lxxxiv (1964) 107–18; cf. Snodgrass 1967, 59 f.

⁵⁸ Salmon (96) asserts that it would have been

'suicide' for a state *not* to follow suit, but in view of the decisive importance of sheer numbers a small state might have been well advised to contemplate alternatives.

⁵⁹ The problems of interpreting 'Homer' (i.e. our Homer) as history are legion, but for my limited purposes the most important is whether it is possible to locate a coherent Homeric 'world' or 'society' in space and time. To avoid multiplying references, I need only cite Snodgrass, 'An Historical Homeric Society?', *JHS* xciv (1974) 114–25, with whose negative response I am in complete agreement, against e.g. M. I. Finley, 'The World of Odysseus Revisited', *Proceedings of the Classical Association* lxxi (1974) 13–31. For the artefactual evidence, see Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (1950) ch. 5; G. Ahlberg, *Fighting on Land and Sea in Greek Geometric Art* (1971); H.-G. Buchholz *et al.*, 'Kriegswesen', *Archaeologia Homerica* (forthcoming).

⁶⁰ Homeric descriptions of chariot-usage are often simply dismissed—as poetic fantasy, confused memory of Mycenaean chariotry or (according to the highly ingenious but one-sided theory of Greenhalgh esp.

or more frequently the hourglass-shaped 'Dipylon' variety) slung round the neck on a leather strap (*telamōn*) and held by a single central handle;⁶¹ a breastplate of linen or leather;⁶² a helmet with stilted ridge-crest that leaves most of the face exposed;⁶³ a pair of javelins⁶⁴ and sometimes a sword.

The first signs of significant change are visible in the last quarter of the eighth century. A magnificent warrior-grave of c. 725 from Argos contained among much else a functional 'bell'-breastplate associated with a helmet that was 'quite impractical, being top-heavy and not very protective' (Snodgrass 1967, 43; *cf.* 50 f., 57).⁶⁵ Shortly before 700 a mounted warrior on an Attic Late Geometric amphora wears the 'bell'-breastplate.⁶⁶ About the same time a shield whose blazon seems to demand that it be carried in an unalterably fixed position appears on another Attic vase, the Benaki amphora,⁶⁷ while not long afterwards terracotta models with the peculiarly hoplite offset rim were being produced by Samian and Siphnian coroplasts (Snodgrass 1964, 65 f.). Rudimentary 'Corinthian' helmets made their début in the late eighth century and were so impressive that around 700 a Peloponnesian bronze-worker depicted an armourer in the process of raising an example on his anvil.⁶⁸ By 650 all the other items of hoplite equipment are attested, either by actual finds or in artistic representations (Snodgrass 1967, esp. 60–77); and c. 650 or somewhat later the master of the Late Protocorinthian Chigi olpe composed in miniature the earliest known wholly successful—not the earliest unquestionable—representation of the phalanx.⁶⁹ Thus the chronological parameters are 725 and 650: can we date the invention of phalanx warfare more precisely within them?

To put the matter schematically, there are two diametrically opposed hypotheses, the 'piecemeal' and the 'sudden change'. The former, which received its most persuasive expression a dozen years ago in this Journal and is currently the more influential, holds that the invention was a 'long drawn out, piecemeal process' (Snodgrass 1965, 110). Hoplite equipment, it is contended, was very expensive, and qualification for hoplite service—the ability to provide your own panoply—depended on the ownership of landed property. The first hoplites will therefore have been the heroes of the preceding individualistic and

7–18, 53–63) deliberate suppression of true cavalry. I remain unconvinced: see now briefly Anderson, *AJA* lxxix (1975) 175–87. Nor do I believe—despite all the Late Geometric representations of the horse, including a few carrying a warrior—that there was ever a 'stage of true cavalry supremacy' (except of course in Macedonia and Thessaly): Snodgrass, 'The First European Body-Armour', *Fest. C. F. C. Hawkes* (1971) 33–50, at 46. However, Greenhalgh 78–83 may be right in thinking that the hoplite 'reform' stimulated true cavalry as a necessary ancillary force. The Spartan élite corps known as 'Hippes' presumably originated as mounted hoplites: Snodgrass 1967, 85; Detienne 134 ff.; Anderson 245–9; Greenhalgh 95 f., 147. But, as Greenhalgh 94 f. remarks, Thuc. iv 55.2 does not, *pace* Helbig, exclude the *ad hoc* raising of a cavalry force by Sparta before 424.

⁶¹ Greenhalgh 63–70 has convinced me that the 'Dipylon' shield was not just a figment of the artistic imagination. For the importance of the *telamōn*, see n. 71.

⁶² Continuity of name (to-ra-ke in the Pylos Linear B tablets) suggests that breastplates were worn throughout the Dark Age, though they were no longer metallic. For 'linen-corsleted Argives', see Salmon n. 30.

⁶³ J. Borchhardt, *Homerische Helme* (1972) 62–5; for the Argive examples, see n. 65. *Cf.* Boardman, 'Heroic Haircuts', *CR* n.s. xxiii (1973) 196 f.

⁶⁴ Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* 257–61; but see Snodgrass 1964, 62, 137–9. An unpublished

Late Geometric sherd from Amyklai shows a spear with a throwing-loop; but there are no certain Lakonian examples of spearheads from throwing-spears.

