

Hoplomachia and Greek Dances in Arms

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WARFARE AND DANCING were often associated by the Greeks.¹ Already in Homer we find Hector's assertion that he knows how to dance for Ares in a fixed fight, and Meriones is distinguished as a dancer.² According to Socrates (Ath. 628F) the best dancers are likewise the best in war, and Lucian (*Salt.* 14) claims that in Thessaly fighters in the forefront were called *προορχηστήρες*. Dio Chrysostom (2.60–61) even recommends to Trajan pyrrhic dancing for military training. Other sources associate the *hoplomachia* with dancing. Lucius Tarraeus, in discussing the five categories of practical arts, cites among other things dancing, wrestling, and *hoplomachia*.³ Lucian (*Salt.* 10, 21) claims that Spartan youths dance after engaging in *hoplomachia*, and that the Idaeian Dactyls insisted the young Ares must master dancing before they would teach him the *hoplomachia*. In Galen's view a *gymnastes* was the best teacher of exercises for dancing, *hoplomachia*, pancration, and wrestling.⁴

Although these references prove only that both *hoplomachia* and dancing were seen as forms of physical exercise, several scholars believe that *hoplomachia* was a dance or that the *hoplomachoi* taught dancing.⁵ This confusion derives from the alleged associations of the origins of *hoplomachia* and the profession of the *hoplomachoi* with the Mantinean armed dance. In this paper I hope to show that the *hoplomachia* was not a dance and that the Mantinean dance has been misinterpreted. The topic of dances in arms naturally leads to the broader questions of the value of such dances for military training and of the relationship between dances and military tactics.

¹ The following will be cited by author's name alone: E. K. BORTHWICK, "Two Notes on Athena as Protectress," *Hermes* 97 (1969); "P. Oxy. 2738: Athena and the Pyrrhic Dance," *Hermes* 98 (1970); GUSTAVE FOUGÈRES, *Mantinee et l'Arcadie orientale* (BEFAR 169 [Paris 1898]); KURT LATTE, *De saltationibus Graecorum* (Giessen 1913); LOUIS SÉCHAN, *La danse grecque antique* (Paris 1930); J.-P. VERNANT, ed., *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1968).

² *Il.* 7.238–41, 16.617–18, cf. Lucian *Salt.* 8, and E. K. Borthwick, "Notes on the Plutarch De Musica and the Cheiron of Pherecrates," *Hermes* 96 (1968) 64 n.1.

³ In *Grammatici Graeci* I.3 111.

⁴ Galen, *De sanitate tuenda* 2.11–12 (VI 146–56K.).

⁵ Séchan 64; W. Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War II* (Berkeley 1974) 216–17; Philippe Borgeaud, *Recherches sur le dieu Pan* (Bibl.Helv.Rom. 17 [Rome 1979]) 40; and Fougères, Vian, and Lacroix in nn.21–22, 28 *infra*.

I

The *hoplomachoi* are best known from the Socratic dialogues of Plato and Xenophon.⁶ They were essentially military sophists, itinerant teachers of military arts, active at Athens from the time of the Peloponnesian War and throughout the fourth century B.C., until their trade was institutionalized as part of the Athenian *ephebia* and *hoplomachia* became a regular course of instruction in gymnasia nearly everywhere in the Hellenistic period.⁷ In addition to tactics and the broader topics of generalship (*strategika*), the *hoplomachoi* taught *hoplomachia* (Pl. *Euthyd.* 273c).

No explicit definition of *hoplomachia* survives in an ancient source, and definitions found in modern scholarship rely too much on Hellenistic and Roman evidence, periods in which the *hoplomachia* had become institutionalized for public education and public sport.⁸ We should distinguish *hoplomachia* from *monomachia*. The latter denotes a duel of champions or a judicial duel in the sense of trial by combat.⁹ The Romans used the terms interchangeably for gladiatorial combat, but it is significant, as Louis Robert has noted, that *hoplomachos* is never found as a term for gladiator in the Greek East.¹⁰

Hoplomachia denotes fighting in heavy armor. The *strategos* Nicias observes that this exercise increases a soldier's strength, gives him training in the use of his weapons, and will aid him in pursuit or retreat after the ranks of the phalanx have been broken. These skills

⁶ Pl. *Lach.* 179E–84C, *Euthyd.* 271B–73C; Xen. *Mem.* 3.1, cf. *Cyr.* 1.6.12–14.

