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## Warfare and Society in Early Greece

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## Chapter 8

# Archaic textual sources

### 1. Introduction

The textual evidence from the Archaic period, down to around 500, is the subject of this chapter. The evidence consists of fragments attributed to lyric poets, and a number of inscriptions, selected for the information that they contain on Greek warfare and martiality. The material is discussed as much as possible in geographical order, moving roughly from west to east and from north to south, apart from some shorter texts that make better sense when discussed within a proper context, such as the epigram from Korkyra and remarks concerning the activity of Greek warriors in the Near East and Egypt.

Perhaps at this point it is good to remember the main objectives listed in the introduction. What I am going to examine here in particular are: (1) different types of warriors; (2) regional diversity with regards to warfare, as well as; (3) developments through time, both continuity and discontinuity, in as far as this is possible; (4) aspects of 'martiality', *i.e.* the (symbolic) role violence and war played off the battlefield, and finally; (5) ancient Greek terminology. Due to the diverse nature of the evidence discussed in this chapter, I shall present brief summaries after each of the longer subsections. In addition, I shall compare the evidence with that gleaned from Homer, as the material follows chronologically and much Archaic poetry, especially elegiac verses, use epic language.

### 2. A survey of the evidence

Like the Homeric epics, the poems discussed in this chapter were meant to be sung, often to the accompaniment of music.<sup>729</sup> The lyric poets were members of the elite; their songs were performed for an immediate audience of friends,<sup>730</sup> but at least some compositions circulated more widely across the Aegean. Lyric poetry is usually categorised according to genre, based on the meters used.<sup>731</sup> Elegiac poetry was similar to epic; suitable for the celebration of war and bloodshed. Many of the fragments discussed below come from exhortation poetry, *i.e.* songs in which men are

729 For further details, refer to Mulroy 1992, 9–11.

730 See, for example, Stanford 1981 (performance); Bartol 1992 (specifically iambic poetry).

731 For a more in-depth discussion, refer to Harvey 1955, West 1973.

encouraged to stand and fight (Tyrtaios, Kallinos, Mimnermos).<sup>732</sup> Iambic poetry tended to be more varied as far as the subject matter was concerned, ranging from sex to warfare, from (insider) jokes to serious politics (Archilochos, Alkaios).<sup>733</sup> Much of this poetry was probably intended to be recited during the *sumposion* (i.e., drinking songs) or, in the case of choral songs and iambic poetry, at festivals.<sup>734</sup>

Archaic poetry is seldom used as a source of historical information. Discussion of the material is often limited to philological or literary arguments. Whenever this material is used in a history of Archaic Greece, a few lines are normally cited only when they illustrate a particular point made by the author (e.g., the style of fighting described in Tyrtaios, or the reference to Gyges by Archilochos). However, these writings provide an invaluable source of information as regards the history of ideas (in this case, warfare and martiality) for the period in question,<sup>735</sup> as demonstrated by Snodgrass in one chapter of his monograph *Archaic Greece* (1980). To ignore such a valuable source of information would be a waste. It should be noted that in the course of time many of these poets came to personify particular genres, the poets themselves transformed into literary personae. Archilochos, for example, became the embodiment of scabrous poetry, some of which mocked dominant values.

#### a. Sparta

Tyrtaios composed elegiac poems, mostly songs of exhortation, in an Ionic dialect, for Spartans. Classical authors claimed that Tyrtaios had originally been a lame Athenian schoolteacher.<sup>736</sup> Tyrtaios' *floruit* is generally dated to the latter half of the seventh century. This date was contested at the end of the nineteenth century, when A.W. Verrall suggested instead that he was active around the time of the Messenian revolt in 464.<sup>737</sup> Christopher Faraone has recently argued that while Tyrtaios is a poet of the Archaic age, portions of the extant fragments, particularly the longer ones (frr. 10–12 West), contain fifth- or even fourth-century interpolations and alterations.<sup>738</sup> Nevertheless, a date for the bulk of the material somewhere in the later seventh century seems reasonable.

#### i. Arms and armour

Tyrtaios tells us that some men are equipped with shields that is *kalupsamenos*, 'covering himself', covering the body from the shoulders

732 An interesting slant on exhortation poetry can be found in Irwin 2005, esp. pp. 15–62.

733 More broadly on poetic inspiration, from Homer to Pindar, see MurrayP 1981.

734 For discussion, refer to Bowie 1986; briefly, Murray 1983; in greater detail, Murray 1990. On Greek music, see also West 1994.

735 Crielaard 2003, 300–303; note also discussion on reliability of ancient sources in Hall 2007, 19–22.

736 E.g., Plato *Leges* 1.629a–b.

737 Verrall 1896, Macan 1897 (criticism); Verrall 1897 (response to Macan).

738 Faraone 2006, who also briefly discusses questions concerning the authenticity of the Tyrtaian corpus as a whole (cf. references to Verrall and Macan, above). My thanks to Prof. André Lardinois for pointing out Faraone's paper.

down to the shins (fr. 11.24 West).<sup>739</sup> The poet refers to a shield in one instance as being ‘bossed’, *omphaleossēs* (fr. 12.24 West), which can be taken to mean that this is a central-grip shield. In such types of shields, a boss normally covers the area of the shield where the handle is located. However, I would tentatively suggest that the word might also be used to refer to the bronze plating of an Argive shield. At least some of Tyrtaios’ warriors are equipped with helmets that feature plumes or crests (fr. 11.32 West).

The main weapons are the spear and the sword (fr. 11.25–30 West). Tyrtaios refers to ‘spearmen’, *aichmētes*, in another fragment (fr. 19.13 West), a term familiar also to Homer. In one fragment, Tyrtaios distinguishes between two different kinds of warriors on the basis of their armour, making a distinction that is apparently absent in Homer. The relevant passage runs as follows:

You light-armed men [*gumnētes*], wherever you can aim  
 from the shield-cover, pelt them with great rocks  
 and hurl at them your smooth-shaved javelins,  
 helping the armoured troops [*panoploi*] with close support. (fr. 11.35–38 West)

This explicit distinction between light-armed men (*gumnētes*; literally ‘naked men’) and armoured troops (*panoploi*) is not only new,<sup>740</sup> but it also unique among the poets discussed in this chapter. This distinction does not reappear until Herodotos and later writers, when the term *panoploi*, ‘all-equipped’, has been replaced by a word with similar meaning, *hoplites* (singular, *hoplitēs*), ‘equipped’; *gumnētēs* remains in general usage.

## ii. Warfare

In songs of exhortation, a picture comes to the fore of close-ranged fighting in which *panoploi* and *gumnētes* fight in close co-operation. The poet tells the men not to be afraid, but to engage the enemy at close range, using their shields for protection. Shields press against shields (fr. 11.31–34 West), and the men engaging the enemy in hand-to-hand combat are referred to as *promachoi* (fr. 11.12 West); these men fight in the front lines (fr. 11.11–14 West). These *promachoi* are no doubt all *panoploi*, as the *gumnētes* are told to seek cover behind their shields, while hurling rocks and javelins at the enemy. Archers are noticeably absent in most passages, although they are mentioned in one fragment (fr. 19.1 West).

A few fragments refer to the conquest of Messenia by the Spartans and the effects that this had on the region’s inhabitants. Modern commentators often refer to a first and second Messenian war; this, however, is a modern convention. Ancient sources only ever speak of ‘the’ Messenian war,<sup>741</sup> regarding the conquest of Messenia as a single, if perhaps protracted event that happened in the distant past. Tyrtaios mentions that Messenia was

739 The original Greek implies through its use of *kalupsamenos* that the shield ‘enshrouds’ the entire body, *i.e.* it is very large.

740 See also Van Wees 1994, 147.

741 Brief discussion in Luraghi 2006, 46 n. 3 (with references).

conquered in the time of his fathers' fathers (fr. 5.5–8 West); when taken literally, the war apparently took place two generations ago, although the phrase seems more likely to be metaphorical, *i.e.* the war happened 'long ago'. The war supposedly lasted twenty years – twice as long as the Trojan War. This smacks of heroic rhetoric, intended to glorify the Spartan conquest, rather than an accurate assessment of how long it took to pacify the region.