⁶⁵ P. Courbin, 'Une tombe géométrique d'Argos', *BCH* lxxxi (1957) 322–86, at 340–56 (breastplate), 356–67 (helmet); *cf.* his *Tombes géométriques d'Argos* i (Etudes Peloponésiennes vii, 1974) 40 f., 135 n. 7. For a new Late Geometric Panoply Tomb at Argos, containing a similar helmet, an iron sword and possibly a bronze breastplate, see now *AD* xxvi 2 (1) (1971) 81 f., pl. 68z. Snodgrass, *Fest. Hawkes* (n. 60) has argued cogently that the bronze plate-cuirass had to be re-introduced to Greece from Urnfield Europe.

⁶⁶ A. Alföldi, *Fest. K. Schefold* (1967) 24 n. 94, pl. 7.1; *cf.* n. 60.

⁶⁷ Lorimer 87 f., pls. 19, 22; S. Benton, *BSA* xlvii (1953) 340 (horse-blazon); R. Tölle-Kastenbein, *Antike Welt* v. 3 (1974) 29, fig. 10.31–35. The same is probably true of the human-head blazon on the amphora Tölle-Kastenbein publishes.

⁶⁸ Actual examples: Kunze, *Olymp. Berichte* vii (1961) 56–128; Snodgrass 1964, 20–8. Bronze figurine: *AJA* xlviii (1944) 1–4; B. Schweitzer, *Die geometrische Kunst Griechenlands* (1969) 172 f., pl. 200. Tölle-Kastenbein (n. 67) 25, on the evidence of an Attic LG amphora, would date the invention of the 'Corinthian' helmet not later than c. 720.

⁶⁹ Bibliography in E.-L. I. Marangou, *Lakonische Elfenbein- und Beinschnitzereien* (1969) n. 937a. See now Salmon 87.

long-range form of warfare. Non-aristocrats will have been in no rush, or even considerably reluctant, to enlist in a phalanx. The archaeological evidence reveals, what we might anyway have anticipated, individual items of the panoply or individual hoplites in various places from c. 725 but no phalanx before (at latest) c. 650. The verses of the Spartan Tyrtaios attest the transitional stage of reluctant hoplites and inchoate hoplite tactics.⁷⁰

The alternative hypothesis, to which I subscribe, can (like its rival) be expounded with varying arguments and nuances. What follows is very much an idiosyncratic, but I hope not arbitrary, selection expressed with my own emphases. Briefly, the change was relatively sudden and due *imprimis* to the widespread adoption of what became regarded as the hoplite accoutrement *par excellence*, the shield with *porpax* and *antilabē*. This was not, however, a case of brute technological determinism (as it is represented by Lorimer; cf. Detienne 132 n. 68). For, to borrow the careful phraseology of Greenhalgh (71), the new shield was 'not impossibly ill-adapted to the unorganised warfare of the javelin era'. But Greenhalgh, although he does at least make the points that it *was* ill-adapted and that pre-hoplite warfare was *unorganised*, does not go far enough. As an invention for use in pre-hoplite warfare the hoplite shield would not merely have been barely (if at all) superior to its single-handled predecessors but also in certain circumstances positively and dangerously inferior.⁷¹ For what the invention of *porpax* and *antilabē* tells us is that concern for protection in the front was outweighing the need for manoeuvrability and for protection in the flank and rear—in other words, that a change in tactics in the direction of organised, hand-to-hand fighting was *already* in progress.⁷² This trend is wholly compatible with, though not necessarily explained by, an increasing use of the kind of heavy metal body-armour interred with the heroic occupants of the Argive warrior-graves cited above.⁷³ The hoplite shield was invented by c. 700. Hoplites properly so called (i.e. operating in phalanx-formation) followed somewhere in the first quarter of the seventh century, the precise date varying naturally from state to state.⁷⁴

How are we to decide between the two hypotheses? Arguments from visual and literary art are too insecure to decide the issue,⁷⁵ but a review of the whole gamut of

⁷⁰ For earlier versions of the hypothesis, see R. Nierhaus, 'Eine frühgriechische Kampfform', *JdI* liii (1938) 90–113; and, with special reference to Sparta and Tyrtaios, the works cited in E. N. Tigerstedt, *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity* i (1965) 348 n. 22; add F. Kiechle, *Lakonien und Sparta* (1963) 266–70. Snodgrass has been followed generally by Detienne, esp. 132 n. 67; W. Donlan, 'Archilochus, Strabo and the Lelantine War', *TAPA* ci (1970) 137 and n. 16; and now, with further nuances, by Salmon (esp. 90–2). For applications of Snodgrass' conclusions to Sparta, see n. 109.

⁷¹ Greenhalgh 73 rightly emphasises the connection between the lack of protection for the back (due to the abandonment of the *telamōn*—hence all those poet-*rhipaspides*) and the adoption of hoplite tactics; but, as I have said in n. 17, he exaggerates the hoplite shield's manoeuvrability and so unduly minimises the vulnerability, indeed 'nakedness' (e.g. Thuc. v 71.1; Xenophon, *Hell.* iv 4.11) of the right flank outside the phalanx. 'Larger size and greater rigidity' (Salmon n. 6) are advantages pre-eminently in hand-to-hand fighting. Salmon fails to do justice, it seems to me, to the fact that the Greeks *invented* the double-grip shield: why should it not have been invented with the phalanx in mind rather than the other way round?

⁷² This may be the true explanation of a few Homeric passages (*Il.* xiii 130–5, with 145–52, 340–3; xvi 211–7; xii 105) that seem to describe hoplite

tactics.

