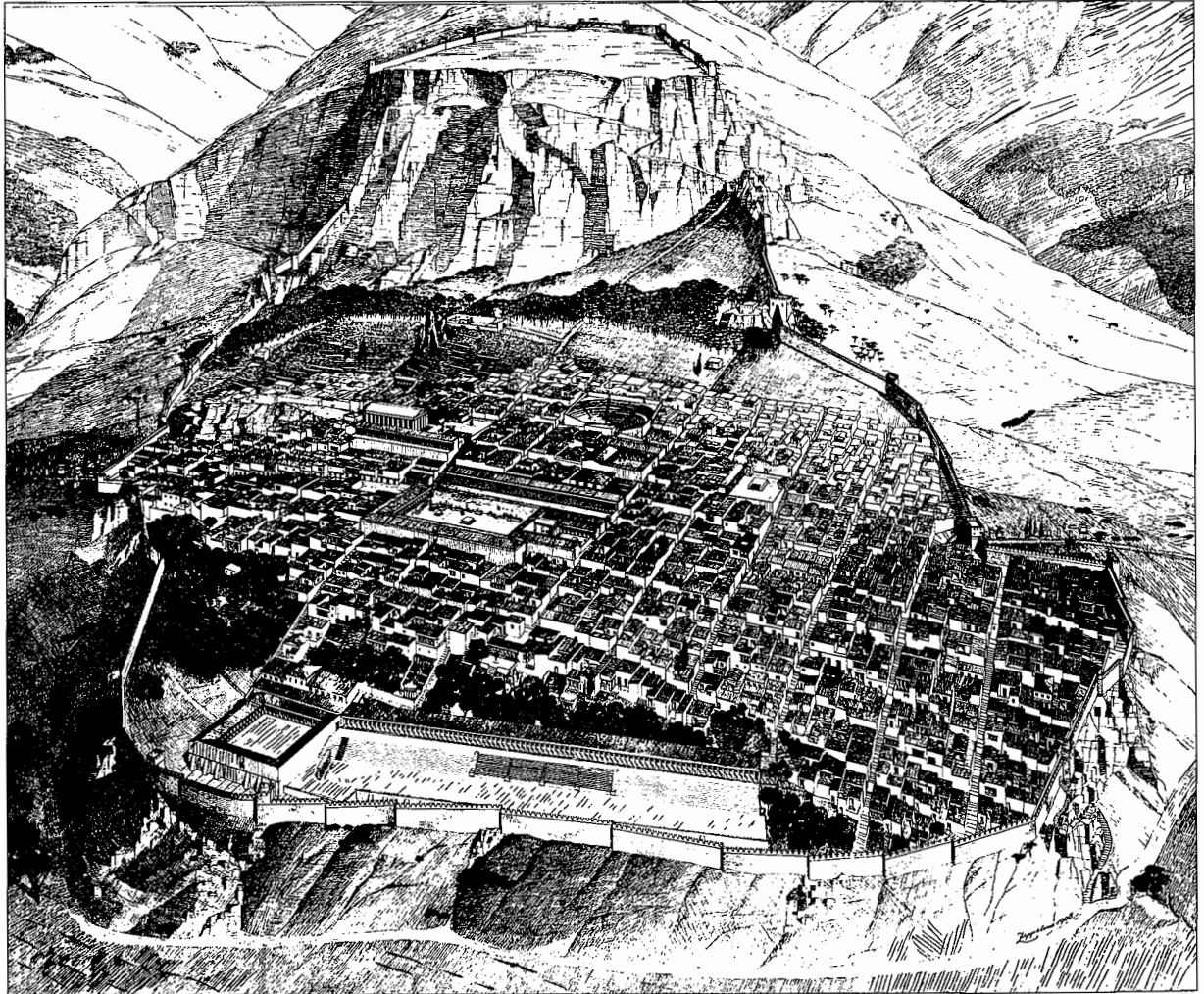


THE MILITARY

"The war to end all wars." "Peace in our time." Such hopeful pronouncements have become ironic epitaphs to the 20th century's longing for concord among nations. Two global conflagrations followed by a 45-year stand-off between lethally armed superpowers cannot help but temper the optimism that came with the ending of the Cold War. As the superpowers turn swords into plowshares, we turn our attention to a matter that looms constant behind the drama of war and peace: the intimate—and some would say fateful—connections between the state and the military. From



An artist's conception of the ancient Greek polis of Priene. In addition to the walls, prominent features include the stadium, the marketplace, the temple, and the theater.