There is little doubt over what inspired the Lakedaimonians to expand their territory. The Spartans seized the lands of the Messenians for agricultural gain, as the country was 'good to plough and good to plant fruit' (fr. 5.4 West). The Messenians were not ousted from their lands, but instead reduced to servile status and required to pay a heavy tax; later sources, starting with Herodotos, refers to these slaves as Helots (the etymology is obscure). Tyrtaios mentions how the enslaved Messenians suffered, 'like donkeys under heavy loads' (fr. 6 West). They were thus not sold off or used to work the lands of their masters' back in Lakonia, but instead were tied to the land.<sup>742</sup> Later Classical sources speak of similarly subjugated populations in the Argolid, Thessaly, and Krete;<sup>743</sup> no doubt these too were the result of past territorial expansions.

### iii. Martial values

A person who refuses to fight for his community will be shamed and exiled (fr. 10.1–14 West). Tyrtaios extols the virtues of fighting and dying for one's *patridos*, 'fatherland'. He emphasises that men should not fight for personal glory alone (fr. 10.15–16 and 10.23–24 West), but for the benefit of 'the whole community (*dēmos*) and state (*polis*)' (fr. 12.15 West). Nevertheless, should a young warrior die in battle in the prime of his life, he will enjoy everlasting glory (fr. 12.21–34 West).<sup>744</sup> Tyrtaios places the most emphasis on fighting at close range, as *promachos*. The parallels here with the descriptions found in the *Iliad* are easy to spot: the importance attached to deeds of martial excellence (*aretē*), the search for glory, the value of defending one's home and kin, and so forth.<sup>745</sup>

As in the *Iliad*, the death of the young and handsome warrior is glorified, whereas the sight of older men dying on the battlefield is considered 'disgraceful'. Tyrtaios specifically addresses the 'young men' (*neoi*) of the Spartan army to stand and fight against the enemy (fr. 10.15–32 West); I shall discuss this term in more detail on page 2.8.1, below. Tyrtaios encourages the men to engage the enemy at close range instead of hanging back.<sup>746</sup> This tells us that battles did not consist of a simple, straightforward clash between rival armies; rather, Tyrtaian battles are characterised by the

742 MacDowell 1986, 31–37 (almost all sources of Classical and later dates).

743 Westermann 1945 conveniently summarises the evidence.

744 These lines may be later fifth-century interpolations, as per Faraone 2006, 43–46 (who compares them to lines in Pindar's odes and the 'high-flown rhetoric of late fifth-century epitaphs').

745 *Cf.*, for example, Hom. *Il.* 15.496–498; Hom. *Od.* 14.244–245.

746 Similar harangues are also found in the *Iliad*, for example 7.99–100.

same ebb and flood familiar from Homer.<sup>747</sup> This explains why Tyrtaios points out that virtues or good looks are worthless if a man is unwilling to participate in battle (fr. 12.10–20 West). He reminds the young men that if they take recourse to flight, they will shame their country and force the older men to take the brunt of the enemy's assault. This distinction between younger and older men, especially among the aristocracy, is one that Homer also makes.

Death on the battlefield is the surest path to glory. According to Tyrtaios, the community would remember and honour the fallen warrior for many generations, with people being able to point out his grave many years after his death (fr. 12.29–30 West; cf. Archilochos fr. 133 West, discussed above). This suggests that the number of 'honourable dead' was comparatively small, at least in the battles that Tyrtaios presumably used as inspiration for his songs. No doubt only members of the aristocracy, who presumably fought as *panoploi* rather than *gumnētes*, would have been awarded a burial with full honours and a monument to mark their graves. The survivors would point to the grave and talk about its occupant, thus keeping the warrior's memory alive and granting him immortality. This is a very Homeric conception of death and glory; compare the description of Achilles' funeral and burial mound:

Around them [*i.e.*, the cremation urns] then, we, the chosen host of the Argive  
spearmen, piled up a grave mound that was both great and perfect,  
on a jutting promontory there by the wide Hellespont,  
so that it can be seen afar from out on the water  
by men now alive and those to be born in the future. (Hom. *Od.* 24.80–84)<sup>748</sup>

Dying on the battlefield was, however, not the sole means of acquiring honour and glory. Tyrtaios tells us that if a man were to distinguish himself in battle and survive, all the people of the community, 'young and old alike', would honour him. He would become something of a local celebrity, respected by high and low, and 'all the men at the public seats' would 'make room for him'. In other words, brave warriors can look forward to enjoying certain privileges. This, Tyrtaios emphasises, is the just reward of those who defend their country (fr. 12.35–44 West). No doubt this type of honour, too, as in the Homeric epics, would be limited to members of the aristocracy. In contrast, the coward may die from receiving a spear in the back between the shoulder blades, a death that is considered especially shameful (fr. 11.3–20 West).

#### iv. Summary

Tyrtaios tells us that, in his time and at Sparta, there were two kinds of fighters, namely *panoploi* ('armoured troops') and *gumnētes* ('naked troops'), though apparently both used shields. They also appear to have mixed freely on the battlefield, with the main purpose of the *gumnētes* to provide support for the *panoploi* by throwing javelins and rocks at the enemy. But what did

747 For further details, see also Singor 1988, 93–111; Latacz 1977, 232–237.

748 See also *Il.* 7.89–90; *Od.* 1.239–240 and 14.369–370.

these men fight about? The Spartans at one point managed to conquer the Messenians, so the acquisition of land emerges as a clear motive for war, as does the defence of this land against rebels. Most of Tyrtaios' songs exhort the men to fight, telling them that death in battle is glorious and flight leads only to dishonour and banishment.

*b. Athens and Salamis*

The poet and politician Solon, who was active in the first half of the sixth century,<sup>749</sup> was once appointed as arbiter in Athens to prevent *stasis* and tyranny (e.g., fr. 4, 34–35 West). Solon relies heavily on martial metaphors in a number of the extant fragments. In one passage, he says how he 'took my stand with strong shield covering both sides, allowing neither unjust dominance' (fr. 5.5–6 West). In another, Solon describes how he took a stand in the middle of the two opposing sides, in the *metaichmios*, the 'land between the spears', quite literally the no-man's land between two armies (fr. 37 West). This figure-of-speech suggests that there is normally some distance between rival armies, as on the Homeric and possibly Tyrtaian battlefield.

One reason that he was trusted by both sides of this conflict might have been his earlier military career, when he inspired the Athenians to continue their long-lasting conflict with Megara over control of the island of Salamis (fr. 1–3 West).<sup>750</sup> Plutarch claims that the Athenians made a law that no-one was to mention capturing Salamis, and that when Solon saw so many 'young men' (*neoi*) restless, he composed his poem *Salamis* and thus managed to rouse the Athenians, who went on to wrest control of the island from Megara (*Sol.* 8.1–3). As Hans van Wees points out, two issues were at stake in this conflict, namely the honour of the Athenians as well as the conquest of land.<sup>751</sup>

The earliest known Athenian decree, dating to between 510 and 480 (and broken into seven fragments), happens to inform us a little about the situation at Salamis and what the rights and obligations of the (Athenian) inhabitants were. The text makes clear that the Athenians sent *klērouchoi* to Salamis. This is the earliest known reference to *klērouchoi*,<sup>752</sup> Athenians who were giving allotments abroad that they could settle without losing their Athenian citizenship.<sup>753</sup> Among other things, the decree states that the *klērouchos* must pay taxes and provide military service to Athens, with each colonist providing his own arms at a value of 30 drachmae; the Athenian governor (*archon*) must either approve the men's equipment or is responsible for mobilising the colonists in an emergency (the text is fragmentary preserved and unclear at that point). The text was approved by

749 Note that I consider the Athenian archon list a later fabrication that is next to useless when it comes to dating archons earlier than the later sixth century; see also Plommer 1969.