⁷ Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 42.3; E. Saglio, "Hoplomachia," *Dar.-Sag.* 3 (1899) 248–49; Jüthner, *RE* 8 (1913) 2298–99 s.v. "Hoplomachie." I examine the history of the *hoplomachoi* in more detail in "The *Hoplomachoi* and Vegetius' Spartan Drillmasters," *Chiron* 13 (1983). On the significance of the *hoplomachoi* for the beginnings of Western military theory see my "The Origins of Military Theory in Ancient Greece and China," *International Commission of Military History, Acta 5, Bucarest 1980* (Bucharest 1981) 74–79. Cf. Adolf Bauer, "Die Anfänge der Kriegswissenschaft," *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Geschichte* 3 (1886) 1–12, and *Die griechischen Altertümer: die Kriegsaltertümer* (Munich 1893) 273–78; I am preparing a more detailed discussion of this topic.

⁸ Saglio (*supra* n.7); Lorenz Grasberger, *Erziehung und Unterricht im klassischen Altertum* III (Würzburg 1881) 139–41; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York 1956) 37; Jüthner (*supra* n.7) 2298; R. T. Ridley, "The Hoplite as Citizen: Athenian Military Institutions in their Social Contexts," *AntCl* 78 (1979) 528 n.59.

⁹ Duel of champions: Hdt. 1.82, 6.92.3, 9.26.3–5; Diod. 4.58.2–4; Chrysermus *FGrHist* 287F2; Strabo 8.3.33 (Ephorus *FGrHist* 70F115); J. J. Glück, "Reviling and Monomachy as Battle-Preludes in Ancient Warfare," *AClass* 7 (1964) 25–31; A. MacC. Armstrong, "Trial by Combat among the Greeks," *G&R* 19 (1950) 73–79; for Roman use of *monomachia* in this sense see William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* (Oxford 1979) 38–39; judicial duel: Fougères 351–52.

¹⁰ Georges Laflaye, "Gladiator," *Dar.-Sag.* 2.2 (1896) 1563; Louis Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'orient grec* (Paris 1940) 65.

were important to every hoplite.¹¹ As obvious as this kind of instruction may appear, it was something of which the Greeks tended to assume knowledge in their hoplites.¹² Marrou has compared the *hoplomachia* to fencing and no doubt the *hoplomachoi* could teach 'tricks of the trade' unknown to the average citizen.¹³ Polybius (2.65.11) alludes to the defensive skills taught by these military sophists, when he compares Cleomenes III's use of the terrain in stationing his camp at Sellasia to the defense of good *hoplomachoi*. Hellenistic poets say much the same: the young Heracles learned the *hoplomachia* from Castor (Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.4.9), and Theocritus (24. 125–26) specifies that this instruction included not only how to stick an opponent with a spear, but also how to fend off sword thrusts.¹⁴

The *hoplomachoi* staged public displays of their craft, just as other sophists did, to promote business. These public shows, such as discussed in the *Laches*, should probably be distinguished from their teaching sessions with pupils noted by Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.1). The evidence is too meager to say whether the contests of *hoplomachia* in Plato (*Leg.* 833E) are an accurate picture of a public *hoplomachia*. Plato names contests of one against one, two against two, and teams of ten each, in which *hoplomachoi* set the rules for blows to inflict or avoid in order to win. Weapons training and the skills of individual attack and defense thus seem to be the meaning of *hoplomachia*.

The origins of instruction in *hoplomachia* are certainly Arcadian. An Athenian origin can be quickly dismissed. Zenodotus Theophilus recorded that Athena taught the *hoplomachia* to Phalanx, the twin brother of Arachne; both for their incest were turned into snakes and devoured by their children.¹⁵ Athenaeus (154D) has preserved fragments of Hermippus and Ephorus that are more enlightening:¹⁶

¹¹ Pl. *Lach.* 181E–82B. Raoul Lonis, *Guerre et religion en Grèce à l'époque classique* (Paris 1979) 35. Pritchett (*supra* n.5) takes Nicias' comments to imply dancing.