⁷³ See n. 65. I agree with Donlan (n. 70) 137 n. 14 that the breastplate 'implies a closing of range in combat'. It could, however, be argued (as Henry Blyth suggested to me) that the donning of such armour was precipitated by the development of a *missile* capable of piercing non-metallic breastplates too easily. Against this suggestion I would point out that, so far as we can tell from the archaeological evidence, javelin-heads are unlikely to have achieved greater penetration in the second half of the eighth century; at the same time, other missiles were no more effective then than in c. 500, when most hoplites exchanged their all-metal breastplates for composite versions (n. 23). Besides, the bronze-clad hoplite was by no means invulnerable even in the kind of warfare to which his equipment was adapted; and the bronze breastplate was not an invariable component of the hoplite panoply. So I am tempted to think that the Argos breastplate and its successors are a case of 'overkill' (cf. Paus. x 26.2). This may be an important clue.

⁷⁴ It is misleading to call the isolated heavy-armed infantrymen of the late eighth and early seventh centuries 'hoplites' (as does Snodgrass 1967, 74); 'l'hoplite "seul" est un non-sens': Detienne 139 n. 108.

⁷⁵ The need for a thoroughgoing overhaul of the contemporary representational evidence, using the latest understanding of styles, hands and chronology, has now been met by Salmon (86–90). He points

economic, social and political conditions in this 'Age of Revolution' (c. 750–650)⁷⁶ may yield more reliable signposts. First, however, let us dispose of the question of geographical priority. I do not believe it is yet possible to assert with confidence that any one state was responsible for the entire process. The archaeological evidence indicates only that by c. 650 nearly all the more important among them had entrusted their principal military functions to the phalanx, the Asiatic Greeks and western colonists perhaps rather later than the men of Old Greece. A few states were associated with technological developments—Corinth (helmet), Argos (shield), Chalkis ('Bronze-town'?: sword, breastplate)⁷⁷—but these may have been responsible, not for the invention of those items, but rather for the production of the first demonstrably effective and hence generally copied versions.⁷⁸ For some students (including Salmon 92 f.) the notices concerning Pheidon of Argos—especially a statement of Aristotle (*Pol.* 1310b 26–8) to the effect that he was one of those who converted themselves from (hereditary) kings into tyrants—have seemed to justify sweeping conclusions: for example, it has been argued that, since Pheidon had the motive, the influence and the power to form the first phalanx, it was as a phalanx that the Argives scored signal successes under his leadership. My own view is that the ambiguity of Aristotle's remark is typical of the evidence for Pheidon's career as a whole and that, since there is room for more than reasonable doubt even about his date, he is best left out of the reckoning.⁷⁹

However, the problem of the origins of tyranny is closely allied to that of how—and why—hoplite warfare was introduced. According to some 'piecemeal' theorists (not including Salmon), it was the tyrants who produced the phalanx, according to the 'sudden change' hypothesis, the phalanx that 'produced' the tyrants. It is therefore time to widen our horizon beyond the military sphere. If due allowance is made for the inadequacy of the evidence, we can assuredly isolate the following trends as the dominant ones of the period at least in the more advanced areas of Greece: relative overpopulation leading to settlement abroad and stimulating a decisive switch from pasturage to arable farming at home; growth of overseas trade, especially in metals and luxury goods and raw materials; decline of monarchy; full development of the *polis*; questioning of social and political values; and contrivance of new political expedients. How does the hoplite 'reform' fit into this general picture of upheaval? Or, to return to our paradox, why did the Greeks invent and almost universally adopt a mode of warfare that was on the face of it so at variance with both Greek terrain and the military way?⁸⁰

Land-hunger (relative overpopulation) had military repercussions in two directions. Warfare became more frequent as each political community sought to secure for itself the maximum amount of land compatible with its convenient utilisation and defence: throughout Greek antiquity the ownership of land was the most important single cause of interstate wars.⁸¹ Secondly, the shift from stock-raising to arable farming determined thereafter the general pattern of warfare on land, for the basic objectives everywhere in this game of 'agricultural poker' (Snodgrass 1967, 62) became the menacing, temporary possession or

out (87f.) that, even if a Corinthian painter had *wanted* to depict the phalanx as such before 650, he would not have had the technical capacity to execute his *Kunstwollen*. I return to Tyrtaios in Section. IV

⁷⁶ This is the title of Part III of C. G. Starr, *The Origins of Greek Civilization 1100–650 B.C.* (1961), which remains the best general study available.

⁷⁷ If the etymology is correct, Chalkis is 'one of the few city-names significant in the Greek language': A. R. Burn, *The Lyric Age of Greece* (1960) 71; cf. J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas*² (1973) 42.

⁷⁸ For the enormous conservatism of hoplite equipment, note that a shield vainly wielded against Philip II at Olynthos in 348 would not have looked out of place on the arm of Archilochos: Snodgrass 1964, 65 and n. 110.

⁷⁹ The bibliography on Pheidon is vast: for the

ancient sources, see M. Mitsos, *Argoliki Prosopographia* (Athens, 1952) s.v.; and for a recent survey, R. A. Tomlinson, *Argos and the Argolid* (1972) ch. 7. Still, in view of the prosperity of eighth-century Argos, the broad Argive plain and its proximity to Corinth, I would be inclined to count Argos among the earliest hoplite states; and I must admit that Salmon makes a plausible case for associating Pheidon with the Argive hoplite 'reform'. For the battle of Hysiai, however, see n. 104.