750 On Salamis, see, for example, Shapiro 1981, 174.

751 Van Wees 2004, 23.

752 Evans 1963, 168.

753 Other colonists were called *apokoi*. These were wholly independent from their hometown; e.g., *apokoi* at Hdt. 7.95 (Ionians and Dorians).

the *boulē*, the Athenian council.<sup>754</sup>

This is the earliest reference to men each having to supply their own equipment. These men could then be inspected, and were presumably mobilised, by a representative of the central authority, in this case the *archon* or 'governor'. This seems incompatible with earlier forms of army organisation, with warbands consisting of leaders and their (personal) followers. The cost of the panoply is interesting as well. Coinage was at some scale introduced in Greece only from 550 onwards. It is often difficult to estimate exactly how much an ancient drachma was worth, but 30 drachmae around 500 must have been the equivalent of somewhat more than thirty days' worth of wages for a simple labourer at the very least.<sup>755</sup> The situation on Salamis was presumably similar to that in Athens at around the same time, with each relatively affluent Athenian subject to some kind of authority figure appointed by the council and having to provide his own military equipment at a (minimum) fixed value.

### c. *Eufoia*

A fragment by the Parian poet Archilochos (see below) might refer to the so-called Lelantine War (the name is modern).<sup>756</sup> Much has been written about this war, and it is often difficult to untangle truth from fiction.<sup>757</sup> The fragment in question runs as follows, using a slightly modified version of West's translation:

There won't be many bows drawn, nor much slingshot,  
when on the plain the War-god brings the fight  
together; it will be an *ergon*<sup>758</sup>  
of swords — that is the warfare [*machēs*] that the spearfamed [*douriklutoi*]  
lords [*despotai*] of Euboea are expert at. (fr. 3 West)

Archilochos here describes how the lords of the Euboians excel in the work (*ergon*) of swords, before adding that they are also *douriklutoi*, 'spear-famed'. This emphasis on fighting with spear and sword indicates short-ranged warfare; just as we have seen in the *Iliad*, and as we may be led to believe from our examination of the Archaic material so far, archery and other kinds of long-ranged warfare are rare.

This fragment might refer to the Lelantine War, *i.e.* a war nominally fought between Chalkis and Eretria over control of the Lelanton plain. Thucydides mentions how this was the first war in which people from a great variety of Greek places joined in the fighting, either on the side of Chalkis or Eretria (1.15). We should probably not envision some kind of state-organised system of alliances at work here, similar to those used in the Persian Wars, but probably something a bit more small-scale. Jan Paul

754 Meiggs & Lewis 1989 [1969], 25–27 (no. 14).

755 A labourer working on the Erechteion in Athens in the later fifth century B.C. earned one drachma a day, so if one takes inflation into account, the thirty days' estimate is rather on the conservative side; see Carradice & Price 1988, 103.

756 For an in-depth analysis of the war, its sources and its problems, refer to Parker 1997.

757 Demonstrated by the detailed review in Hall 2007, 1–8.

758 Translated by West as 'agony', but the word means 'work', *i.e.* 'the work of swords'.

Crielaard suggests that the Lelantine War was ‘an aristocratic affair’, in which the fighting men of Chalkis and Eretria might have recruited *xenoi*, aristocratic ‘guest-friends’, to aid in the fighting.<sup>759</sup>

#### d. Paros and Thasos

Archilochos was born on the island of Paros and later took part in the Parian conquest of Thasos. His *floruit* is conventionally dated to around the middle of the seventh century. This date is largely based on a fragment that refers to Gyges, then ruler (‘tyrant’) of Lydia (fr. 19 West), as well as a fragment that mentions a solar eclipse (fr. 122).<sup>760</sup> As with most other lyric poets, Archilochos’ songs were originally intended for only a small group of listeners, and performed at a *sumposion* or, in some cases, at festivals. In one fragment, Archilochos addresses Charilaos as the dearest of his *hetairoi* or ‘companions’ (fr. 168 West). The extant fragments demonstrate that Archilochos was a member of the elite, and therefore concerned himself mainly with ‘words and deeds’ (cf. Hom. *Od.* 2.273), that is: politics and war.

#### i. Arms and armour

It is clear that for Archilochos, the main weapon is once again the spear (e.g., fr. 96.4 and 98.1 West). The typical warrior to Archilochos, as with Homer, is the *aichmētēs* or ‘spearman’ (e.g., fr. 24.13 West). Shields are not described in much detail, but they were obviously considered bothersome in flight and had to be thrown away if speed was of the essence, as the following, well-known fragment demonstrates in which the poet mocks the heroic code of honour:

Some Saian sports my splendid shield [*aspis*]:  
I had to leave it in a wood,  
but saved my skin. Well, I don’t care –  
I’ll get another just as good. (fr. 5 West)

The *telamōn*-equipped shields of the *Iliad* were swung around the back when a warrior had to flee. It seems likely that the shield referred to by Archilochos, in contrast, was of Argive type (cf. also fr. 98.12 West), as it was thrown aside instead (such shields are carried on the left arm and can be relatively easily slipped off).<sup>761</sup>

#### ii. Warfare

The word *stratēgos* is attested for the first time in Archilochos (fr. 114.1 West). The word is cognate with *stratos*, ‘army’ or ‘host’. It thus literally means ‘army-leader’, often translated as ‘general’. This word might simply be an alternative to the Homeric phrase *anax andron*, or the more common *hēgemōn* or *hēgetōr*; it seems unlikely to refer to a magistrate of some kind,

759 Crielaard 2002, 259–260.

760 Cogan & Tadmor 1977; cf. Morris 2000, 184–185.

761 For an overview of the problems involved in analysing this passage, see Schwertfeger 1982.

like the Athenian *stratēgoi* of the later sixth century onwards. Elsewhere, Archilochos refers to a leader as *archos* (fr. 113.1 West). Unfortunately, none of the descriptions of battle in the extant fragments attributed to Archilochos are detailed enough to attempt a reconstruction of the style of fighting that he was familiar with.

The extant fragments attributed to Archilochos furthermore contain songs of exhortation and general references to battle. An interesting description of a battle is recorded on the poorly preserved papyrus fragment mentioned earlier (fr. 98 West). The battle described here is a siege, with walls apparently built of stone and equipped with towers; 'men of Lesbos' are mentioned (fr. 98.11), but it is unclear whether they are the besiegers or the defenders. It features two new items not mentioned by Homer (or any other Archaic poets, for that matter), namely possible siege ladders (singular, *klimax*; fr. 98.16) and some sort of ironclad thing (*sidēron*; fr. 98.17), which makes a loud noise; a siege engine? This fragment is very problematic, as West's restorations of sections of the papyrus are contentious.<sup>762</sup>

As Archilochos was an islander, it should come as no surprise that there are references in the extant fragments to ships and seafaring. A throwaway comment alludes to Archilochos' life on Paros as a 'life on the sea' (fr. 116 West). In another fragment, Archilochos mentions how Poseidon Hippios chose to allow a man called Koiranos (literally, 'military leader') to survive a shipwreck (fr. 192 West); he adds specifically that he was the only one of fifty men to live. We have already seen how a crew of fifty was probably common on warships in the Homeric epics and later pentekonters, so the ship that was wrecked was probably a warship as well.

Finally, Archilochos took part in the Parian conquest of Thasos, during which he fought against Thrakians, particularly the Saian tribe (mentioned above). The fact that Parian warriors were sent to aid the Thasian settlers demonstrates how close the relationship was between Paros and her colony.<sup>763</sup> Parian interest in the island focussed on the gold mines; both the island itself and the nearby mainland were known to possess a number of these,<sup>764</sup> making it a fiercely contested area. Fighting was apparently not always necessary, as in one fragment Archilochos speaks of how 'Thrakian dogs' were bribed (fr. 93), presumably in exchange for land or some sort of cease-fire, though it is also possible that the Thrakians had laid siege to a Parian settlement or camp on Thasos and the Parians paid them off (*cf. Il.* 22.111–122).