¹² J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley 1970) 84–87.

¹³ Marrou (*supra* n.8) 37.

¹⁴ The remainder of Theocritus' account of Castor's instruction (127–29) does not constitute aspects of *hoplomachia*: organizing a phalanx and commanding cavalry (if the latter is understood as creating formations) are tactics. Estimating the size of an attacking enemy unit, however, belongs not to tactics but to *strategika*, the highest level of affairs in the ancient concept of the command structure.

¹⁵ *FHG* IV 516 fr.5. Müller dates Theophilus under Ptolemy Euergetes, but Jacoby (*ad FGrHist* 296), who does not include this fragment, leaves the date open.

¹⁶ Fritz Wehrli, *Hermippos der Kallimacheer* (Basel 1974) fr.83, *cf.* 82; *FHG* III 35 fr.1; Ephorus *FGrHist* 70F54. We should note that the text quoted is that of Gulick in the Loeb edition (1951). Gulick has rejected with good reason Kaibel's emendation (Leipzig 1887) *καθέσεις* for *μαθήσεις* in the final sentence. The emendation has no support in the manuscripts.

Ἐρμῆπος δ' ἐν α' περὶ νομοθετῶν τῶν μονομαχοῦντων εὐρετὰς ἀποφαίνει Μαντινεῖς Δημόνακτος ἑνὸς τῶν πολιτῶν συμβουλευσαντος, καὶ ζηλωτὰς τούτων γενέσθαι Κυρηναίους. Ἐφορος δ' ἐν ἕκτη ἱστοριῶν ἤσκουν, φησί, τὰ πολεμικὰ οἱ Μαντινεῖς καὶ Ἀρκάδες, τὴν τε στολὴν τὴν πολεμικὴν καὶ τὴν ὄπλισιν τὴν ἀρχαίαν ὡς εὐρόντων ἐκείνων ἔτι καὶ νῦν Μαντινικὴν ἀποκαλοῦσι. πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ ὄπλομαχίας μαθήσεις ἐν Μαντινεῖα πρῶτον εὐρέθησαν Δημέου τὸ τέχνημα καταδείξαντος.

Demonax and Demeas are in all probability the same person, and identical to the Demonax sent at the request of the Delphic oracle to settle affairs in Cyrene *ca* 550 B.C.¹⁷ The judicial *monomachia* which Demonax established does not concern us, but Ephorus indicates that instruction in *hoplomachia* had its origins at Mantinea in the mid-sixth century B.C.¹⁸

Other evidence could be offered to support Ephorus' view. Pausanias records an Arcadian myth that Hoplodamus and other giants protected Rhea against Kronos somewhere near Mt Thaumasion when she was pregnant with Zeus (8.32.5, 36.2). A cult of Zeus Hoplosmios existed at Methydrion and perhaps at Mantinea as well, where one of the five tribes was called Hoplodmia.¹⁹ Similarly Hera and Athena have the epithet Hoplosmia at Mantinea, and the Mantinean oikist in the founding of Megalopolis was named Hopoleas.²⁰

Some have attempted to take this evidence further. Vian claims that Hoplodamus and the giants became the military instructors of Zeus. The *hoplomachia* was thus a ritual combat, a part of the cult of Zeus Hoplosmios and a means to initiate the youth into the warrior class.²¹ Fougères believes Zeus Hoplosmios represents Zeus' assimila-

¹⁷ Hdt. 4.161; Diod. 8.30.2; Hermip. fr.82 Wehrli with p.92; Jacoby *ad FGHist* 70F 54; Fougères 351 n.1. Also see A. A. I. Waisglass, "Demonax, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΑΝΤΙΝΕΩΝ," *AJP* 77 (1956) 167-76.

¹⁸ Wehrli (*supra* n.16) 92-93, unaware of the arguments of Fougères (*supra* n.9), confuses the two meanings of *monomachia* and wishes to equate *monomachia* and *hoplomachia*. As a lawgiver of the sixth century B.C., Demonax's activity at Mantinea probably fits the pattern of one man rising to prominence to settle political unrest. See Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, "Legends of the Greek Lawgivers," *GRBS* 19 (1978) 199-209. The judicial *monomachia* must have been a part of his legislation. On the accuracy of Hermippus: Dion.Hal. *De Isaeo* 1; Joseph. *Ap.* 1.163. Ephorus wrote a *Περὶ εὐρημάτων* (*FGHist* 70F104-06), and Demonax's invention of *hoplomachia* is probably a myth.