AND SOCIETY

the Greek *polis* up through the modern nation-state, martial imperatives have provided nations not only with an urgent reason for being and a basis for civic loyalty but also with a model for political and social organization. Paul Rahe and Charles Townshend provide background to William James's question: Can nations find a moral equivalent of war? And Charles Moskos ponders the fate of America's military, now being transformed from a citizens' army into a social laboratory where debates over gender roles and the acceptance of open homosexuality are expected to be resolved.

THE MARTIAL REPUBLICS OF CLASSICAL GREECE

by Paul A. Rahe

At the turn of this century, the Irish-American journalist Finley Peter Dunne wrote a column of political and social satire for a Chicago newspaper. On one occasion, he touched on the ancient world, attributing the following observation to his character, the sage of Halsted Street, Mr. Dooley:

I know histhry isn't thru, Hinnessy, because it ain't like what I see ivry day in Halsted Sthreet. If any wan comes along with a histhry iv Greece or Rome that'll show me th' people fightin', gettin' dhrunk, makin' love, gettin' marrid, owin' th' grocery man an' bein' without hard-coal, I'll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not befure. Historyans is like doctors. They are always lookin' Pr symptoms. Thos iv them that writes about their own times examines th' tongue an' feels th' pulse 'an makes a wrong dygnosis. Th' other kind iv histhry is a postmortem examination. It tells ye what a counthry died iv. But I'd like to know what it lived iv.

Mr. Dooley's complaint deserves mention because it reflects with great precision the difficulty faced by modern historians of antiquity and by their readers as well. Like Mr. Dooley, we are eager to know more about ancient domestic life—and not only about family quarrels, drinking bouts, love, marriage, and the never-ending struggle to make ends meet. But on these and related matters, we have very little reliable information. Indeed, what Mr. Dooley could see every day on Halsted Street in Chicago are the very things the ancients took great care to hide from one another—and ultimately from us.

The dearth of evidence regarding the private sphere does nothing to assuage our curiosity, but it may in itself be revealing. We may not be able to say what the Greek cities that flourished in the epoch stretching roughly from the eighth to the fourth centuries B.C. died of, but the relative silence of our informants regarding domestic affairs suggests that the citizens of the fully

autonomous *polis* lived for something outside civilian life, a condition that Mr. Dooley and the residents of Halsted Street would have had trouble comprehending.

In their fundamental principles, modern liberal democracy and the ancient Greek *polis* stand radically opposed. The ancient city gave primacy not to the household and its attendant economic concerns but to politics and war. It was a republic oriented less toward the protection of rights than toward the promotion of virtue—first, by its very nature and, second, by its need to survive. Its cohesion was not and could not be a mere function of incessant negotiation and calculated compromise; it was and had to be bound together by a profound sense of moral purpose and common struggle.

One of America's Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton, captured the difference between the two regimes succinctly when he wrote in *The Federalist*, "The industrious habits of the people of the present day, absorbed in the pursuits of gain, and devoted to the improvements of agriculture and commerce are incompatible with the condition of a nation of soldiers, which was the true condition of the people of those [ancient Greek] republics." Hamilton's point is a simple one: The modern citizen is a civilian—a bourgeois family man or woman whose ancient counterpart was a warrior. Commerce defines the terms on which life is lived in modern, liberal polities. The ordinary citizen may not be a merchant himself, but the concerns of trade and industry regulate his labor with respect to time and govern the relations that unite him with his

compatriots. By contrast, commerce was peripheral to the ancient economy. The ordinary Greek was a more or less self-sufficient peasant proprietor, and he needed his fellow citizens as unpaid bodyguards against the city's slaves and for the defense of his family and land against foreigners far more than he needed them for any exchange of services and goods.