### iii. Martial values

Archilochos presents a mirror image of the heroic ideology espoused by Homer. In one passage, the poet exhorts fighting men to stand their ground. He warns them not to be 'over-proud in victory, nor in defeat oppressed' (fr. 128.4 West). He reminds his audience that, ultimately, the outcome of a

762 Hans van Wees, personal communication, 2005.

763 For further details, see Graham 1983 [1964], 71–97.

764 Healey 1978, 45–47, summarises the evidence.

battle is ‘under the gods’ control’ (fr. 111 West). In a number of fragments, Archilochos mocks the heroic ideals outright. In one fragment, he describes the kind of military commander (*stratēgos*) that he would trust with his life. Archilochos claims to prefer ‘a shortish sort of chap, who’s bandy-looking round the shins’ (fr. 114.3 West). That is quite a different kind of leader than tall and handsome Achilles, but I should point out that even in Homer not all heroes conform to stereotype: Tydeus, the father of Diomedes, is specifically said to have been fairly short (Hom. *Il.* 5.801); Agamemnon, too, the ‘lord of men’, was not tall according to Priam (Hom. *Il.* 3.166–170), and Odysseus was shorter still (Hom. *Il.* 3.191–198). Archilochos’ point is no doubt that a smart commander worries about the survival of his men, rather than fret about his appearance.

A more direct parody is perhaps apparent in Archilochos’ notions regarding bravery in battle. Ideally, Homeric heroes, like the men inspired by Tyrtaios, fight for their honour and their fatherland; death in battle will confer immortal *kleos*, ‘fame’, on the deceased. However, Archilochos sees little point in dying in a blaze of glory if flight meant that you could live to fight another day (fr. Adesp. 38 West). Apparently, one of the reasons for fleeing is that ‘no one here enjoys respect (*aidos*) or reputation (*periphēmos*) once he’s dead’ (fr. 133 West), as the people familiar to the poet only tended to the living. This is quite different from what we have seen in Homer and Tyrtaios. Archilochos mocks established ideology, which in turn suggests how current these martial values were.

In another fragment, Archilochos states:

I crave a fight [*machēs*] with you, it’s like a thirst.<sup>765</sup> (fr. 125 West)

In short, then, Archilochos was an aristocrat for whom violence was an accepted part of life; the use of the word ‘thirst’ links violence to drinking at the *sumposion* (i.e., fighting and feasting; both associated with the aristocracy). Some sort of war-weariness is perhaps demonstrated in another fragment, arguably not addressed to any particular man but rather to Erxias as an archetype.<sup>766</sup> In this fragment, the poet wonders out loud how or to what end the hapless army (*anolbos stratōs*) is being assembled (*hathroizetai*) this time (fr. 88 West). This suggests that the Parians frequently instigated wars.

#### iv. Archilochos the mercenary

Archilochos may have served as a mercenary for some time. The following fragment is often cited to support this hypothesis:

On my spear’s my daily bread,  
on my spear my wine

765 In the recent Loeb edition of Archilochos (no. 259), Gerber suggests that this might actually be a reference to sex (cf. the pairing, from the *Odyssey* onwards, of Ares and Aphrodite, the gods of war and lust). Whether or not the line is metaphorical is unimportant; the martial vocabulary *c.q.* connotations are important here.

766 I.e., to *praktikos*, ‘the man of action’, as explained in Gerber’s note to this passage in the Loeb Classical Library edition (no. 259) to Greek iambic poetry, p. 129.

from Ismaros; and drinking it,  
it's on my spear I recline. (fr. 2 West)

The word that West here translates as 'recline', *keklimenos*, is commonly used in the sense of reclining on a dining couch, such as used during the *sumposion*.<sup>767</sup> We may therefore interpret this passage in one of two ways. Firstly, this fragment may suggest that fighting is simply a way of life for Archilochos. This impression is reinforced when, in another fragment, he refers to himself as a *therapōn* of Enyalios, the war-god (fr. 1 West).<sup>768</sup> The word suggests a close relationship between the *therapōn* and his host. In the *Iliad*, some of these men follow their leaders to war because they apparently have to for some reason: there is perhaps a sense here that Archilochos is a fighter simply because it is something that comes naturally to him, whether he wants to or not. It suggests that violence is an integral part of Archilochos' life, and maybe a characteristic feature of the social circles in which he moves. After all, the fragment subtly brings to mind both fighting and feasting: essential parts of the aristocratic way of life, united here in hyperbole; Archilochos is both a warrior and a poet.

Secondly, we may take the passage literally: Archilochos may have earned a living (bread and wine) through fighting. In another fragment, Archilochos states that he will 'be called an *epikouros*, like a Carian' (fr. 216 West).<sup>769</sup> What exactly is an *epikouros*? It is commonly translated as 'mercenary', but this does not cover the meaning completely, as some of the Trojan allies in the *Iliad* are called *epikouroi*; they were almost certainly allies or friends rather than pure hirelings.<sup>770</sup> The literal translation of the word is something like 'young man alongside'; since use of the word is exclusively limited to martial contexts, 'fighter alongside' covers the literal meaning succinctly. Such men may have been 'soldiers of fortune', the *misthophoroi* ('wage-earners') familiar from Classical source,<sup>771</sup> as well as aristocratic adventurers who sought both profit and glory, as well as a means to expand their influence by gaining new and powerful foreign friends (*xenoi*).<sup>772</sup> Hence Archilochos' pessimistic statement that 'an *epikouros* is a buddy (*philos*) for just so long as he's prepared to fight' (fr. 15 West); *i.e.* an *epikouros* would fight as long as it either served their own purposes or was profitable.<sup>773</sup>

767 Shanks 1999, 127.

768 Regarding Enyalios, see Gantz 1993, 81.

769 Cf. Podlecki 1969, 75.

770 Lavelle 1989, 36 n. 1 conveniently lists the evidence.

771 See Van Wees 2004, 71–73. However, even Xenophon's *Anabasis*, set between 401 and 399, suggests that many of the later so-called mercenaries (often termed *xenoi*, 'guest-friends' and 'strangers'), or more especially their commanders, came to the call of Kyros the Younger as a personal favour. *Epikouroi* are always men from outside one's own community and therefore, in the Greek sense, *xenoi* or 'strangers', 'foreigners' (hence, to Archilochos, Karians are known mostly as *epikouroi*, foreign allies or friends who fight alongside you in times of war); cf. the discussion in the previous chapter. For more on the situation in Xenophon, see Anderson 1970, 54–55.

772 See also Herman 1987, 101–105.

773 For a recent overview on *epikouroi* and mercenaries, refer to Trundle 2004.

## v. Summary

In many of the extant fragments, Archilochos mocks the ideology espoused by Tyrtaios and the other poets discussed in this chapter – and ideology that is virtually identical to that presented in the Homeric epics. Archilochos has no qualms about abandoning his – presumably Argive – shield, nor does he desire a commander who is more preoccupied with his appearance than the battle at hand. However, such satire serves to demonstrate how common the main ideology was, and that there must be truth in it.

The acquisition of land again emerges as a motive for war: Archilochos took part in the Parian colonisation of the island of Thasos and specifically mentions a battle against the Saians and how they bribed ‘Thrakian dogs’. He also describes a siege, mentioning siege ladders and some kind of contraption. In another fragment, he mentions a ship with fifty men, no doubt a galley of the type encountered in both Homer and the iconographic evidence. All this demonstrates the great variety of warlike activities that Archilochos was partial or privy to, namely land-battles, sieges, and naval activity. No wonder that Archilochos presents himself as a henchman of Ares, a man to whom war and battle came naturally, and who may have himself served as a mercenary, ‘like a Karian’.

### *e. Mytilene (Lesbos)*

Alkaios, a native of Mytilene on the island of Lesbos, lived around 600; he was a contemporary of Sappho. Alkaios specialised in composing drinking songs, which were performed during symposia. The topics touched upon in these songs are varied. Some of the most interesting are his so-called political fragments. Mytilene suffered from political instability characterised by *stasis* (‘factional strife’). Some of the members of the wealthiest segments of their communities, leaders of parties or factions pursuing dominance, managed to install themselves as *turannoi* (‘tyrants’ in the sense of sole rulers). No less than three tyrants rose to prominence in Mytilene: Melanchros, Myrsilos, and Pittakos. Alkaios, as a member of the (ruling) elite, opposed these men, who desired to reign more or less as absolute monarchs.<sup>774</sup>

However, tyranny was not limited to the island of Lesbos.<sup>775</sup> From this point in time onwards (*i.e.*, about the end of the seventh century), this kind of power struggle between prominent members of the ruling elite, *stasis* or ‘factional strife’, emerges in a number of communities across the Aegean.<sup>776</sup>

774 However, we should not take Alkaios’ opinion of them as gospel; in Classical times, Plato ranked Pittakos – who was by then known especially for his aphorisms – alongside Solon as one of the Seven Sages of Archaic Greece (*Protagoras* 343a).