¹⁹ Zeus Hoplosmios: *IG* V.2 344; Arist. *Part.An.* 673a; Francis Vian, *La guerre des géants* (Paris 1952) 239; Fougères 163, 297; A. B. Cook, *Zeus* II.1 (Cambridge 1925) 290-91; Jessen, *RE* 8 (1913) 2299 s.v. "Hoplosmios." Tribe Hoplodmia: *IG* V.2 271; Fougères 163.

²⁰ Hera and Athena: Vian (*supra* n.19) 239 n.3. Hopoleas: Paus. 8.27.3; Sundwall, *RE* 8 (1913) 299 s.v.

²¹ Francis Vian, "La fonction guerrière dans la mythologie grecque," in Vernant 63.

tion of a local divinity, who was the patron of an *ὀπλιτικὴ ὄρχησις*, a dance similar to that of the Curetes and Corybantes. All such dances in his view share a common origin in defending the infant Zeus. The Mantineans allegedly employed the armed dance of the cult for the military training of their youth.²² Vian, however, connects the dance with the *Moleia* festival at Mantinea, held to commemorate the duel of Lycurgus and Areithous.²³

I am not convinced that this material tells us much about the origins of *hoplomachia* and the profession of the *hoplomachoi*. The frequent appearance of names incorporating some form of *hoplon* may make it likely that the Mantineans created something called *hoplomachia*, but this is argument by association rather than direct evidence. Forms of the epithet *hoplosmios* are found elsewhere than at Mantinea.²⁴ Moreover, the only evidence for the *Moleia* is a scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, and nothing is said about dancing.

Armed dances vary by locality and by the divinity with which they are associated.²⁵ Although the pyrrhic dance of the Cretan Curetes was sacred to Zeus, the pyrrhic at Athens belonged to Athena and that at Sparta to the Dioscuri (Pl. *Leg.* 796b). The Cretan pyrrhic may have originated as a fertility rite without military connections, on which the myth of the Curetes protecting the infant Zeus was later grafted.²⁶ One cannot argue that all armed dances have a connection with Zeus.

Alleged graphic representations of the Mantinean dance scarcely enlighten. Séchan identified pairs of warriors on a geometric vase in the dipylon style as performers of the duel dance of the Arcadians and Mantineans, probably because a lyre-player also appears.²⁷ As we shall see, there is no evidence that the Mantinean dance involves a duel or mock combat. More recently, Lacroix has argued that the

²² Fougères 298–99, 349–50, cf. Vian (*supra* n.19) 238.

²³ *Il.* 7.137–47; schol. Ap.Rhod. 1.164; cf. Ariaethus of Tegea, *FGrHist* 316F7; Vian (*supra* n.19) 242–43 and (*supra* n.21) 63, followed by W. Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* III (Berkeley 1979) 208. Actually Vian's views are not clear: in his book he associates the dance with the *Moleia*, but in the later article he connects it with the cult of Zeus Hoplosmios.

²⁴ Hera Oplosmia in Elis and Triphylia: Tzetz. ad Lycoph. *Alex.* 858. Cf. Aphrodite Hoplismene at Corinth, Sparta, and Cythera: Paus. 2.5.1, 3.15.10, cf. 3.17.5, 3.23.1; and Artemis Hoplismene at Abydos: P. R. Franke, "Artemis Hoplismene," *AA* (1963) 450–54.

²⁵ Jean-Claude Poursat, "Les représentations de danse armée dans la céramique attique," *BCH* 92 (1968) 551. Cf. Hdt. 6.129.3 and Ath. 181E where the Attic and Laconian dance figures are distinguished, and the various armed dances in Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.5–11.

²⁶ Latte 41–54; Séchan 87. The armed dance *karpeia* was also a fertility dance: Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.7–8; Hesychius s.v.

²⁷ Séchan 94–95 and in Dar.-Sag. 4.2 (1911) 1031 s.v. "Saltatio" fig.6056.

