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Chapter 4

Evidence from sanctuaries

1. Introduction

In the tenth and ninth centuries, cultic activities probably took place in the open air, especially at remarkable natural sites, including springs and caves. The true focal point of cultic activity in ancient Greece was, after all, the altar. But from the eighth century onwards, temples were erected with the specific purpose of housing statues representing the gods, as well as votive offerings deposited by their worshippers. Among the most valuable offerings deposited at these temples were weapons and armour, although it should be noted that these are still relatively rare and are only found in bulk at Olympia and one or two other sanctuaries (especially Kalapodi).

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of these martial votive offerings. In addition to the central points of focus, such as what the dedications might tell us about different types of warriors and what regional differences can be noted, a number of additional questions readily present themselves. What types of armour and weapons were dedicated to the gods? At which cult sites were weapons and armour offered to the gods? Who or what group of people donated these objects? And, perhaps most importantly, why did some Greeks offer arms and armour to the gods? From the eighth century the number of dedications increased exponentially and continued after weapon graves disappeared from the archaeological record throughout much of southern and central Greece around 700.²⁰⁴

2. A survey of the evidence

In this section, a number of important sites are discussed where offerings of weapons and armour have been found. In the course of the Archaic period, a number of cult sites gained more than regional importance and were transformed into Panhellenic sanctuaries. The earliest of these were Olympia and Delphoi, the latter especially famous for its oracle. By the early sixth century, two additional sanctuaries achieved a Panhellenic status, namely Isthmia (originally a local Korinthian sanctuary) and Nemea (an

204 See also previous chapter; Snodgrass 1980, 52–55.

Argive sanctuary). Around the same time, the Panhellenic games appear to have become more formalised.²⁰⁵ By the end of that same century, these four sanctuaries and their accompanying games were the most important in the whole of the Greek world.²⁰⁶

a. The sanctuary at Olympia

According to Catherine Morgan, Olympia was a neutral meeting place for local rulers of Messenia and Arkadia during the tenth and ninth centuries. At around the start of the eighth century, this rural shrine attracted the attention of other Peloponnesian communities, with possibly athletic competitions being instituted at about this time. The town of Elis was resettled in the last quarter of the eighth century and probably controlled the sanctuary. The dedication of tripods at the site indicates that aristocrats from various regions were competing with each other in the games,²⁰⁷ including martial sports such as chariot races.²⁰⁸

The numerous finds of weapons and armour from Olympia have been the subject of a number of syntheses.²⁰⁹ Most of the weapons and armour found at Greek sanctuaries are hard to date because of a lack of a clear context, making the creation of an accurate typology difficult.²¹⁰ As dedications quickly filled up the temples, priests periodically cleaned them out and deposited the gifts in trenches (hence, some communities in the sixth-century started building *thesauroi*, 'treasuries', to keep their votive offerings safe).²¹¹

i. Weapons

Of the weapons unearthed at Olympia, dedications of arrowheads are rare prior to the seventh century. Nearly all Protogeometric and Geometric finds of arrowheads in the Aegean world are from graves rather than sanctuaries.²¹² Nevertheless, almost five hundred arrowheads, nearly all of which were made of bronze, have been unearthed at Olympia, of which about a tenth can perhaps be dated to the seventh century; most of the arrowheads date to the fifth century, especially after the Persian Wars.²¹³

As regards spearheads, the smallest and lightest are often classified as javelin-points. However, the discovery at Nemea of a cache of javelins suggests that at least some of these javelin-points were used not in combat, but in athletic competition.²¹⁴ Nevertheless, most of the spearheads, of which no less than 840 are made of iron, were definitely weapons of war: some of the later examples feature inscriptions that clearly identify them as