⁸⁰ According to Alfred Vagts (quoted *ap.* Finley 172), 'the military way is marked by a primary concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power with the utmost efficiency'.

⁸¹ de Ste. Croix, *Origins* 121, 218–20, esp. 219 n. 12 ('Lelantine War').

destruction of the enemy's crops and the protection of one's own.⁸² There was, however, no outstanding military (i.e. strategic) reason why hand-to-hand fighting, let alone the hoplite variety, should have been considered the optimum method of achieving these objectives. For the question naturally arises 'why the defending side should accept the challenge of open battle on the plain, instead of holding the difficult passes that led to it' (Anderson 5).⁸³ Yet, as we have seen, the adoption of the hoplite shield implies that long-range missile-warfare was already giving way to hand-to-hand fighting before the creation of the phalanx.

Another feature of the 'Age of Revolution' was the development of the *polis*. The idea of a community of citizens who were in some sense equals was born (*cf.* Aristotle, *Pol.* 1287^a 16–18; 1301^a 25 ff.), and the institutional framework was devised for the waging of more frequent wars. But even though representatives of the *polis* could temper the potential anarchy of the individual provision of hoplite equipment by keeping muster-rolls, supervising training and ensuring that weapons were in good condition (Snodgrass 1967, 61), the *polis*-framework in itself could have accommodated other kinds of warfare. Again, therefore, the development of the *polis* is not a sufficient explanation of the 'reform'.

The decline of monarchy takes us further. For although the 'Age of Revolution' was generally presided over by governing aristocracies, their period of sway was fleeting.⁸⁴ It is always dangerous to generalise from Hesiod, but he was surely not out on a limb among his (reasonably prosperous) peers in complaining bitterly of aristocratic 'bribe-swallowing', selfishness and misrule—in a word, injustice.⁸⁵ This psychological independence, begotten of experience of alternative modes of social existence, will have been one effect of the upheavals involved in mass emigration and increased travel.⁸⁶ Another, allied to the rise of the *polis*, will have been the establishment in the 'old country' of a solid peasantry of substantial farmers outside the aristocracy. By an accident of birth these farmers lacked the operative qualification for political power, and through long conditioning they probably had no very articulate political consciousness; but it would be surprising if they had not felt that, since possession is only nine points of the law, their economic status required safeguards. So long as they could have afforded at least the essentials of the hoplite panoply—as I am sure they could (see below)—they would have been foolish indeed not to avail themselves of this means of defending their property.⁸⁷ Indeed, the notion may already have been current that ownership of property obligated the owners to render the appropriate military service (*cf.* Pritchett I 27 and nn. 107 f.).

It has, however, been argued that it was still open to the aristocrats to organise small hoplite forces on a gentilicial basis.⁸⁸ To this argument there are two unanswerable

⁸² For the shift, see briefly Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (1971) 378–80; for its motivation, Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life* 66 ('the choice between cereals and meat depends on the number of people'). For the pattern of land-warfare, de Ste. Croix, *Origins* 46 (classical Athens turned herself into the one major exception—hence the failure of Spartan strategy with which we began: n. 2). On warfare in general as a means of production, Pritchett I ch. 3 (booty), esp. the sources cited in 58 n. 40. In Polybius iv 26.7, 36.6 *laphuron* means precisely 'war'.

⁸³ This is the question that Salmon (nn. 1 and 49) fails to answer satisfactorily. I do not of course dispute that *on its chosen ground* the phalanx could be a superior instrument to most others.

⁸⁴ Forrest, *The Emergence of Greek Democracy* (1966) ch. 2. Sealey (n. 109, below) 267 n. 19 cites Forrest's distinction between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' lines of social demarcation, but omits to mention that he is making a radically different use of it.

⁸⁵ On this aspect of Hesiod as a social commentator, see H. T. Wade-Gery, 'Hesiod' (1949), *Essays in Greek History* (1958) ch. 1, at 10–14. M. Gagarin,

'*Dikē* in the Works and Days', *CPh* lxxviii (1973) 81–94, would give *dikē* a specifically legal, rather than a generally moral, connotation; *cf.* his '*Dikē* in Archaic Greek Thought', *CPh* lxxix (1974) 186–97. I doubt whether it is fruitful to draw such distinctions.

⁸⁶ Travel by itself was a necessary, but certainly not a sufficient, condition of this psychological development: Brunt, *JHS* lxxxv (1965) 218 (contrast with Phoenicians).

⁸⁷ As Greenhalgh 75 remarks, again with just the right shading, the hoplite's 'style of warfare was not everywhere cheaper than the earlier style . . . , but it could be, and sometimes it had to be'. On the nature of the connection between the rise of the *polis* and the acquisition of real property, see Finley, 'The Alienability of Land in Ancient Greece' (1968), *The Use and Abuse of History* (1975) ch. 9, at 159 f.