775 But as Hall 2007, 142, points out, ‘it is important to recognize that it was not a universal phenomenon: according to one estimate, only twenty-seven out of hundreds of states are known to have been subject to a tyranny over a period of 150 years.’

776 The total number of Greek settlements ‘suffering’ *stasis* and tyranny should probably not be overexaggerated (*contra* Thouk. 1.13). Hansen & Nielsen 2004, 1361–1362, provide a list of known *poleis* afflicted by *stasis*: while there are many sixth-century

In the work of some later Archaic poets, notably Theognis of Megara and Solon of Athens, *stasis* and the associated threat of tyranny loom large, although no mention is ever made of actual outright violence having broken out in the streets (*cf.* the actions of the Athenian Kylon described in Hdt. 5.71).

### i. Equipment and the warband

In one fragment, Alkaios describes a cache of weapons and armour:

The high hall is a gleam  
with bronze; the roof is all arrayed  
with shining helmets, and white  
horse-plumes to ornament men's heads  
nod from their crests. Bright greaves  
of bronze to keep strong arrows off  
cover the unseen pegs,  
and corslets of (new) linen [*thorakes te neō linō*], and  
a pile of convex shields.  
Chalkidian swords are there,  
and belts [*zōmata*] in plenty, tunics too.  
We can't forget this store  
now that we've taken on this task. (fr. 140.3–16 Voigt; translation West)

It seems likely that Alkaios and his compatriots, no doubt including his brothers, were supposed to use this store of arms and armour in their struggle against a *turanos* at Mytilene.<sup>777</sup> The fight to defend the position of the ruling elite is presumably the 'task' referred to in this fragment (fr. 140.16 Voigt).<sup>778</sup> The description of the 'store' resembles similar descriptions found in the Homeric epics.<sup>779</sup> Particularly interesting is Alkaios' remark that greaves are especially used as protection against arrows. The swords are said to be of Chalkidian make, which confirms what we know of the Euboians' reputation in this field from Archilochos.

Linen corslets are mentioned rather than bronze cuirasses. The corslets are also new (*neō*), so we may assume that they have never been used before. Ian Morris suggests that the description of the store is meant not only to be reminiscent of Homer or deliberately heroising; the store itself and the terminology used also 'evokes the east'. For example, linen corslets are considered part and parcel of Lydian equipment. In another fragment, Alkaios refers to a 'Karian helmet-plume' (fr. 388 West), another eastern (Anatolian) element. Morris furthermore suggests that Alkaios—like Homer—ignores the presence of non-aristocrats in combat, pushing 'the unpleasant real-world need for masses of infantry into the background.'<sup>780</sup>

However, Alkaios' hall apparently contains enough armour to equip at least a small number of men, perhaps including those who did not or could not procure any weapons or armour of their own. Morris's 'masses of

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examples, there are even more belonging to the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.

777 See also Alk. fr. 383 West.

778 See also Podlecki 1969, 76–79.

779 Van Wees 1992, 41 (with references).

780 Morris 2000, 177.

infantry' suppose that armies during this time were large, possibly as large as they could be in Classical times. Nowhere is this notion supported in the extant Archaic evidence. Rather, it seems likely that Alkaios was a high-ranking member of a group of drinking buddies who pooled their resources—in this case, weapons and armour—so that they could form a war-band whenever necessary. Military organisation was more probably of a type familiar from the Homeric epics, with leaders and their followers, rather than the centrally-organised armies known to Herodotos and Thoukydides.

The hall mentioned in the fragment is one used for drinking; the men there may, perhaps, form a kind of 'fighting club'. The new corslets suggest that they were acquired specifically to equip more than one man. In any case, it is clear that Alkaios represents a segment of the elite at Mytilene that is both able and willing to defend their position of power. The presence of such war-bands suggests that the 'State', in its presumably embryonic form, did not possess a monopoly on violence; or to put it simply, armed aristocrats *were* the State. As such, *stasis* occurred when these aristocrats ('civilians') used their equipment against each other, rather than against an outside foe.

## ii. Factional strife at Mytilene

Despite his apparent resources and determination, Alkaios and his friends failed in stopping some men from seizing power as tyrants in Mytilene. His political opponents eventually banished the poet from the city and he moved to another part of the island. Banishment is a characteristic way of disposing of cowards, as well as troublesome or criminal elements in early Greece (*cf.* Hom. *Od.* 1.403–404), though Alkaios later returned to Mytilene. Of the tyrants who once reigned at Mytilene, the most famous was Pittakos. In one fragment, Alkaios writes of him:

But let him [*i.e.*, Pittakos], married into the family of the Atridae, devour the city as he did in company with Myrsilus, until Ares is pleased to turn us to arms; and may we forget this anger; and let us relax from the heart-eating strife and civil warring, which one of the Olympians has aroused among us, leading the people [*damos*] to ruin, but giving delightful glory [*kudos*] to Pittakos. (fr. 70.6–13 Voigt; translation Campbell)

As Campbell explains in the notes to this passage, Pittakos married into the Pentilidai (hence, Atridai), who were supposedly descendants of Atreus by way of Orestes, and once the ruling family of Mytilene.<sup>781</sup> Alkaios accuses the people of doing nothing while the tyrant 'devours' the city and its people (*polis*). Achilles once accused Agamemnon of being a devourer of his own people to emphasis the latter's greed (Hom. *Il.* 1.231). So here too Alkaios is painting Pittakos as a greedy man; in both the *Iliad* and this passage, the people are accused of doing nothing. Alkaios stresses that Ares must rouse the people in order to oust the tyrant; the reference to the

781 The fact that Alkaios refers to Pittakos as 'base born', *kakopatridos* (fr. 348 Voigt), does not mean that he really was of common descent, merely that Alkaios hates his guts; see also Snodgrass 1980, 95.

war-god indicates that Alkaios feels Pittakos must be thrown out through the use or display (threat) of force.

A number of fragments attributed to Alkaios refer to a war between Mytilene and Athens. Alkaios took part in this war, which was apparently fought over control of the city of Sigeion, which lay in the Hellespont near Troy (Hdt. 5.94–96). In one battle, Alkaios had to abandon, or perhaps even surrender, both his shield and armour, which the enemy then took and hung in the temple of their principal goddess, Athena (fr. 401B Voigt). One fragment can be taken as a dig aimed at the Athenians, when Alkaios writes how ‘she’ (probably Athene) tried to inspire a scattered host of men to fight (fr. 382 Voigt). According to other later sources, Pittakos defeated an Athenian general, Phrynon, in single combat (Plut. *de Herod. malign.* 858ab; cf. Strabo 13.1.38). Phrynon is mentioned in a badly preserved bit of papyrus attributed to Theognis (fr. 167 Voigt).

### iii. Martial values

Aside from the existence of war-bands in Mytilene, there are a number of other similarities between the writings of Alkaios and those of Homer, Archilochos, and other Archaic poets. Alkaios in one fragment proclaims that ‘death in battle is a splendid thing’ (fr. 400 Voigt). In another fragment, Alkaios tells his listeners that ‘war-like men’ are the *purgos* (‘tower’) of the *polis* (fr. 112 Voigt), a very succinct way of reminding his audience—presumably fellow aristocrats—that they are the ones who protect their communities (and therefore have a stake in political power).