205 Morgan 1993, 26–27.

206 Morgan 1990, 39 and 213–215.

207 Morgan 1990, 192.

208 For further details, see Golden 1998, 23–28.

209 Among others, Baitinger 2001; Bol 1989; Kunze 1991.

210 See, for example, Baitinger 2001, 33–34; Jarva 1995, 11–12.

211 Snodgrass 1999 [1967], 48–49.

212 Baitinger 2001, 28.

213 Baitinger 2001, 29–30.

214 Baitinger 2001, 35.

booty.²¹⁵ It seems likely that most of the earlier spears were also taken from vanquished opponents to be dedicated to the gods. Toward the end of the sixth century, butt-spikes were also offered as *tropaia* at Olympia; no earlier examples are known.²¹⁶ A butt-spike (*saurotēr*, literally 'lizard-killer') was fixed to the bottom end of a spear; it gave some balance to the spear, allowed it to be stuck into the ground, and was also used to dispatch fallen enemies.²¹⁷

Only a handful of daggers have been unearthed. The total number of swords—or remains of scabbards and the like—at Olympia is also rather limited: some 40 items, including pieces of sword and scabbard decorations, have been catalogued by Baitinger. The earliest Iron-Age sword dates to the seventh century; most are of the Naue-II variety that remains common until the middle of the sixth century. These early swords are two-edged and fairly straight; the earliest dedicated slashing sword, sometimes slightly curved and always with a single sharp edge, dates to around the middle of the sixth century.²¹⁸ A new type of sword, shorter when compared to Naue-II blades and characterised by a cross-guard, appears around the middle of the sixth century or slightly later.²¹⁹

ii. Armour

As regards body-armour, the most conspicuous type is the bell-shaped cuirass. Some twenty-nine examples have been unearthed, some of which have been neatly preserved while of others only scraps remain.²²⁰ These date to the seventh and sixth centuries and can be dated according to their style, using Archaic sculpture as a reference and the panoply discovered in Argos tomb T45, discussed above, as an anchor point. A few of the Olympia cuirasses are decorated with intricate, engraved decorations around the shoulder blades, and have been dated to the mid-seventh century. This type of body-armour remained in use until well into Classical times.²²¹

In addition to the bell-shaped cuirasses, the ancient Greeks were familiar with a number of other pieces of body-armour. The term *mitrē* has been taken from Homer, rightly or wrongly, to refer to a piece of armour that was worn to protect the lower body. It has a straight edge where it would be attached to a belt (or perhaps a cuirass); the bottom end is rounded and follows the shape of the lower body. This abdominal plate is probably of Cretan origin;²²² some ten specimens are known from Olympia.²²³ Scale-armour had been in use from the end of the Bronze Age onwards in the Near East. One piece 'of bronze scale-armour of unknown date was

215 See also Jackson 1991, 230–232.

216 Baitinger 2001, 54–55.

217 Snodgrass 1999 [1967], 80.

218 Baitinger 2001, 75–79.

219 Killian-Dirlmeier 1993, 118–130.

220 Jarva 1995, 20–23.

221 Jarva 1995, 17–29; Snodgrass 1964b, 73–76.

222 For more on Cretan armour, refer to Hoffmann 1972.

223 Jarva 1995, 51–52.

found at Olympia, and had apparently been silver-plated.'²²⁴

Other finds of armour include over a dozen upper arm guards, mostly those of the right arm (which would not have been protected by a shield); they may all date to the sixth century.²²⁵ Lower arm guards are sometimes confused with greaves.²²⁶ Nevertheless, five of these arm guards have been identified at Olympia. A beautiful example of a lower arm guard (Olympia M130) covers the arm from the tip of the elbow to the wrist. The maker of this piece of equipment took care in modelling the anatomical features of the lower arm on it. It probably dates to the last quarter of the seventh century.²²⁷

Greaves (which protected the shins), a single thigh guard, and a number of lower and upper arm guards have also been unearthed. Greaves were obviously a popular piece of equipment, as the number of finds at Olympia readily attests.²²⁸ Ignoring those from the Bronze Age (see chapter 2, above), the earliest greaves have been dated to the seventh century. In addition, a few foot-guards and over fifty (!) ankle-guards have been discovered at Olympia. The ankle-guards date back to at least the middle of the seventh century; some of the foot-guards may date to the last quarter of the seventh century.²²⁹ Protection for the feet appears to be a feature mostly of the seventh century and perhaps a little earlier; Homer perhaps also mentions ankle-guards.²³⁰