In antiquity, the model for political relations was not the contract but kinship. The ancient city was, like the household, a ritual community of human beings sharing in the flesh of animals sacrificed, then cooked at a common hearth. The citizens were bound together by the myth of common ancestry and linked by a veneration of the gods and the heroes of the land. The *polis* was not and could not be the household writ large, but as Plato makes clear in *The Republic*, this is what it tried to be. The city was not a circle of friends, but as both Plato and Aristotle imply, this is what it strove to become. The citizens were not tied to one another by a web of compromise. They were, as Augustine puts it, "united by concord regarding loved things held in common."

This fundamental like-mindedness was itself sustained by that steadfast adherence to tradition (*mos maiorum*) and that pious veneration of the ancestral (*ta patria*) which the common civic rituals and legends were intended to foster. "The *polis* teaches the man." So wrote Simonides, the well-traveled poet from Iulis on Ceos. And when the Cyclops of Euripides' satyr play wants to know the identity of Odysseus and his companions, he asks whence they have sailed, where they were born, and what *polis* was responsible for their education

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(*paideia*). As long as the citizens were relatively isolated from outside influence, it mattered little, if at all, that the religious beliefs and rites of a particular city were irrational and incoherent. What mattered most was that the beliefs and rites peculiar to that city inspired in the citizens the unshakable conviction that they belonged to one another. And where it was difficult if not impossible to engender so profound a sense of fellow-feeling, as in colonies that drew their citizens from more than one metropolis, civil strife (*stasis*) was all too often the consequence. Put simply, the political community in antiquity was animated by a passion for the particular. The patriotism that gave it life was not a patriotism of universal principles, such as those enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, but a religion of blood and of soil.

Of course, the *polis* came into being in the first place because of the need for common defense. The word itself appears to be derived from an Indo-European term employed to designate the high place or citadel to which the residents of a district ordinarily retreated when subject to attack. But that high place was more than just a refuge. Even in the narrow, pristine sense of the word, the *polis* was also an enclosure sacred to the gods who lived within the city's walls. Thus, when a city pondered the establishment of a colony, it was customary for the founder (*oikistes*) to consult the oracle of Apollo at Delphi regarding the site. The failure to seek or a decision to ignore the advice of the god was thought likely to be fatal to the entire enterprise. In fact, the act of establishing a new community was itself an elaborate religious rite specified in detail by the laws. And in keeping with the divine origin and character of the new *polis*, the citizen designated as *oikistes* could expect to be buried with all solemnity in the central

marketplace (*agora*), to be worshipped as a demigod and divine protector of the *polis* from the moment of his decease, and to be honored thereafter in an annual festival complete with public sacrifices and athletic games.

The political community's sense of common endeavor was grounded in its particular *patrioi nomoi*—its ancestral customs, rites, and laws. These practices and institutions distinguished a city from similar communities and defined it even more effectively than the boundaries of the civic territory (*chora*) itself. If forced to abandon its *chora*, a *polis* could nonetheless retain its identity. The sage Heraclitus took this for granted when he wrote that "the people must fight for the *nomos* as if for the walls of the *polis*." When a Greek city went to war, the citizens battled not just to expand their dominion and to protect their wives, children, and land; they fought also to defend their *patrioi nomoi* and the entire way of life which these embodied.

This spirit carried over into the conduct of foreign affairs. Even where military cooperation was the only end sought, the Greeks tended to invest any confederacy they joined with moral and even religious foundations. This is why cities that formed such a connection often adopted each other's gods, founded a common festival, or sent delegations to share in each other's principal rites. In 428 B.C., when the Mytilenians were intent on securing aid from Sparta and its allies, they couched their request in terms that would find favor. "We recognize," they remarked, "that no friendship between private individuals will ever be firm and no community among cities will ever come to anything unless the parties involved are persuaded of each other's virtue and are otherwise similar in their ways: For disparate deeds arise from

discrepancies in judgment.”