### iv. Summary

When we turn to Alkaios, a new element is added: political intrigue. We are still in the realm of what looks like war-bands; the description of the hall in fr. 140 suggests that men could still pool their resources and then take arms alongside their drinking-buddies to complete a certain ‘task’, whether it be fighting enemies from without or within. In the latter case, conflicts between rival (aristocratic) factions would lead to *stasis*. But the former was also known to Alkaios, who specifically mentions a war between the people of Mytilene and Athens. Ideologically speaking, ‘Homeric’ values continue to loom large, with Alkaios specifically referring to warriors as the ‘towers’ of a community.

### f. Smyrna

Mimnermos was probably a slightly younger contemporary of Kallinos (latter half of the seventh century). Mimnermos mentions how his ancestors originally sailed from Pylos to settle at Kolophon, and from there captured Smyrna, his own native city (fr. 9 West). He also wrote exhortation poetry, composing songs specifically to encourage his countrymen to defend their city against Lydian attacks, either in the time of Gyges (fr. 13a), or otherwise his successor. In order to encourage his fellow countrymen, the poet describes how a (probably well-known) courageous warrior, apparently on foot, managed to fend off a number of Lydian horsemen:

His strength and bravery were not like yours,  
as I have heard from older men who saw  
him on the plain of Hermos with his spear  
routing the Lydian cavalry's [*hippomachōn*] thick ranks [*pukinas phalaggas*].  
Pallas Athena ne'er had cause to fault  
his acid fury, when in the front line [*ana promachous*]  
he hurtled through the battle's bloody moil  
against the stinging missiles [*belea*] of the foe.  
No warrior of the enemy remained  
his better in the strenuous work of war,  
so long as he moved in the swift sun's light. (fr. 14 West)

We should probably imagine this solitary figure (or perhaps a leader and his followers, after Homer?), to take a stand in the field and try to fend off or, more likely, scare the oncoming horses with his spear. It suggests a rather freeform mode of fighting, with the warrior no doubt quickly moving 'in the swift sun's light', stabbing at an opponent where possible, hiding and retreating behind obstacles when necessary. The horsemen themselves, if they fought as tightly packed together as the poem suggests, may have been unable to manoeuvre quickly enough to squash the annoying gattly that ran up every now and again to strike at one of their number.

The word used, *hippomachoi*, literally means 'horse-fighters'; perhaps these men fought from horseback, as mounted archers or javelineers (*i.e.*, the *belea* in l. 8); depictions of mounted javelineers are known from later Attic vase-paintings, for example.<sup>782</sup> However, the word is cognate with *hippobatas*, so they might just as well have dismounted to fight on foot. The latter is perhaps most likely in the light of the iconographic evidence already examined in chapter 6. The fact that Mimnermos does not go into any further details suggests that his audience knew exactly how these men fought. The poet Theognis, from Megara, mentions in one passage that a lit beacon fire calls the men to war, and he then tells his friend Kymos to put bits on their horses: riding to battle is obviously common enough for it to be presented as part of the preparations for war.<sup>783</sup>

In any event, this fragment has been frequently compared to exhortations in the *Iliad*, where the *aristeia* ('bravery') demonstrated by some warriors is used to encourage others; Mimnermos may have consciously modelled these lines after similar ones in the Homeric epic.<sup>784</sup> In another fragment, Mimnermos describes how a group of men made 'a fence with their hollow shields' (fr. 13a), which again recalls similar phrases in Homer (*e.g.*, *Il.* 13.130–131). Nevertheless, non-Homeric aspects, such as the *hippomachoi*, ring true to life.

Mimnermos, like his fellow poets, regards the death of an older man as repulsive, from both a moral and aesthetic point of view. More generally, he remarks that old men are always 'loathsome and vile, [...] abhorred by boys, by women scorned' (fr. 1 West). It is clear that this contrast between young

782 *E.g.*, Athens 15.116 (formerly Akropolis 606): Anderson 1961, pl. 30.a; Greenhalgh 1973, 115 fig. 58.

783 Theognis fr. 549–554.

784 Useful is the discussion in Grethlein 2007.

(beautiful) and old (repulsive) was simply part and parcel of aristocratic ideology (cf. Priam's description of a beautiful death in the previous chapter). That it is an ideal is reflected by Mimnermos' statement that he does not wish to die until threescore years have gone by, *i.e.* at the age of sixty (fr. 6 West). This fragment was later cited by Solon, who stated that he did not want to die until *fourscore* years had passed (fr. 20 West)!

g. *Samos*

A statue unearthed on Samos represents Aiakes, either the father or grandfather of the tyrant Polykrates (Hdt. 6.13, 6.22). It dates to around 540. Parts of this seated figure are lost, but the inscription is intact and reads, in Boardman's translation: 'Aiakes, son of Brychon, dedicated [me]. He secured the booty for Hera during his stewardship.'<sup>785</sup> The phrase, 'during his stewardship', is a translation of the Greek *epi tēn epistasin*, literally 'during the (his) leadership'. The booty obtained during his tenure may have been the result of a raid or battle under his command. We know from Herodotos that the Samians were well known as pirates and that it was customary for them to offer part of their treasure to Hera (Hdt. 4.152), the goddess of power.

h. *Ephesos*

Sometime around the middle of the seventh century, Kallinos of Ephesos composed poems to encourage his countrymen to fight bravely in defence of their community. His poetry also resembles parts of the Homeric epics as far as phrasing and terminology are concerned.<sup>786</sup> One sizeable fragment survives of his war songs; it is similar to the exhortation songs by Tyrtaios. A few bits and pieces of other poems are preserved in later authors; Strabo, for example, tells us that Kallinos once sang how Sardis, the capital city of the Lydians, had been captured by invading Kimmerians (*Geography* 14.1.40; Kallinos fr. 5 West).

i. The term *neos* in Greek lyric poetry

Like Tyrtaios, Kallinos addresses the 'young men' (*neoi*) in particular. The word *neoi* refers to 'youths' or 'the youth' in general. Kallinos asks how long the *neoi* intend 'to lie down', *katakeisthe* (fr. 1.1 West). This is an interesting element that Tyrtaios does not mention; the phrase suggests that this song was aimed at participants at a *sumposion*, who would recline on dining couches. The *neoi* here, and perhaps also in the case of Tyrtaios, are perhaps not literally 'young men', but rather friends that Kallinos addresses during a drinking party. In effect, the Greek used here suggests something along the lines of English expressions like 'Come on, guys!', or 'Listen up, lads!'<sup>787</sup> Henk Singor has argued, no doubt correctly, that the *neoi* are simply Greek

785 Boardman 1991 [1978], 97.

786 Cf. Shanks 1999, 112; Singor 1988, 93–96.

787 Cf. Theognis fr. 1319–1322, where *pais* ('boy') is used, perhaps instead of *neos*. See especially Slings 2000; cf. Christenson 2000, 631 and especially n. 3.

men of fighting age.<sup>788</sup>

## ii. The glory of battle

Kallinos' meaning may well be intentionally subtle or ambiguous, in that lying down and joining battle once again link the two main aristocratic pursuits of feasting and fighting. These associations of men are thus similar to those encountered in our discussion of Alkaios, and related to the Homeric bands of men who feast and fight together. These men all share a similar heroic ideology. When Kallinos tells the *neoi* to prepare for war, he tells them to 'throw your last spear even as you die' (fr. 1.5 West). After all, Kallinos claims, it is no small honour to die while defending one's own community:

For proud it is and precious for a man to fight  
defending country [*gēs peri*], children, wedded wife  
against the foe. Death comes no sooner than the Fates  
have spun the thread; so charge, turn not aside,  
with levelled spear and brave heart behind the shield  
from the first moment that the armies meet. (fr. 1.6–11 West)

The reference to family reinforces the idea that Kallinos is not addressing young men (who were probably unmarried),<sup>789</sup> but the older men who were his friends. Continuing, the poet stresses how the brave man 'ranks with demigods' while alive,<sup>790</sup> regarded as a 'tower' (*purgos*) by the people (*laos*), who does more single-handedly than many do together; his loss in battle is mourned by people of both high and low standing (fr. 1.17–20). This is virtually identical to the harangues of Tyrtaios. All this suggests that the men addressed by Kallinos also belonged to the aristocracy. Kallinos is appealing to them to defend their city, perhaps against attacks of roving Kimmerians (fr. 5a, 4 West), or an invasion by the Magnesians.<sup>791</sup>

## i. Karia

Karians appear frequently in the Archaic sources.<sup>792</sup> They sometimes collaborated with 'Ionians', a term that in texts from the ancient Near East frequently relates to 'Greeks' and other peoples from Anatolia.<sup>793</sup> Herodotos claims that not the Greeks, but the Karians invented three characteristic features of the Greek panoply (Hdt. 1.171). Firstly, the Karians devised a method of fastening crests to helmets (*cf.* Alk. fr. 388 West). Secondly, they

788 *E.g.*, Singor 1988, 125.