Helmets have been the object of a number of studies.²³¹ Thanks to the distinctive shape of many helmets a good typology has been developed in the course of time. At Olympia, a number of different types have been found: the so-called 'Chalkidian' and 'Illyrian' helmets, the *Kegelhelm*, and the Korinthian type helmet.²³² The oldest of these helmets is the *Kegelhelm* (the same type as the helmet found in Argos grave T45), which consists of five pieces and has a stilted crest. This type eventually, early in the seventh century, developed into the two-piece Illyrian-type helmet which, despite its name, might actually be a Peloponnesian invention. The Korinthian-type helmet is encountered most often at Olympia; it is 'the foremost type of Greek helmet.'²³³ The Korinthian helmet, named after the place where it was presumably developed, was made out of a single piece of bronze and—unlike the *Kegelhelm*- and Illyrian-type helmets—protected the face. In the sixth century, an open-faced variant was created based on the Korinthian, that has been dubbed 'Ionian'. Later, in the fifth century, another variant on the Korinthian type was developed, the Chalkidian

224 Snodgrass 1964b, 85.

225 Jarva 1995, 73–75.

226 Snodgrass 1964b, 240.

227 Jarva 1995, 76–79.

228 Jarva 1995, 84–85.

229 Jarva 1995, 100–109; Snodgrass 1964b, 240.

230 Discussion on these possible Homeric ankle-guards in Jarva 1995, 104–105 (with references).

231 E.g., Borchartd 1972, Edrich 1969, Hencken 1971, and of course Kukahn 1936.

232 Snodgrass 1964b, 13–15, 18, 20–26, and 34.

233 Snodgrass 1964b, 20 (with references).

helmet, which left the ears free and added moveable cheek-pieces;²³⁴ the 'Attic' subtype lacked a nose-guard.

Finally, we have the remains of shields, as well as objects that have been conclusively demonstrated by Snodgrass, in most cases, to be shield bosses (rather than cymbals). The bosses were used on shields with a single central grip. The shape of the shields is unknown, but they were presumably round or oval, as evidenced from figurines and metal shield coverings of Geometric and Early Orientalising date.²³⁵ More than seven hundred fragments of Argive-type shields have been discovered at Olympia, including bronze elements from the outside of the shield, rim fragments, handles, and shield band panels.²³⁶ These shields were made of wood; the rim was generally reinforced with bronze. Furthermore, a number of bronze blazons have been found that were fitted to the wooden shield. Complete bronze facings covering all of the wood on the front are comparatively rare among the finds at Olympia. The shape of the shield and the inner fixtures for the arm did not change after the basic design was introduced, presumably around the end of the eighth century.²³⁷

b. The other Panhellenic sanctuaries

Next to Olympia, the Panhellenic sanctuary at Delphoi—sacred to Apollo and famed for its oracle—is the most important cult site in the Aegean. Only small quantities of weapons and armour have been recovered at Delphoi. By far the most interesting finds there are a few early bronze shield facings. These are of the so-called *Herzsprung* or 'Lambda' type and are perfectly circular, with raised concentric circles with a spare triangular area (hence the alternate name based on the Greek letter *lambda*). *Herzsprung* shields have been unearthed in various regions, including Italy, the Aegean, and Cyprus. The shields at Delphoi date to the very end of the eighth century, at the time when single-grip shields were probably phased out in favour of the double-grip Argive shield.²³⁸

The temple of Poseidon at Isthmia lies about 16 kilometres outside of Corinth and was that city's most conspicuous extraurban sanctuary, so any who dedicated their arms and armour at the site would be sure that they were seen by people who crossed the isthmus.²³⁹ The weapons and armour here, which were mostly donated in the seventh and sixth centuries, have been examined by Alastair Jackson. In 1991, he noted that the excavations yielded 'traces of 200 helmets and innumerable shields most from the hundred years down to the Persian invasion'.²⁴⁰ Later investigations have increased the total number of helmet fragments to four hundred, most dating to before the mid-fifth century.²⁴¹