Fifty-one years before, in a time of like trouble, the Spartans' Athenian rivals resorted to similar rhetoric. On the eve of the Battle of Plataea, the Spartans expressed fear that the citizens of Athens, their allies of the moment, would come to terms with the Persians. In response, the Athenians mentioned two reasons why they could not conceive of abandoning the struggle against the Medes. First, they explained, it was their duty to avenge the burning of their temples and the destruction of the images of their gods. “Then,” they added, “there is that which makes us Hellenes—the blood and the tongue that we share, the shrines of the gods and the sacrifices we hold in common, and the likeness in manners and in ways. It would not be proper for the Athenians to be traitors to these.” In neither case was the presence of a shared enemy deemed adequate. Though separated by half a century, the two speeches were in accord: The only secure foundation for alliance was a common way of life.

The conviction so firmly stated by the Mytilenians and the Athenians contributed in a variety of ways to the actual making of policy. Cities with a common origin and extremely similar *nomoi* rarely went to war. The ordinary Greek colony, for example, generally had customs, rites, and laws closely akin to those of the mother city. Even when the two were fully autonomous, they usually maintained close ties, and the colony was expected to defer in most matters to the metropolis and to send a delegation with gifts of symbolic import to join in celebrating the principal festival of that community. The failure of a colony to perform what were seen as its moral obligations was deemed shocking in the extreme, and it could give rise to a bitterness that might easily overshadow the cold calcula-

tion of interests. As the historian Thucydides makes abundantly clear, one cannot make sense of the origins of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.) without paying close attention to the deep-seated anger that shaped the Corinthians' policy towards their renegade colonists the Corcyraeans.

The forceful response that the Spartan expression of distrust elicited from the Athenians in 479 B.C. deserves a second glance. The great struggle against Persia did in fact bring home to the Hellenes all that they held in common—the blood and the tongue that they shared, the shrines of the gods and the public sacrifices, and their similarity in manners and ways. It was natural in the aftermath of that war, particularly when the Great King of Persia started once again to meddle in Hellenic affairs, for some Greeks to begin to argue that wars within Hellas were not properly wars at all but examples of civil strife and, as such, reprehensible. But though such arguments were made, they had very little effect.

If the Greeks were nonetheless inclined to make war on each other, it was at least in part because the disparate communities were never sufficiently similar in manners and in morals. What brought the citizens of a particular *polis* together set them apart from others; what united them as a people set them in opposition to outsiders. They held their land at the expense of slaves and foreigners, and they pursued the way of life peculiar to them in defiance of notions elsewhere accepted. When in Plato's *Republic* Polemarchus (“war-leader”) defines justice as “doing good to friends and harm to enemies,” he is merely reasserting on the personal level the grim civic ethic suggested by his name. In ancient Greece, patriotism went hand in hand with xenophobia. If “civil strife is not to thunder in the city,” Aeschylus's divine chorus warns the Athenians, the citizens “must return joy for joy in a spirit of common love—and they

must hate with a single heart."

The implications of all of this were not lost on the American Founding Fathers. Perhaps because of his own experience as a soldier, Alexander Hamilton recognized the warlike demeanor of the ancient agricultural republics more clearly than many who have come after, and this recognition played no small role in determining his adherence to James Madison's bold project of refashioning the disparate American states into an extended commercial republic. When confronted by the arguments of those who believed that no viable republic could be constructed on so vast a territory, Hamilton retorted that the American states were themselves already too large. Those who took such arguments seriously would have to choose between embracing monarchy and dividing the states "into an infinity of little, jealous, clashing, tumultuous commonwealths, the wretched nurseries of unceasing discord, and the miserable objects of universal pity or contempt."