⁸⁸ Snodgrass 1965, 120 considers the possibly relevant fate of the Fabii at the Cremera in c. 477; Greenhalgh 151 fails to mention that they were annihilated! Against the analogy of Greek with Etruscan and/or Roman experience, see also Salmon 12 f.

replies. The personal advantages would in most cases have been transitory. Secondly, and more important, this would have been an unsatisfactory method of defending the national territory as a whole. For, unlike the previous style of fighting, hoplite warfare by definition demands that the greatest possible numbers be put into the field on a given occasion (*cf.* Salmon 85). Conversely, the very creation of the phalanx in and of itself presupposes the existence of a wider circle than a handful of aristocrats who could afford the requisite arms, armour and other expenses of hoplite warfare. It will not, therefore, have been long before the aristocrats invited these wealthy and well-equipped commoners to join them in forming the phalanx to which their adoption of heavy armour and, above all, the hoplite shield had already all but committed them. No doubt they proffered the invitation with mixed feelings—it was the aristocrats, if any, who were the ‘reluctant hoplites’—but this concession could have been regarded as the least of several potential evils.

Indeed, it had the makings of a brilliant compromise. The relevant commoners were enabled at a stroke to defend not only their own property but also the *polis* of which they were citizens. At the same time the devolution of military responsibility did not obviously imperil the aristocratic structure of society. Rather, it could have reasonably been hoped that phalanx-warfare would defuse the potentially explosive contradiction between aristocratic *aretē* and *polis*-equalitarianism.⁸⁹ For although membership of the phalanx was open in principle to all who could provide their own *hopla*, and although sheer numbers were an advantage in the hoplite style of fighting, rarely was as much as one half of a state’s citizen-body able to turn out as hoplites in practice.⁹⁰ (The one exception to this rule, Sparta, is considered in Section IV.) Besides, if the aristocrats wished to preserve their differentials—and their energy—they could arrive at the battlefield on horseback and in resplendent attire, accompanied by several attendants. From the narrowly military viewpoint the fighting unit became for the first time properly organised and to that extent more effective. But the improvement was preponderantly in a defensive and negative sense.⁹¹ Surprise, as was remarked earlier, was not a prominent word in the vocabulary of the hoplite strategist, and there were relatively few set-piece battles. In fact, hoplite warfare continued for centuries as it had begun—a gentlemanly, amateur affair confined to a campaigning ‘season’ in spring and early summer before the harvest, a ‘walking tour ending in a combat’ (Adcock 82) that demanded a minimum of training and theoretical analysis (*cf.* Pritchett II 207).⁹² In fine, here was a mode of warfare entirely consonant with its being undertaken by the class of substantial, but in many cases working, farmers. As Marx neatly phrased it, ‘antiquity unanimously esteemed agriculture as the *proper occupation* of the free man, the soldier’s school’.⁹³

And that of course was the whole point, the key to the paradox with which we began this section. For the other side of the hoplite coin is the exclusion, militarily, of the poor peasantry and ‘wearers of skins’ in the country, of the shopkeepers, petty traders, handicraftsmen and casual labourers in the town. The acceptance and apotheosis of hand-to-hand fighting presupposes the refusal (whether conscious or not) to countenance and

⁸⁹ A. W. H. Adkins, *Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece* (1972) exaggerates the former at the expense of the latter: see M. Austin, *JHS* xciv (1974) 216 f.; *cf.* n. 107 for the controversy over Tyrtaios’ ethics.

⁹⁰ See esp. Ps.-Herodes, *Peri Politeias* 30 f., with de Ste. Croix, *Origins* 35 n. 65; *cf.* Thuc. vi 17.5. The institution of pay for hoplite service, at first to purchase rations, was apparently a fifth-century phenomenon: Pritchett I ch. 1 (mainly Athenian evidence).

⁹¹ But see n. 102.

⁹² On the ‘quasi-laws’ of Greek warfare, see Diod. xxx 18.2 (from Polybius); Polyb. iv 8.11; xiii 3.2–7; with F. W. Walbank, *Polybius* (1973) 90 f., 175 n. 15; *cf.* also Pritchett II 173, 251 f. On amateurism and

the ‘half-religious if not almost sporting’ code of conduct (Snodgrass 1967, 103), see A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*⁵ (1931) 345 f.; Pritchett II 147, 187 (‘warfare seems sometimes to be a game in which all that is involved is a fair fight with equal weapons on a plain’), 231; on the ‘agonal’ spirit, V. Ehrenberg, *Ost und West* (1935) ch. 4, at 69 f. Whatley (n. 5) 122 speaks of a ‘lack of hard logic about Greek warfare’ and compares the ‘conventional warfare of the age of chivalry’; *cf.* Pritchett II 174, 177 (attitude of Franks). However, A. Brelich, *Guerre, agoni e culti nella Grecia arcaica* (1961) exaggerates the ritual aspect: see Andrewes, *JHS* lxxxii (1962) 192 f.

⁹³ K. Marx, *Grundrisse* (Pelican ed. 1973) 477 (emphasis in the original).

develop the mobile and light-armed infantrymen for whose style of combat Greece, one would have thought, had been made. Institutionalised naval warfare or the *permanent* blocking of passes and frontiers would of course have been beyond the economic capacity of most early seventh-century Greek states.⁹⁴ The creation of an effective light-infantry force would not. It was rather the social and, especially, the political implications of light-armed warfare that determined its 'unduly subordinate role in the seventh, sixth and even most of the fifth centuries' (Snodgrass 1967, 85).⁹⁵ 'Political privilege and the limit of military obligation justified each other' (Adcock 5; *cf.* 68)—a neat variation on General von Clausewitz's dictum that war is the continuation of politics by other means. The hoplite 'reform' brought on a change in conceptions of bravery, but hoplite ideology retained the indelible stamp of its aristocratic origins (Detienne, *passim*). What else is the contempt for arrows that reverberates through the centuries from Homer (*Il.* xi 385 ff.) onwards but the continuing—and increasingly necessary—justification of the original, largely non-military, refusal to develop light-armed warfare?⁹⁶