234 Snodgrass 1964*b*, 33–35; Connolly 1998 [1981], 60–63.

235 Snodgrass 1964*b*, 37–51.

236 Refer to Bol 1989.

237 Snodgrass 1964*b*, 63–65; see also Bol 1989, 1–5.

238 Snodgrass 1964*b*, 55–56.

239 Pedley 2005, 48.

240 Jackson 1991, 245.

241 See <http://humanities.uchicago.edu/orgs/isthmia/publications/2004report.html> (brief

Chariot races were part of the games at Isthmia. It is therefore no surprise that the metal items here include objects associated with horses and chariots. These typically aristocratic items include bronze horse bits of Bronze-Age type that continued to be used in Geometric times, as well as later, sixth-century iron bits. Some iron fixtures probably belonged to chariots or wagons; these include iron wheel tires, bands, clamps and plates, and nave bands. Whole chariots or even parts of chariots, especially wheels, were dedicated to the gods.²⁴²

c. *The sanctuary at Kalapodi*

Near the modern village of Kalapodi in Phokis, an ancient sanctuary—possibly sacred to Apollo—has been unearthed, with evidence for cult activity at the site stretching back to shortly before 1200. The metal finds at this sanctuary include copious amounts of weapons and armour. Among the bronze finds these are various types of helmets (five early so-called *Kegelhelmen*, twenty-nine Illyrian helmets, sixty-two Korinthian helmets, and one late so-called Chalkidian helmet), three greaves, two shields of ‘Herzprung’ type and forty-one Argive shields. It should be mentioned that fragments of a seventh-century wall-painting have been discovered that show armoured warriors; the scene is discussed in the chapter on the iconographic evidence.

Most of the *Kegelhelmen* at Kalapodi were found in contexts dated to the sixth century or earlier; at least one, no. 1960, has been unearthed in a Late Geometric II context. The early types of Illyrian helmets, made of two pieces, cover a similar range, including the fifth century. Illyrian helmets made in one piece tend to be later, dated to decades around 500. Korinthian helmets are dated from the Early Protokorinthian period down to the Classical period. The fifth-century examples include helmets with parts cut out from the sides (a feature I shall return to in our discussion of the iconographic evidence). The shields and other pieces of armour have been unearthed in Classical or later contexts, although the greaves have stylistically been dated to the end of the seventh and early sixth centuries; some of the shields are probably also earlier, including some sixth-century Argive examples.²⁴³

The weapons include more than three hundred spearheads, more than thirty *sauroters*, over seventy arrowheads, more than sixty swords (of which twenty-two indeterminable fragments), and nine knives (of which only one dates to the sixth century, the others are Classical). Interestingly, some spearheads and swords were ritually ‘killed’, *i.e.* bent in order to make them useless. The bulk of the spearheads are Classical; less than a tenth can be dated to the sixth century. Of the *sauroters*, about half a dozen belong to the sixth century, the rest are later. Most of the arrowheads date to the fifth century, less than a handful belong to the sixth century or earlier, and a few are of Mykenian date. The same holds true for the swords: less than a

report of the 2004 campaign).

242 Raubitschek 1998, 97–108.

243 Refer to the catalogue in Felsch 2007, 357–374.

handful can be dated to the seventh and sixth centuries, the remainder are all Classical.²⁴⁴

d. The sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta

During the excavations of the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta, literally tens of thousands of very simple lead figurines have been unearthed. These figurines are flat, with a smooth back and a simply executed front; figurines from the period 635 to 500 were more solid and heavy. Many of these simple figurines represent warriors, both spearmen and archers, as well as riders. On the basis of the available excavation data, I have not been able to ascertain the proportions of these different types of troops. However, the earliest of the figurines date from the very end of the eighth century down to the fourth, although their popularity sharply decreased after 500,²⁴⁵ which suggests a change in dedication practices or the way warriors were perceived, changes that are not mutually exclusive *per se* (a point to which I shall return later).