On more than one occasion, the Greeks were forced to choose between the alternatives posed by Hamilton, and in all but the most difficult of circumstances most, if not all, preferred the jealousy, the tumult, the unceasing discord, and the excitement of life in the fully autonomous *polis* to the relative tranquillity promised in exchange for their absorption into a great empire. In considering the character of the *polis*, we must never lose sight of the permanence of conflict that afflicted Greek life. The ordinary Hellene would have nodded his approval of the opinion attributed by Plato to the lawgiver of Crete: "What most men call peace, he held to be only a name; in truth, for everyone, there exists by nature at all times an undeclared war among all the cities." Such was the human condition in Greece, where political freedom took pre-

cedence over commodious living.

Because the ancient city was a brotherhood of warriors and not an association of merchants, the principal task of legislation was the promotion of public-spiritedness and not the regulation of competing economic interests. It is revealing that, in Plato's *Republic*, a discussion of the best regime rapidly turns into a dialogue on character formation. Unfortunately, even under the best of circumstances, the nurturing of civic virtue was a difficult undertaking—one that called for the deliberate shaping of the citizens' passions and opinions. Even when everything has been done to ensure that the citizens have the same interests, there remains a tension between private inclination and public duty, between individual self-interest and the common good that is impossible fully to resolve. Death and pain are the greatest obstacles: They bring a man back upon himself, reminding him that when he suffers, he suffers alone. As a consequence, the quality which Plato and Aristotle called civic or political courage is rare: It is not by instinct that a man is willing to lay down his life for his fellow citizens. He must be made to forget the ineradicable loneliness of death. The fostering of courage, self-sacrifice, and devotion to the common good requires artifice, and this is why Plato's discussion of character formation rapidly turns into a dialogue on poetry and its chief subject: man's relations with the gods.

Even the most skeptical of the Greeks acknowledged the religious roots of that "reverence and justice" that served as the "regulators of cities" and the "bonds uniting" the citizens "in friendship." In Critias's satyr play *The Sisyphus*, the protagonist has occasion to discuss the origins of that cooperative capacity that makes political life possible. "There was a time," he notes, "when the life of human

beings was without order and like that of a hunted animal: the servant of force. At that time, there was neither prize for the noble nor punishment for the wicked. And then human beings, so it seems to me, established laws in order that justice might be a tyrant and hold arrogance as a slave, exacting punishment if anyone stepped out of line." This stratagem worked well in most regards, but it was of limited effectiveness in one decisive respect—for "though the laws prevented human beings from committing acts of violence in the full light of day, men did so in secret." It required "a real man, sharp and clever in judgment," to find a remedy for this deficiency; when he finally appeared, he "invented for mortals dread of the gods, so that there would be something to terrify the wicked even when they acted, spoke, or thought entirely in secret." Critias's Sisyphus was by no means alone in making this assertion. In one fashion or another, Aristotle, Isocrates, Polybius, Diodorus, Strabo, Quintus Mucius Scaevola, Marcus Terentius Varro, and Marcus Tullius Cicero all echo his claim.

The skepticism voiced by these luminaries was foreign to the ordinary Greek, but the political importance that these men ascribed to religion was not. The *polis* had a civic religion, and that religion was one of the chief sources of its unity and morale. For the Greeks, the gods were a constant presence. The Olympians might be thought to stand above the fray, but the gods and heroes of the land were taken to be the city's protectors, sharing in its glory and suffering its reverses. In Greece as well as in Rome, it was commonly believed that no town could be captured prior to the departure of its patron deities. For this reason, some cities chained their gods down, and it was an event of profound political importance when a citizen managed to discover abroad and remove to

a final resting place within the territory of his own *polis* the bones of a hero. Securing and maintaining divine favor was vital. As a consequence, propitiation of the gods could never be simply a private matter; piety was a public duty.

Just as the piety of the citizens was thought to protect the city, so also their misdeeds could threaten its survival. Indeed, the whole community might be made to suffer for the sins of a single man. Pindar compares divine vengeance to "a fire on a mountainside: though begotten of a single seed, it removes a great forest entirely from sight." As a consequence, men were unwilling to take ship with an individual deemed guilty of offending the gods, and cities found it necessary to expel or even execute the impious and those who had polluted the community by murder, manslaughter, or some other infraction.