Unwittingly, however, the aristocracies had dug the grave of their monopoly of political suzerainty. Dissident aristocrats, exploiting economic, political or even 'racial' grievances, came to sole power with the support—or at least the non-interference—of the majority of hoplites.⁹⁷ Hence the military factor in the origins of tyranny *c.* 650, a generation or so after the hoplite 'reform'. Judged, however, from the standpoint of the *longue durée*, the 'reform' bore solid political fruit. After the quantitatively (though not qualitatively) limited 'opening' of society effected by the tyrannies, most states knuckled down under some form of oligarchy, in which the hoplites stood, socially and politically, foursquare on the side of the *gennaioi* and *chrēstoi* in opposition to the light-armed *dēmos* (e.g. Ps.-Xenophon, *Ath. Pol.* i 2). As Aristotle put it, 'in a *politeia* the class that does the fighting wields the supreme power' (*Pol.* 1279b 3).⁹⁸

IV

Sparta's role in all this is unclear owing to the dearth of good contemporary evidence, but, despite her undoubted peculiarities, it would be wrong to divorce her development from that of the Greek world as a whole. It is true that the monarchy survived (though it had always been highly unusual for its collegiality); that only one colony was established, and this a somewhat atypical one (Taras, *c.* 706); and that tyranny was avoided. On the other hand, Sparta experienced the by now familiar problems concerning the distribution of land, civil rights and political power. In short, therefore, what differentiated Sparta was the solutions she adopted, and these all flowed from the initial decision taken by the Spartan aristocracy (including the kings) to turn Sparta into a *rentier* state living almost entirely off the surplus labour of subject populations, not only in Lakonia, but also—and more remarkably—in neighbouring Messenia.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ On the development of naval warfare, see de Ste. Croix, *Origins* 394 f.; but there were no specifically war-ships before the seventh century: D. H. F. Gray, 'Seewesen', *Archaeologia Homerica* i G (1974) 122 ff., 131 ff. For permanent garrisons, see G. T. Griffith, *Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World* (1935) e.g. 71.

⁹⁵ Gomme (n. 56) 14 f. discusses the implications in greater detail; *cf.* Pritchett I 49, 132 f.; II 117 and n. 1, 173 f.

⁹⁶ The *locus classicus*—suitably Spartan—is Thuc. iv 40.2, elucidated by Gomme, *CQ* n.s. iii (1953) 65–8; *cf.* Hdt. ix 72; Plutarch, *Mor.* 234E (46). The debate was still alive in the time of Procopius (*Bell. Pers.* i I. 8–16). Compare the general Greek attitude to sea-power, which largely reflects 'the influence of the epic conception of an individual virtue which only land-fighting can show': Momigliano, 'Sea-Power in Greek Thought', *CR* lviii (1944) 1–7, at 7. See e.g. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1327^b 11–13, with Pritchett II 99

n. 224.

⁹⁷ The tangled issues have now been convincingly unravelled by Salmon (esp. 93–101). I would only add that the Greek aristocracies were not the last to discover how 'the acceptance of technological progress rapidly undermines both the social structure on which their rule is based and the ideas serving as its justification': S. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao* (1969) 132 (on the Mandarins).

⁹⁸ This passage is to be read with *Pol.* 1297^b 16–24, where Aristotle speaks of a stage of hoplite 'democracies' (the old name for *politeiai*); for the connection between military and political power, *cf.* also *Pol.* 1274^a 12, 1291^b 23, 1304^a 20 ff., 1321^a 12 ff. The link between land-ownership, access to political rights and military prowess will be further explored in de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*.

⁹⁹ The argument of this Section is unavoidably

As early as c. 750, according to a plausible modern chronology, the Aegid 'conqueror' of Amyklai, Timomachos, was allegedly sporting a bronze breastplate.¹⁰⁰ But neither this nor Pausanias' battle-descriptions is an adequate reason for believing that 'Sparta seems to have discovered the new [*sc.* hoplite] tactics at the time of the First Messenian War' (Detienne 140), i.e. long before any other state.¹⁰¹ On the contrary, I would argue that there are several reasons for thinking that Sparta may have been relatively behindhand. Lengthy, but ultimately successful, campaigns in first Lakonia then Messenia (the 'First' war) could have encouraged a faith in the old and tried military ways.¹⁰² Sparta's geographical position, the absolute divide between Spartan and perioikic status and a perhaps already rigidly hierarchical social structure may have rendered economic mobility less easy here than in some other states. There is evidence independent of the hypothesis that the Spartans were tardy in adopting hoplite warfare to show that the Spartan aristocracy was more successful than most in clinging to its exclusive prerogatives.¹⁰³ Finally, the Spartans' disastrous defeat by the Argives at Hysiai could have been a consequence of their failure to conform (or conform adequately) to the hoplite mode.¹⁰⁴

Hysiai, then, will have rendered conformity at the very least less unattractive to the Spartan aristocracy, despite any potential political disadvantages. However, it was the Messenian revolt and the emergence of tyrannies in the Peloponnese around 650 which, given the social and political factors adumbrated in Section III, made conformity ineluctable. As we shall see in the last two paragraphs, they also determined the unique twist that the Spartans gave to the hoplite 'reform'. But the very decision to 'go hoplite' at all is not insignificant, for Sparta if anyone was both capable of conducting protracted war (Pritchett II 123) and had the motive to develop a more flexible form of warfare.¹⁰⁵