3. General discussion of the evidence

In this section, I attempt to provide answers to the main questions raised in this chapter's introduction. The question concerning the types of armour and weapons donated at temples is the easiest to answer. The full range of martial equipment was donated to the gods, from spears and swords to helmets, greaves, shields, and cuirasses. Only items in bronze or iron have survived; it is possible that pieces of armour made of perishable materials, such as linen corslets, were also deposited at sanctuaries, but no trace of them has survived.

Naturally, the finds beg the question whether they are in some respect representative of the 'typical' war-gear worn by the majority of fighters in ancient Greece. Based on the totality of the finds at Olympia, Hans van Wees argue that 'in the archaic period about one in three soldiers wore greaves and one in ten a metal cuirass.'²⁴⁶ The numbers are derived from Eero Jarva's book on Archaic Greek body-armour: he counts about 350 helmets, 280 shields, 225 greaves, and only 33 cuirasses.²⁴⁷ Van Wees argues that the number of greaves must be divided by two since they were worn in pairs. The question, however, is whether this material can be used for—even simple—statistical analyses. Furthermore, the catalogues in Emil Kunze's *Beinschienen* reveal that virtually none of the greaves match up with each other,²⁴⁸ which should not really be surprising considering the chronological range (the greaves cover a period of some three centuries).

Furthermore, we cannot assume that whole panoplies were dedicated to the gods. The fact that almost no pairs of greaves have been found at sanctuaries—most pairs are single finds, sometimes in graves or at other

244 Refer to the catalogue in Schmit 2007, 526–551.

245 Wace 1929, 251–252.

246 Van Wees 2004, 50.

247 Jarva 1995, 111 fig. 6.1; Van Wees 2004, 266 n. 10 (with references).

248 See Kunze 1991.

singular findspots—should serve as a warning against assuming that the dedications represent the full range of weapons and armour available to Archaic Greek warriors. Weapons, for example, outnumber pieces of armour. Instead, it seems more likely that items were dedicated that had a particular significance: bronze is a high-status metal, after all. Furthermore, shields and helmets could be easily tossed aside in case of a rout and then obtained by the victors, or else were items that were easily removed from the body of a slain foe. In short, the evidence from sanctuaries cannot be used to reconstruct what a ‘typical’ Archaic Greek warrior’s panoply looked like: only a comparison with other types of evidence can suggest an answer.

a. At which sanctuaries were these items deposited?

Both archaeological and literary evidence suggest that weapons and armour were dedicated at sanctuaries both great and small from the eighth century onwards (see also chapter 8). Archaeological evidence from most other sanctuaries tends to be slim; François de Polignac lists a number of other sanctuaries where some weapons and armour of Archaic date have been unearthed, namely the sanctuaries of Apollo at Kosmas (ancient Selinous) and Tyros (in Kynouria), at the sanctuary of Hera Limenia at Perachora, at the Heraion on Samos, at the temple of Athena Alea at Tegea, at the oracular sanctuary of Dodona (Zeus), at the temples of Apollo on Delos and at Amyklai, and at the temple of obscure goddess Aphaia on the island of Aigina.²⁴⁹

Only sanctuaries sacred to warlike or particularly powerful gods appear to have ever received weapons: Zeus, his wife Hera, Apollo (and his twin-sister Artemis, both archer-gods), and Athena. But these were arguably the more popular gods of the Greek pantheon anyway, so that the presence of weapons at their sanctuaries is perhaps not so informative. Furthermore, in most cases the total number of weapons and armour is relatively small, especially as regards the Archaic period. What is more interesting, is the fact that weapons and armour were apparently dedicated only at some sanctuaries, so that dedicatory practices were apparently as dependent on specific localities as they were on certain deities (there are, for example, large differences between the dedications at Olympia and Dodona, both sacred to Zeus).

b. Temples to Hera and the goddess’ connection to ships and horses

While the temples to Hera have yielded only small amounts of weapons and armour,²⁵⁰ it is curious that the goddess is often closely associated with ships, at Tiryns, Perachora, and the famous Heraion on Samos. The latter is located near the sea and at a distance of some 6 kilometres from the ancient town; more than forty wooden ship models have been discovered here thanks to the favourable conditions for the preservation of perishable materials (most of the models have been found in wells).²⁵¹ Near the Samian