Mantinean dance appears on bronze and silver issues of Mantinea from the first half of the fourth century B.C. A lone figure, formerly interpreted as Odysseus with an oar, is now seen as a warrior in an Arcadian *pilos*, carrying two or three javelins, and with knees bent ready to spring like the Curetes or Corybantes.²⁸ Lacroix assumes the Cretan and Mantinean dances were similar, although he seems unaware of any connections between the dance and Zeus Hoplosmios.²⁹

Polybius (4.20.4–21) stresses the importance of music and dancing for education in Hellenistic Arcadia. Not all of it was military: the cult of Demeter Kidaria at Pheneus involved a fertility dance, the *kidaris*.³⁰ Only two sources, however, present any real information about the Mantinean dance. Aristoxenus of Tarentum preferred the Mantinean dance to all other national dances because of its hand movements.³¹ Xenophon (*An.* 6.1.11) gives a more detailed description. The Mantineans and Arcadians, wearing their best armor, march in rhythm to the martial lyric of a flute, sing a paean, and dance as they do in their processions to the gods. We do not know what the hand movements admired by Aristoxenus were, but Xenophon's account is echoed in Polybius (4.20.12), where he mentions the annual displays of marching to the flute and dances performed by the Arcadian youth. This type of armed march-dance is found on vases.³² One cannot say that the Mantinean dance did not involve the frantic leaps associated with the dancing of Curetes or Salii, but it seems certain that duels or mock combats were not involved.

We should also add that no *locus classicus* exists for Fougères's *ὀπλιτικὴ ὄρχησις*. Xenophon does not know this term and Aristoxenus refers to the *Μαντινικὴ ὄρχησις*. Certainly this calls into question any connections between the dance and the cult of Zeus Hoplosmios. Furthermore, if Lacroix is correct in identifying the Mantinean dance on the obverse of the coins, the reverse bears the busts of twin divinities on an altar, who could be the Dioscuri.³³

²⁸ Léon Lacroix, "Les monnaies de Mantinée et les traditions arcadiennes," *BAB* V.53 (1967) 303–07.

²⁹ A myth, first preserved in Polemon of Ilium (*FHG* III 126 fr.37; Festus p.439 Lindsay), derives the Roman Salian dance from a Salius of Mantinea recruited by Aeneas. Lacroix (*supra* n.28) 308 with additional references; Vian (*supra* n.19) 243. Vergil (*Aen.* 5.298) says he came from Tegea. Nothing certain can be argued from this myth. Cf. Elias J. Bickerman, "Origines Gentium," *CP* 47 (1952) 65–81.

³⁰ Ath. 631D; Adler, *RE* 11 (1921) 378 s.v. "Kidaria."

³¹ Ath. 22B (Fritz Wehrli, *Aristoxenus* [Basel 1945] fr.112). For the importance of hand movements in Greek dancing see Glenn R. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (Princeton 1960) 306.

³² Poursat (*supra* n.25) 552–65.

³³ Lacroix (*supra* n.28) 308–09.

If one prefers to accept a connection between *hoplomachia*, the cult of Zeus Hoplosmios, and the armed dance, then surely the *hoplomachia* antedates the mid-sixth century B.C. This view, stressing that the art is older than the word, frequently occurs in the scholarly literature and cites the duel of Diomedes and Ajax at the funeral games of Patroclus (*Il.* 23.811–25) as the first known example of *hoplomachia*.³⁴ By our definition this duel is a *monomachia*.

Some would also believe that the *hoplomachia* may once have had a part in the Greek games.³⁵ A helmet found near Olympia in the early nineteenth century allegedly bore the inscription ΟΠΛΟΜΟΜΑΧΟΣ, which Boeckh (*CIG* 1541) emended to ὄπλομάχος. The helmet is lost and its date cannot be determined. The inscription appears alluring evidence when compared to Plutarch's account of an *agon* to the death near Pisa (*Mor.* 675c). Nevertheless, Plutarch labels this *agon* a *monomachia*.