The evidence of Tyrtaios is extraordinarily hard to deploy. His elegiacs are 'riddled with ambiguities' (Snodgrass 1967, 90), and he has perhaps rightly been called the 'most perplexing witness among the poets' (Lorimer 121). Like the vase-painters and his fellow artists generally, Tyrtaios was working within the conventions of a tradition. But in his case the tradition was almost entirely epic and so singularly inappropriate for describing a new hoplite context. Nonetheless, I broadly concur with the judgment that he 'gives valuable evidence for his city's adoption of hoplite equipment and tactics' (Greenhalgh 94, with 180 n. 37)—by the third quarter of the seventh century at the latest. I cannot, however, regard his poetry as testimony of 'a [transitional] stage of confused tactics and reluctant hoplites' (Snodgrass 1965, 116),¹⁰⁶ let alone of 'a disorder and turmoil unlike

abbreviated, but I shall discuss all these questions at greater length elsewhere. Meanwhile, see my unpublished doctoral dissertation *Early Sparta c. 950–650 B.C.: an archaeological and historical study* (Oxford, 1975) 234–50.

¹⁰⁰ Called 'hoplon' by the Thebans and carried in the annual procession at the Amyklaian Hyakinthia: Aristotle *fr.* 532 Rose; for further references to Timomachos, Detienne 138–40.

¹⁰¹ It is not coincidental that the enigmatic Partheniai and Hesiod were contemporaries. If the phalanx had already existed in Sparta, I doubt whether the former would have needed to emigrate and found Taras. For Hesiod's impotence, see Salmon 95.

¹⁰² I agree, however, with Salmon (92) that the 'traditional methods . . . were far more suitable for rapid raids for booty than for war as a means of territorial aggrandisement', and I suspect that the completion of the conquest and the annexation of Messenia could only have been accomplished by more organised methods. But there are other forms of organised warfare besides the hoplite mode, and 'traditional' methods had sufficed for the Spartan conquest of Lakonia.

¹⁰³ On the existence of 'privileged families' at Sparta, see de Ste. Croix, *Origins* 137 f., 353 f.

¹⁰⁴ The authenticity of this battle has been doubted by T. Kelly, *AJP* xci (1970) 31–42. In my view, the balance of probability is on the other side, though there is nothing sacrosanct about the traditional date of 669 B.C. Incidentally, no ancient source associates Pheidon with Hysiai.

¹⁰⁵ It is not therefore surprising that 'organised light-armed troops' were probably 'first used as a tactical force by Sparta': Snodgrass 1967, 79; cf. O. Lippelt, *Die gr. Leichtbewaffneten bis auf Alexander den Grossen* (Diss. Jena, 1910) 28–35. Tyrtaios' *gymnētes* (*fr.* 11.35) may be illustrated on a fragmentary Spartan terracotta relief-pithos of c. 580: G. Steinhauer, *Museum of Sparta* (n.d.) fig. 16 (Inv. 1793); on early Greek slingers, see now C. Foss, *JHS* xcv (1975) 25–30, esp. 25. For the Cretan mercenary archers allegedly hired in the Messenian Wars (Paus. iv 8.3, 12; 10.1; 19.4), see Snodgrass 1967, 40, 81.

¹⁰⁶ For example, some (including now Salmon 91) have interpreted Tyrtaios' exhortation to close with *either* spear *or* sword (*fr.* 11.29 f., 34) as a sign of the lack of uniform equipment and so of a (second)

anything known from the later, classical period' (Finley 161). The supposed ambiguities and contradictions in Tyrtaios melt away, I believe, when it is perceived that they arise from his attempt to pour new spiritual wine into old linguistic bottles. It is also salutary to recall that Spartan hoplites of a much later era, so far from 'wincing at' (Toynbee) or 'reacting instantly against' (Tigerstedt) his poems, found nothing incongruous in singing them before battle (Lykurgos, *Leokr.* 107, quoted *ap.* Tyrtaios, *fr.* 10 West). The main point, however, is that Tyrtaios was not an isolated forerunner of those Spartans who, we learn from Vegetius (*Epitome Rei Militaris* i 8), made distinguished written contributions to the art of warfare. He was simply a patriotic poet concerned to shame, cajole, exhort and inspire his fainting fellow-citizens to victory in a desperate crisis.¹⁰⁷



FIG. 1

Archaeological evidence from Lakonia is slight, but it tends to support in a general way our relatively late chronology for the introduction of hoplite warfare in Sparta and to corroborate our interpretation of Tyrtaios. Warriors on vases and in terracotta wear

transitional phase before the full development of phalanx tactics. I see nothing 'natural' about this interpretation.