249 De Polignac 1995, 45–55.

250 Note Pausanias 2. 17. 1–7 (shield of Menelaos at the Heraion).

251 Descriptions of more than half of them in Johnston 1985, 54–63.

Heraion a so-called *Schiffsfundament* has been discovered. This unique feature formed the stone base or foundation for a complete ship, presumably a *pentekontoros*; it was made around 600 and measures 23.33 m in length and 3.22 m in width.²⁵²

In addition, Samian Hera at least is closely associated with horses and riders, as demonstrated by the small wooden stools of which the side panels are shaped like horses. In addition, the bronze finds included horse-trappings, such as bits and a ninth-century trapezoidal relief of Near-Eastern origin that was used to protect the forehead of a horse (there are many exotic items at Samos, no doubt left there by both Greek and non-Greek travellers and traders), as well as a horse breastplate (discussed in chapter 6). Helmut Kyrieleis points out that 'In no other Greek sanctuary have so many horse trappings been found as in the Heraion at Samos.'²⁵³ Hera, a goddess of power, is thus strongly linked with a number of aristocratic or élite activities, most notably seafaring and horses, but sometimes also more ostensibly violent activities (weapons and armour).

c. Who donated arms and armour to the gods and why?

It is clear that at least some of the weapons and armour unearthed at the sanctuaries had been dedicated by individuals rather than communities. The shift from burial with arms to the display of weapons and armour at (some) sanctuaries is probably to be connected with an increase in inter-polity aristocratic competition.²⁵⁴ W. Kendrick Pritchett summarises a few of the finds, which I paraphrase here, such as a helmet dated to around 600 and possibly from Olympia that features the name of one Krataimenes. Similar inscriptions on pieces of armour or weapons are known from other sites. Even more interesting is a sixth-century bronze plaque from Sparta, which once hung next to some armour, that reads how one Eurystratidas, a Lakedaimon, dedicated said equipment to the gods.²⁵⁵

In addition to actual weapons and armour, votive miniatures were also dedicated to the gods. Dedications of votive shields were known in the Mykenaian period (see chapter 2) and re-appear from the eighth century onwards. From the sanctuary to Artemis Orthia in Sparta we have a small terracotta Argive shield.²⁵⁶ Miniature shields have also been found in a number of other places, including Olympia; one small bronze shield with a gorgoneion, dated to around 500, has been unearthed on the Athenian Akropolis.²⁵⁷ The latter is a good warning against assuming that martial objects were by necessity donated by warlike men: the inscription on the rim identifies the donor as Phrygia the Breadseller. In this particular instance, the shield is intended to be Athena's and is dedicated by a woman—the name Phrygia suggests she is a metic or possibly a (freed?)

252 Snodgrass 1983, 17; Wallinga 1993, 49–52 with ill. 7b; Crielaard 1996, 311 and 311 n. 19 with further references.

253 Kyrieleis 1993, 145.

254 Morgan 1993, 20; cf. also Snodgrass 1977, 277–281.

255 Pritchett 1979, 253–254 (with references).

256 E.g., Sekunda 1998, 53 (fig.).

257 Athens 6837: Hurwit 1999, 61 fig. 45.

slave—to placate or thank her patron deity. Similarly, the large numbers of simple lead warrior figurines at Sparta—and other figurines and miniature martial items at Olympia and elsewhere—may have been intended to honour that sanctuary's particular deity, rather than represent any warlike tendencies or characteristics on the part of the donors.

It is generally assumed that dedicated arms and armour were part of the spoils of war, stripped from the bodies of the enemy dead or else left behind on the battlefield when the enemy fled. However, warrior figurines, votive shields, ship models, and the presence of 'foreign' items of weapons and armour,²⁵⁸ suggest strongly a link with the donor rather than one of his victims: in other words, these objects underline a relationship between the donor and the god in question. It is therefore clear that weapons, armour, and related high-status objects could be spoils of war in some cases, but also more personal objects given to the gods.