The confusion manifest in scholarship concerning *monomachia*, *hoplomachia*, and the Mantinean dance should probably be attributed to making too much of the patchwork mosaic of Athenaeus. The fragments of Hermippus and Ephorus appear in 154D, followed by other fragments on *monomachia* and gladiators. A short section on dancing by kings and generals (155Bff) comes immediately thereafter. Athenaeus wrote when the Romans used the terms *monomachia* and *hoplomachia* interchangeably for gladiatorial combats, and he could not have foreseen the confusion he would engender. In any event, it is clear that *hoplomachia* has nothing to do with the Mantinean dance.

II

With the possible exception of Sparta, our knowledge of Greek military training before the fourth century B.C. is a *tabula rasa*. This is particularly true for Athens, where the date of origin of the *ephebia* remains mired in controversy but clearly not proved before *ca* 335 B.C.³⁶ Xenophon is quite explicit: no public military training existed at

³⁴ Saglio (*supra* n.7) 248; Grasberger (*supra* n.8) 141; Jüthner (*supra* n.7) 2298; Marrou (*supra* n.8) 37.

³⁵ Jüthner (*supra* n.7) 2298, *cf.* Grasberger (*supra* n.8) 141.

³⁶ See Chrysis Pélékidis, *Histoire de l'éphébie attique* (Paris 1962) 78–79; O. W. Reinmuth, *The Ephebic Inscriptions of the Fourth Century B.C.* (Leiden 1971) 1–3, 134–36, and “The Genesis of the Athenian Ephebia,” *TAPA* 83 (1952) 46–47; Pierre Vidal-Naquet, “La chasseur noir et l'origine de l'éphébie athénienne,” *AnnESC* 23 (1968) 947–48. Reinmuth's date 361/0 B.C. for the alleged earliest ephebic inscription has been redated to 334/3 by F. W. Mitchel, “The So-Called Earliest Ephebic Inscription,”

Athens.³⁷ To fill this void, some have argued that pyrrhic dancing and athletics constituted military training at Athens.³⁸ The real value of dances in arms for military training is the question to which we now turn.

Many primitive peoples employ war dances to arouse the spirit to fight, to terrify the enemy, or as part of a magic rite by which they believe the enemy's strength can be neutralized. Apart from whatever can be deduced from a Cretan dance called *orsite* (Ath. 629c), perhaps an 'arouser' dance, there is no evidence that Greek armed dances had these functions.³⁹ We have seen that the Cretan pyrrhic and the Macedonian *karpeia* were fertility dances, at least initially, and the *telesias*, danced by Antiochus the Great, appears to have been after-dinner amusement.⁴⁰ Moreover, the dances described by Xenophon (*An.* 6.1.5–11) appear to have little practical military value. They are pantomimes, processional marches, or simply entertainment. An initial impression leads us to believe that the value of such armed dances as practical military training should not be taken too seriously.

Any evaluation of Greek armed dances must be regarded with great reserve, since neither the literary nor the graphic sources are sufficient to draw solid conclusions.⁴¹ Nevertheless, as we have seen, Homer, Socrates, Dio Chrysostom, and Galen all saw a direct connection between war and dancing or cited dancing as a parallel to *hoplomachia*. We should add Plutarch's emphasis on the Spartan connection between music and war and Philostratus' description of a Spartan dance, which involved avoiding and shooting missiles, leaping, and handling a shield.⁴² Three observations are pertinent: first,

ZPE 19 (1975) 233–43. Also see P. Siewert, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-Century Athens," *JHS* 97 (1977) 102–11.

³⁷ *Mem.* 3.12.5. See Pritchett (*supra* n.5) 211, and on the whole question of Greek military training 208–31. Ridley (*supra* n.8) has collected various interpretations of *Mem.* 3.12.5 and attempts to explain it away. Cf. Ps.-Xen. *Ath.Pol.* 2.1, Frontin. *Str.* 2.1.9, Polyaeus 4.2.7.

³⁸ Ridley (*supra* n.8) 535–47; Borthwick (1969) 388–90 and (1970) 320; Marcel Détiéne, "La phalange: problèmes et controverses," in Vernant 123.

³⁹ Latte 29. Cf. Xen. *An.* 5.4.17 on the Mossynoeci and Lucian *Salt.* 18 on the Ethiopians.

⁴⁰ See n.26 *supra*; Latte 31; Ath. 630A, 155B, cf. Xen. *An.* 6.1.5–11. Séchan (99) thinks the *telesias* was an initiation dance for young men.