789 According to Solon, a man's life is divided into stages of seven years each. He suggests that the fifth hebdomad is the time for a man to marry and produce offspring, *i.e.* between the ages of 28 and 35 (Solon fr. 27.9–10 West).

790 Note Van Wees 2006; see also *Il.* 22.394.

791 Kallinos mentions the Magnesians in one fragment (fr. 3 West), specifically that they are successful in a war against Kallinos' city, Ephesos. Archilochos tells us that the Magnesians were destroyed (fr. 20 West), which suggests that Kallinos predates Archilochos (Strabo 14.1.40).

792 See also the brief overview in Pedley 1974, 96–97 (with references).

793 Refer to Kuhrt 2002, who stresses that 'Greece' was a marginal and little known area to the Eastern empires.

came up with the idea of putting blazons on shields. Finally, they were the first to attach handles to their shields whereas before they were carried from leather straps and suspended from the wearer's neck and shoulder (*cf.* the Homeric *telamōn*).

Some commentators have dismissed the idea that Karian armourers were responsible for the design of what they believe to be typically Archaic Greek war-gear.<sup>794</sup> There is no *a priori* reason to doubt Herodotos, although he did come from Halikarnassos, a Greek city in Karia, and was conceivably for exactly this reason less than objective when it came to Karian achievements. However, Karians are also mentioned in other sources and often appear alongside Ionians and other East Greeks (sometimes as *epikouroi*, as Archilochos makes clear); it seems very unlikely that this idea is wholly a fabrication.

#### *j. Greeks in the ancient Near East*

Greeks had been visiting the ancient Near East from at least Mykenaian times onwards. After the fall of the Mykenaian palaces, Greek artefacts continued to be exported to the ancient Near East from at least the tenth century onwards.<sup>795</sup> Greek overseas activities intensified in the course of the eighth century; traders and adventurers from especially Euboia led the way, followed after 700 by a number of East Greeks.<sup>796</sup> The presence of Greek pottery is not always indicative of the presence of Greeks themselves,<sup>797</sup> but at least some apparently did settle on foreign soil; the Greek trading post at Naukratis is perhaps the best known example.<sup>798</sup>

Assyrian sources tell us of hostile engagements between 'Ionians' and Assyrians during the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III (ruled 745–727) and Sargon II (ruled 722–705). The documents make it clear that some of these Greeks roamed along the coasts of Phoenicia as either traders or raiders. A number of Greeks slaves, perhaps captured during one of the Assyrian expeditions to rid the sea of Aegean raiders, were kept at Niniveh.<sup>799</sup>

Some Greek adventurers found employment as mercenaries in the armies of the large Near-Eastern empires. East Greek warriors from Ionia and Rhodes, and perhaps also a number of Karians, were stationed at Mesad Haschavjahu, a coastal fortress that lay between Jaffa and Ashdod; it was constructed around 630/620.<sup>800</sup> Two examples of such warriors are discussed in the following two subsections. The first concerns the use of Greek warriors in the armies of Egypt, based on inscriptional evidence and the testimony recorded by Herodotos. The second subsection discusses the activities of Alkaios' brother, Antimenidas, in the Babylonian army.

794 Refer to Snodgrass 1964*a*.

795 Haider 1996, 59–63.

796 Boardman 1999 [1964], 35–45; on Euboians, refer to Crielaard 1996; on Al-Mina, see Luraghi 2006, 27–29.

797 As Haider 1996, esp. p. 100, seems to suppose; *cf.* Waldbaum 1997.

798 For further details on Naukratis, refer to Moller 2000.

799 Haider 1996, 79–82; Luraghi 2006, 30–33; for a brief overview of Assyrian sources, note Kuhrt 2002, 18–20.

800 Haider 1996, 75 (dated on the basis of pottery finds).

## i. Egypt

Outside the temple of Abu Simbel, a large and roughly cut inscription can be found on the leg of the giant statue of Ramesses; it has been dated to 591. The inscription, mostly Ionic in lettering but Doric in dialect,<sup>801</sup> reads as follows, as rendered by Matthew Dillon:

When king [*basileos*] Psammetichos came to Elephantine,  
this was written by those who, with [*sun*] Psammetichos son of Theokles,  
sailed and came above Kirkis, as far as the river permitted;  
Potasimto commanded the non-native speakers, and Amasis the Egyptians:  
Archon son of Amoibichos wrote us and Pelekos son of Oudamos.<sup>802</sup>

While many have tried to read Pelekos (Peleqos) as the name of another human being, Dillon points out that the author was actually using a Homeric pun: Archon wrote the inscription using a weapon, Pelekos (Axe or Blade), who quite literally was the son of Oudamos (Nobody).<sup>803</sup> Most of the other names are fairly straightforward. The ‘non-native speakers’, led as a whole by Potasimto, a known general,<sup>804</sup> were clearly not Egyptians; they probably included the Greek contingent that was led by the son of Theokles. That they came down river suggests that they might have travelled by ship.

Archon identifies himself as one of the Greeks who followed Psammetichos. Psammetichos himself was a Greek, the son of Theokles (a purely Greek name), who was named after the Egyptian pharaoh of the same name, to wit Psammetichos II, who ruled between 595 and 589. It was common for Greek fathers to name their sons after *xenoi* (‘guest-friends’); we know from other documents that some Karian fathers in Egypt also named their sons after the pharaoh.<sup>805</sup> This suggests that the son of Theokles was not simply a mercenary, or even an adventurer; instead, it suggests, as Herman has argued, that he may well have come along on this expedition up the Nile as a favour for his father’s Egyptian friend.<sup>806</sup> Some of these men may have been ‘soldiers of fortune’ or adventurers, while others were some kind of (hereditary) *epikouroi*: men who aided their guest-friends (or those of their fathers).<sup>807</sup>

## ii. Babylon

Alkaios tells us that his brother, Antimenidas, once fought for the Babylonians, possibly in the army of Nebuchadnezzar II; he might even

801 Jeffery 1961, 355.

802 Meiggs & Lewis 1989 [1969], 12–13 (no. 7); see also Jeffery 1961, 355 and pl. 48a; Haider 1996, 107–108.

803 Dillon 1997, 129–130.

804 Vittmann 2003, 201.

805 Haider 1996, 110–111.

806 Herman 1987, 101–102.

807 Cf. Herodotos’ story, which is a common *logos* (e.g., *Od.* 14.248–291 and 17.419–444), concerning the Ionian and Karian ‘men of bronze’ who were hired by Psammetichos I after they had washed ashore and turned to raiding the Egyptian countryside (*Hdt.* 2.152–163); see also Luraghi 2006, 34–35.

have taken part in the storming of Askalon in 604.<sup>808</sup> In one fragment, Alkaios refers to Babylon and Askalon, the latter of which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 604 (fr. 48 Voigt; P. Oxy. 1233 fr. 11.6–20). In a fragment, Alkaios states that Antimenidas went to Babylon, ‘serving as an ally’ (*summachō*). He adds that Antimenidas was handsomely rewarded for his efforts, as he returned ‘with the hilt of [his] sword ivory bound with gold’ (fr. 350.2 Voigt; translation Campbell).<sup>809</sup>

The use of the verb *summachō* is interesting: it literally means ‘to fight jointly’. It implies a somewhat more formal relationship than that denoted by the noun *epikouros*. There is also a difference in scope: whereas only individuals (and their followers) can be *epikouroi*, it is possible for both individuals and groups—particularly other polities—to be *summachoi*, ‘allies’ (e.g., Hdt. 1.102; see also Hdt. 6.9). An alliance between two polities, as discussed below on the basis of an inscription found at Olympia, was called a *summachia* (e.g., Hdt. 1.82, 4.120).<sup>810</sup> The fact that Alkaios states that his brother ‘served as an ally’ might suggest—and barring compositional considerations such as meter!—that he went not as an *epikouros*, as either an adventurer or *xenos* of Nebuchadnezzar (or own of his lieutenants), or out of friendship (*philia*),<sup>811</sup> but rather as member of a group that owed some sort of formal allegiance to the Babylonians or to allies of the Babylonians.