In the Archaic period, most of these items were deposited at the larger sanctuaries, especially Olympia, but a shift can be noted in the fifth century, when dedications of weapons and armour decrease at Olympia and instead increase at local sanctuaries. This is clearly demonstrated by a perusal of the inventories of weapons and armour at these more local or smaller regional sanctuaries, where the bulk of the weapons and armour date to the Classical period (*e.g.*, at Kalapodi and Perachora). Alastair Jackson suggests that in the Classical period it was no longer considered proper to publically humiliate an enemy at the larger sanctuaries.²⁵⁹ However, this seems uncharacteristically considerate; another explanation might more profitably connect this change to a difference in social makeup of Classical armies (higher proportion of non-aristocrats, for example) and a decrease in the amount of bronze used for armour.

Thanks to the work of François de Polignac, sanctuaries are nowadays commonly associated with the rise of the *polis*, the Greek city-state, in which extra-urban sanctuaries in particular played an important role. However, Archaic sanctuaries are more frequently associated not with specific towns, but with specific groups of people that may extend beyond a single civic community.²⁶⁰ Temples served as places where members of neighbouring or rivalling communities would congregate. In the Archaic period, temples and their associated sacred areas (*temenoi*) were used for more than worship alone: they may have served as the focal point for trade, too.²⁶¹ Sanctuaries were prime arenas where rival aristocrats would compete for status. What better way to demonstrate one's own superiority and martial prowess than by displaying either the shield of a defeated enemy or an well-crafted piece of bronze armour or iron sword—signs of wealth as well as indicators of warrior prowess—in a very public space?

258 Refer to Herman 1983 and Morgan 1987.

259 The foregoing, Jackson 1991, 228.

260 Note Hall 1995 (the case of the Argive Heraion); Hall 2007, 84–87.

261 Hall 2007, 83.

4. Conclusions

Of the sanctuaries, Olympia has yielded by far the most items of weapons and armour. Other important sanctuaries include Delphoi, Isthmia, and Kalapodi. Weapons are the most commonly donated martial item; pieces of armour are relatively rare. Discrepancies with regards to the proportion of greaves, cuirasses, helmets, and shields have been used to demonstrate that not all warriors wore a complete panoply. This seems logical, but the evidence does not conclusively support this notion: there may have been other reasons to donate more shields than, say, greaves. As such, it is difficult to say anything about what an Archaic Greek warrior would have looked like on the basis of these finds. The evidence suggests that spears and swords were the most common weapons, while bows and arrows were rare; of the armour, shields, helmets, and greaves are common, while cuirasses are comparatively rare.

Weapons and armour were mostly dedicated at extra-urban or regional sanctuaries, of which the Panhellenic ones are the most obvious examples. Close to or even within settlements, votive miniature shields or even small figurines may have been a more appropriate gift offering, as at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta and on the Athenian Akropolis, although warrior figurines were also deposited at Olympia (see chapter 6). The gods and goddesses that received these martial gifts include Zeus (god of power), Apollo and his twin sister Artemis (archer-gods), and Athena (goddess of wisdom and warcraft). Poseidon, like his brother Zeus, also received gifts of armour, as well as horse trappings and pieces of chariots, at Isthmia; it is interesting to note that ships—both as models and in the shape of an actual *pentekontoros* (i.e., the *Schiffsfundament*)—were among the offerings to Hera at Samos.

Those who dedicated martial objects—arms, armour, votive shields, and so forth—need not have been men. Similarly, gifts of arms and armour were not limited exclusively to spoils of war. Instead, items might be selected that were deemed particularly appropriate for either the donor (a bronze shield as a sign of wealth) or the receiver (a bronze shield with a gorgoneion motif as a gift appropriate to Athena). In most cases, it seems that only individuals dedicated arms and armour to the gods. In some cases, at least, the display of weapons and armour no doubt served as a very public statement concerning the donor's wealth, status, and military prowess.