⁴¹ Warnecke, *RE* 4A (1932) 2247 s.v. "Tanzkunst." Poursat (*supra* n.25) writes from the point of view that the representations of the dance on vases can be decisive, while Scarpi rejects the graphic evidence completely. See Paolo Scarpi, "La pyrrhiche o le armi della persuasione," *DArch* 12 (1979) 80 n.15.

⁴² Plut. *Lyc.* 21.3–4, *Mor.* 238B; Philostr. *De gym.* 19.

the remarks of Socrates and Galen refer only to the use of dancing to improve agility; and second, the Spartan dances of Lucian (*Salt.* 10) and Philostratus are not identical—Lucian indicates a processional dance. Third, as already noted, the references to *hoplomachia* and dancing in Galen and Lucius Tarraeus show only that both were considered physical exercise.

We are best informed about the Athenian pyrrhic, which was performed nude at the Panathenaea and involved choruses from the Athenian tribes.⁴³ The tragedian Phrynichus was supposedly elected strategos for staging good pyrrhics.⁴⁴ At Athens, as with other pyrrhics associated with Athena, the dance commemorated battles of the goddess against giants.⁴⁵ Borthwick is convinced that the pyrrhic was used for military training in the 420's B.C. and emphasizes maneuvers with the shield and leaping.⁴⁶ No doubt, as Borthwick says, Homer, the staple of traditional Athenian education, influenced military training, particularly if this customarily private form of training involved attempting to imitate tactics from the *Iliad*.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, these dance figures are a far cry from the practical training of the *hoplomachoi*, and there is no evidence that the Athenian pyrrhic included mock combat between individuals or choruses.⁴⁸

Plato's pyrrhic (*Leg.* 7.815A) has elicited different views. Scarpi believes Plato has copied the Spartan pyrrhic, while Poursat argues that Plato describes an ideal warrior dance having no relation to the real Athenian pyrrhic.⁴⁹ It seems likely that Plato borrowed from the Athenian dance, since his pyrrhic resembles that of Euripides (*Andr.* 1129–36) in emphasizing leaps and avoiding imaginary missiles, and

⁴³ Lys. 24.4; Isae. 5.36; Scarpi (*supra* n.41) 78–97, who believes the pyrrhic antedates the Panathenaea and was an initiation dance for the Athenian youth. Nudity: Poursat (*supra* n.25) 564, 566–83, 586–609, *cf.* Ath. 20E–F. *Contra*, Latte 35–36.

⁴⁴ Ael. *VH* 3.8, *cf.* Suda s.v. Φρύνιχος and E. K. Borthwick, "The Dances of Philocleon and the Sons of Carcinus in Aristophanes' *Wasps*," *CQ* 18 (1968) 44–45. Plutarch (*Mor.* 747B) claims paedotribes taught the pyrrhic in the palaestrae.

⁴⁵ Borthwick (1969) 389–90 and (1970) 322–23. He has also made a case that the Thessalian dancing of Lucian *Salt.* 14 probably relates to Athena.

⁴⁶ Borthwick (1970) 320 with n.2 and "Trojan Leap and Pyrrhic Dance in Euripides' *Andromache* 1129–41," *JHS* 87 (1967) 18–23. *Cf.* Ar. *Nub.* 988–89.

⁴⁷ Ar. *Ran.* 1034–36; Borthwick (1969) 388–90. His argument for *hypaspidia* (*Il.* 13.157–58, 806–07, *cf.* Tyrt. 8.35–36) seems probable, but I find the references for *paraspistes* (Eur. *Cyc.* 5–8, *Ion* 1528–29, *cf.* Tyrt. 8.31) unconvincing.

⁴⁸ Latte 83; Poursat (*supra* n.25) 582. *Contra*, Séchan 65. The Thracian dance of Xen. *An.* 6.1.5 is the only evidence for an armed dance involving mock combat between dancers. We should also note that the hand movement called *xiphismos* (Ath. 629F, Poll. 4.99) does not indicate a military exercise or use of a sword: Latte 18, Séchan 74.