¹⁰⁷ For the modern literature on the historical problems surrounding the authenticity and interpretation of Tyrtaios, see Tigerstedt (n. 70) 45-51 and notes. On his language (an amalgam of epic, Dorisms and vernacular Ionic), K. J. Dover, *Entretiens Hardt* x (1964) 190-3; B. Snell, *Tyrtaios und die Sprache des Epos* (1969). I agree with H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (1971) 45 that, 'when Jaeger claims that Tyrtaios was trying to substitute a city-state

morality for an aristocratic morality in Sparta, he has failed to notice that in Sparta the two kinds of morality were not distinct'; cf. Greenhalgh, 'Patriotism in the Homeric World', *Historia* xxi (1972) 528-37, esp. 535 f. However, like Adkins (n. 89), Lloyd-Jones presses his thesis of continuity too hard: see now W. Donlan, 'The Tradition of Anti-Aristocratic Thought in Early Greek Poetry', *Historia* xxii (1973) 145-54 (but I cannot see why the 'deep-rooted and self-conscious literary expression of anti-aristocratic opinion' may not also be a 'token of social unrest').

pre-‘Corinthian’, though possibly metallic, types of helmet as late as c. 675. But not long before 650 an unpublished ivory seal from the sanctuary of (Artemis) Orthia depicts three schematic but unmistakable hoplites in line (FIG. 1); and shortly thereafter mould-made and ‘mass’-produced lead figurines of hoplites start to be dedicated in appreciable quantities by poorer Spartans.¹⁰⁸ These humble figurines have been interpreted as a ‘sign of a unified and self-conscious hoplite class’ (Snodgrass 1965, 115). But, even though this interpretation may well be correct, the main point is that in Sparta, thanks to the helots, ‘hoplite class’ became synonymous with ‘citizen-body’. For uniquely in Greece, the Spartan citizen-body was both able and obliged to afford the luxury of turning itself *en bloc* into a professional—and so truly ‘new model’—army.¹⁰⁹

I cannot discuss here the details of the early army-organisation, but I share the view that the state supplied armour and weapons to citizens as well as to helots and ex-helots.¹¹⁰ Thus, as we would have expected in Sparta, the required qualification for service as a hoplite will have been on all fours with that for full citizenship, namely the ability to maintain fixed minimum contributions to one’s *sussition* (*cf.* n. 48). The system, I suggest, was introduced during or immediately after the ‘Second’ Messenian War, when, following the redistribution of land that Tyrtaios (*ap.* Aristotle, *Pol.* 1306^b 37–1307^a 2) informs us was being demanded, all citizens were transformed into hoplites and so obliged to go through the *agōgē*, which was then either newly-invented or for the first time being generally enforced. Indeed, if we can give a concrete sense to the self-styled Spartan ‘homoioi’ (peers), it is to the uniformity of their hoplite equipment and training, not to the equality of their property nor even their shared way of life as a whole, that we should primarily look.¹¹¹ Thus—and not inappropriately—we end on a note of high paradox: the *polis* that was ‘la plus hoplitique’ (Detienne 125) was in crucial respects not typically hoplite at all.

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¹⁰⁸ Helmets: Snodgrass 1964, 8 and nn. 22 f.; 9 and n. 24; 195, pl. 4; 18, 26 and n. 86. Seal: Dr John Younger of Duke University photographed an impression taken by Dr Lila Marangou, Ephor of the Benaki Museum. I am most grateful to them both, and to the Managing Committee of the British School at Athens, for permission to reproduce it here. Lead figurines: Lorimer 92 f.; J. Boardman, ‘Artemis Orthia and Chronology’, *BSA* lviii (1963) 7. It is perhaps also relevant that the fine Lakonian bronze horse-figurines, which had achieved a wide circulation since the inception of the series c. 750, go out of production by c. 675: see my *Early Sparta* (n. 99) 167–84.

¹⁰⁹ Toynbee, *Some Problems* (n. 4) 250–60 has attempted to apply Snodgrass’ ‘piecemeal’ hypothesis to Sparta. His exegesis of the archaeological evidence and of Tyrtaios is wholly derivative, when not actually erroneous, but his wider political and economic inferences are more compelling. In my view the Spartan ‘Great Rhetra’, with its prescription of regular *Apellai* and granting of *kratos* (in whatever sense) to the *damos*, presupposes the formation (however rudimentary) of the hoplite phalanx; and in this sense I agree with Toynbee’s formally incorrect statement (270) that ‘according to the rhetra, the *damos* of hoplite phalangites already possesses the

ultimate sovereign authority in the Spartan state’. Also following Snodgrass, R. Sealey, ‘Probouleusis and the Sovereign Assembly’, *CSCA* ii (1969) 247–69, at 249 f., 267 f. has attempted to refute the ‘class-struggle’ theory of the assembly’s sovereignty put forward by A. Andrewes, *Probouleusis. Sparta’s contribution to the technique of government* (Oxford Inaugural Lecture, 1954). I have several disagreements with Andrewes—in particular over his interpretation of *probouleusis* in Sparta and his imprecise use of ‘class’—but he has much the better of the argument with Sealey.

¹¹⁰ Pritchett I 4 n. 3; Finley 166 f.; against e.g. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta* 14 and n. 6, who argues for the individual supply-system. For helots and ex-helots on active service, see Andrewes in Gomme (n. 56) iv (1970) 35 f.; Y. Garlan, ‘Les esclaves grecs en temps de guerre’, *Annales littéraires de l’Université de Besançon* iv (1972) 29–62, at 32–5, 42 f. I have not yet been able to see K. W. Welwei, *Unfreie im antiken Kriegsdienst*. 1 (Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei 5, 1974).

¹¹¹ ‘Homoioi’ need not of course mean ‘exactly alike’, but for the egalitarian effect of uniform equipment, see Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* ii 1.14–17; and on the effect of equal training, Pritchett II 208 and n. 4.