#### *k. Miscellaneous inscriptions*

Aside from those inscriptions already mentioned, we also possess a number of epitaphs and, from the latter half of the sixth century onwards, texts of treaties.

##### i. Epitaphs from Korkyra and Athens

We are fortunate that some Archaic epigrams have survived, which sometimes provide further details concerning the death of the entombed warrior. The grave of Arniadas on the island of Korkyra (Corfu), dated to around 600, featured a three-line hexameter, in which we are told that the warrior died while he was fighting next to a number of ships, presumably on a beach. The epigram as a whole reads, in M.L. Lang’s translation:

This is the tomb [*sēma*] of Arniadas whom flashing-eyed Ares destroyed as he fought beside the ships in the streams of Arathos. He was the bravest by far in the wretchedness of war.<sup>812</sup>

Catherine Derderian compares this epitaph with another from Athens, perhaps datable to 540–530, where we are asked to mourn for ‘Kroisos, whom raging Ares once destroyed in the front lines [*eni promachois*].’<sup>813</sup> This

808 Quinn 1961, 19–20.

809 Haider 1996, 93, calls it a ‘*Prunkschwert*’.

810 For more on *summachia*, see Tausend 1992.

811 On the difference between *philia* and *summachia*, see Van Wees 2004, 10–15 (with references; esp. p. 255 n. 20).

812 Lang 1991, 75; Hansen 1983, 80 (no. 145).

813 Derderian 2001, 100; Hansen 1983, 19–20 (no. 27).

epitaph was engraved in the base of a famous kouros—a statue of a naked young man—found here in the Anavysos cemetery.<sup>814</sup> Both epitaphs present the warrior as having fallen victim to the wargod’s wrath and tell us where they were killed, all using the epic language familiar from Homer. As far as Arniadas is concerned, he may have been engaged in a seaborne raid or perhaps even fought against such raiders. Kroisos may have fought in a larger type of engagement, perhaps something along the lines of the battles in Homer or some of the elegiac poets discussed in this chapter.

Derdarian suggests that the ‘warrior’s epigram transforms the crisis of death into a transition from heroic action and death to a future of memory; it depicts the warrior’s past action in death in heroic diction and emphasizes the agency of the reader, who reacts to the epigram’s message with recognition, mourning, and aspiration to follow its ethical paradigm.’<sup>815</sup> The importance of fighting bravely and then transcending death to continue living in memory is a motif that we have already encountered a number of times.

## ii. Alliance treaties

*Summachia*—formal alliances between polities—appear on mainland Greece in the course of the sixth century. Later historians, such as Herodotos and Thoukydides, refer to *summachia* that supposedly existed between, for example, the Lydians and the Milesians in the seventh century (Hdt. 1.22), but these Classical authors may have used this word because it was familiar to them. One of the earliest attested uses of the word *summachia* in the sense of an alliance is found inscribed on a bronze plaque found at Olympia and dated to the later sixth century. It is ‘the earliest treaty of alliance of which we know the terms’.<sup>816</sup> The text reads as follows:

This is the covenant between the Eleans and the Heraeans. There shall be an alliance [*summachia*] for a hundred years, and this (year) shall be the first; and if anything is needed, either word or deed, they shall stand by each other in all matters and especially in war [*ta t’ ala kai par polemo*]; and if they stand not by each other, those who do the wrong shall pay a talent of silver to Olympian Zeus to be used in his service. And if anyone injures this writing, whether private man or magistrate or community [*aite fetas aite telesta aite damos*], he shall be liable to the sacred fine here in written.<sup>817</sup>

The text is something like a contract, in which both parties (the people of Elis and Heraia) agree to come to each other’s aid whenever necessary, especially in times of war; if one side fails to comply with the terms of the agreement, it must pay the appropriate fine. The plaque was set up at the Panhellenic sanctuary at Olympia; the fine had to be paid to Zeus, the protector of oaths (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 10.329–330).

814 Athens 3851: see, e.g., Hurwit 1985, 253–254.

815 Derderian 2001, 101.

816 Van Wees 2004, 13.

817 Meiggs & Lewis 1989 [1969], 31–33 (no. 17).

### 3. Conclusions

The emphasis in the Archaic poets is put squarely on close-ranged fighters. *Belea* or missiles are mentioned by a number of poets, but ranged warfare appears to have been limited, or its importance is perhaps deliberately downplayed. However, I do not believe that the latter is the case. Just as Mimnermos stresses the valour of a man who fights oncoming horsemen on his own, so too could the poets have told us of the slaughter wrought on contingents of archers or javelineers, had these been present. Indeed, Tyrtaios specifically and uniquely makes a clear distinction between *panoploi* ('armoured troops') and *gumnētes* ('naked troops'), without stressing the importance of either one or the other.

How did the men in the poems fight? The evidence is ambiguous. However, it seems unlikely that they fought in any kind of strict formation resembling the Classical phalanx; Herodotos never, for example, mentions the depths of the *taxeis*, a common feature of later authors such as Thoukydides and Xenophon. Obviously, this does not mean that they used no formation at all, as some poets stress the importance of *promachoi* the armies do possess at least a rudimentary structure similar to that encountered in Homer. Indeed, the mixing of *panoploi* and *gumnētes* in Tyrtaios also resembles the relatively fluid style of fighting described in the *Iliad*. Furthermore, there is a flexibility with regards to the battle-arenas that is often overlooked: men fight on what appears to be open land, but they could also take part in sieges, and travelled aboard fifty-oared warships. Furthermore, there was enough room for individuals to show off their skills in single combat (*cf.* Antimenidas).

Wars could erupt between communities. We have the people of Mytilene fighting the Athenians, the Athenians squaring off against the Megarans, the Spartans against the Messenians, the Parians against the Thrakians, and so on, all for the possession of land. These battles are no mere border-skirmishes, as modern consensus would have us believe, but hard-fought encounters over relatively sizeable tracts of desirable land. These battles need not have been as massive as in the Classical period. In fact, it seems likely that until the late sixth century, military organisation still took the shape of war-bands or 'fight-clubs', in which case the armies were (predominantly) culled from the upper classes and may have numbered a few hundred men at the most. Enlargement in scale was only possible when armies were organised by more or less anonymous central bodies, as demonstrated by the inscription from Salamis.

Aside from war between communities, there was also *stasis*: factional strife within a *polis*. Such internal conflicts were a feature of a number of towns in Archaic Greece, though it is difficult to get a handle on exactly how common it may have been. Certainly, Archaic Greeks were no doubt as competitive as Homer's heroes, or their Classical descendants. Alkaios' fragments suggests that factions consisted of aristocratic men who formed drinking-cum-fight clubs, who, when necessary, would band together, armed and ready, to protect or (re)gain power through force if necessary.

*Epikouroi*, 'mercenaries', are also a feature of the Archaic period. The

Greeks themselves apparently hired mercenaries to aid them in combat, as pointed out by Archilochos with regards to Karians. But Greeks could also offer their services either to guest-friends or hitherto unknown persons or bodies. Greek and Karian mercenaries operated in Babylonia and Egypt; in the latter case, at least, they functioned as part of a foreign contingent. These mercenaries could be true 'soldiers of fortune', perhaps impoverished men, as well as aristocratic adventurers, perhaps like Alkaios' brother Antimenidas. Both the desire to aid guest-friends, as well as the need to forge new friendships and acquire both profit and glory, were no doubt powerful motives for Greek warriors to travel abroad.