⁴⁹ Scarpi (*supra* n.41) 81; Poursat (*supra* n.25) 566 n.2.

he relates it directly to Athena (*Leg.* 796B). Plato adds, however, shooting missiles, which is not attested in the Athenian dance. The elements of Philostratus' Spartan dance coincide with Plato's pyrrhic, but Philostratus is a very late source for classical Sparta and he may have copied from Plato.

Probably the most that can be concluded from our knowledge of the pyrrhic is that this dance might have increased physical fitness, agility, and dexterity in handling a shield. We cannot say that pyrrhic dancing totally prepared an individual to fight in a phalanx. One can also ask what percentage of Athenian males of military age danced the pyrrhic? Or if Scarpi's arguments that the pyrrhic was an initiation dance are correct, how many continued to practice the pyrrhic as adults? The scanty evidence does not permit answers. Aristophanes' criticism (*Nub.* 988–89) of Athenian pyrrhic dancers, however, if a true appraisal, is surely a sad commentary on the fitness of the dancers for military service.

III

Homer's comments on dancing and war as well as Lucian's on the Thessalians arouse our curiosity. The question of possible connections between dancing and the origins of some military tactics has not been posed, and I venture an interpretation of this problem more to provoke thought than to give a definite solution.

Meriones is called a dancer when he dodges Aeneas' spear, and swerving or ducking movements to avoid missiles are common elements in the dances of Plato, Euripides, Dio Chrysostom, and Philostratus. Missile dodging could be the connection between dancing and warfare before the institution of the hoplite phalanx. Thus Lucian's *τοὺς προστάτας καὶ προαγωνιστὰς* should probably be taken as Homeric *πρόμαχοι* rather than as the first rank of a phalanx.⁵⁰

Except for Philostratus' account of the Spartan dance, marching in step is the aspect of the Lacedaemonian pyrrhic most discussed. Certainly this part of the dance reflects the new situation after the introduction of the phalanx, when synchronized movement in mass became important. Spartan marching songs were famous, but the Athenian pyrrhic also involved a rhythmic march to the beat of the

⁵⁰ *Salt.* 14; the inscriptions cited by Lucian have no parallels and are probably fictitious.

pyrrhic or *enoplion* meter.⁵¹ In the Hellenistic and Roman periods the term pyrrhic denoted a march step rather than the dance (Latte 61). Learning to march in step might have been a greater contribution of the pyrrhic to military training than leaping or maneuvering the shield.

Finally, tactics and choral dancing share the same problem in requiring the co-ordinated movement of a human mass to achieve specified goals—a fact well known to Xenophon.⁵² Marching in step is only one solution to this problem; division and reunion of the mass present new difficulties. The sources are practically silent on this aspect of the pyrrhic. Aelian Tacticus and Arrian report, however, that the Hellenistic phalanx employed a countermarch called Persian, Cretan, or choral, which raises a new question of possible connections between tactics and dancing.⁵³ Is it possible that Hellenistic armies borrowed a maneuver from the choruses of the stage or is the converse true? Apuleius (*Met.* 10.29), for example, records the performance of a Greek pyrrhic, in which the dancers formed circles, squares, and other formations. Aelian, Arrian, and Apuleius are all Roman sources, so nothing can be argued from them for the pyrrhic of the fifth century B.C., which underwent numerous changes after that date.⁵⁴ Tactics and dancing have much in common, but we must leave the question open whether armies borrowed techniques from dancing or the converse.⁵⁵

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⁵¹ Ath. 630E; Dio Chrys. 2.59; Hephaestion 50, in P. Westphal, *Scriptores Metrici Graeci* I 27; Pl. *Resp.* 400B; Diomedes in Keil, *Gram.Lat.* I 475 and Plotius Sacerdos at IV 497.

⁵² *Oec.* 8.3–4, *Mem.* 3.4.2–5, *Cyr.* 1.6.18, cf. *Mem.* 3.5.6.

⁵³ Ael.Tact. 27.1, 4; Arr. *Tact.* 23.1. Asclepiodotus (10.13, 15) does not mention the term 'choral'.

⁵⁴ See Latte 56–63, and for the pyrrhic in the Roman period J. and L. Robert, *Bull.épig.* 1981, 481.

⁵⁵ Scarpi (*supra* n.41) 91 n.104 in a future work hopes to connect the Roman Salii with the introduction of hoplite tactics in Italy.

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