Just as patriotism required piety, so piety demanded patriotism. Treason was more than a political act, at least as politics is narrowly defined in modern times. The man who turned coat or simply abandoned his city in time of crisis betrayed not just his fellow citizens; he betrayed the gods as well. This explains why one peripatetic writer chose to list "offenses against the fatherland" under the category of "impiety." It also explains why the law of Athens equated treason with the robbing of temples. The Athenians dealt with the two crimes in a single statute that called not just for the guilty party's execution but also for the confiscation of his property and a denial to him of burial in his native soil.

To reinforce the conviction that the gods required of citizens a total devotion to the common good, the ancient cities resorted to the administering of oaths. Fortunately for us, an Athenian orator took the trouble to explain in detail the logic of this practice to the members of a jury. "The oath is the force holding the democracy to-

gether," he observed. "Our regime is composed of three elements: the magistrate, the juryman, and the private individual. Each of these is required to give his pledge, and quite rightly so. For many have deceived human beings and escaped notice, not only by eluding immediate dangers but also by remaining unpunished for their crimes through the rest of the time allotted to them. But no oath-breaker escapes divine notice; no man of this sort can avoid the vengeance that the gods exact. Even if a perjurer manages to escape retribution himself, his children and his entire family will fall upon great misfortunes." This religious understanding guided civic policy throughout all of Hellas.

Except during an emergency, it was probably not the norm for a community to exact from all of its citizens at once a pledge of their loyalty. It was common within the Greek cities to make provision for the military training of the young. Ordinarily, it seems to have been deemed sufficient that these youths be called upon to swear once and for all at the time of their initiation into manhood that they would stake their lives to protect the community, their fellow citizens, and the institutions they held in common.

The demands placed on the ordinary Greek soldier, or hoplite, and the moral support afforded him in his moment of trial went far beyond anything imagined by the average soldier today. As Aristotle emphasizes, mutual acquaintanceship was one of the features that distinguished the Greek *polis* from a nation. If the *polis* was to function properly, he suggests, it had to be "easily surveyed" so that the citizens might know each other's characters. Most of the cities were small towns, and in only a few did the citizen body exceed a few thousand. There was little, if any privacy, and the citizen's entire existence was bound up with

his participation in the religious and political affairs of the community. The Greek soldier was well-known to the men around him. He had spent the better part of his leisure time in their company: When not in the fields, he would leave the household to his wife and loiter about the blacksmith's shop, the palaestra, the gymnasium, or the marketplace, discussing politics and personalities, testing his strength and his wit against the qualities of his contemporaries, and watching the boys as they grew up. He lived for those hours when, freed from the necessity of labor, he could exercise the faculties—both moral and intellectual—that distinguished him from a beast of burden and defined him as a man. When deprived of reputation, he was deprived of nearly everything that really mattered. In classical Greece, the absence of a distinction between state and society was as much a practical as a theoretical matter: It meant that the citizen lived most of his life in the public eye, subject to the scrutiny of his compatriots and dependent on their regard. To be identified as a draft evader, accused of breaking ranks, or branded a coward and, in consequence, to be shunned or deprived of one's political rights could easily be a fate worse than death.

In time of war, the Greek citizen could not escape combat. No allowance was made for conscientious objection, there were no desk jobs, and slaves and metics performed whatever support functions the hoplite could not perform for himself. More often than not, he was fighting near his home in defense of his children and his land. And even when he was posted abroad, he was acutely aware that the city's safety and his family's welfare depended on the outcome of the struggle.

On the field of battle, this foot soldier would be posted alongside his fellow citizens as they advanced, shoulder to shoul-



der, marching in step—in some communities, to the tune of a flute. The phalanx was generally eight men deep, and it extended as far as the numbers and the terrain permitted. There was no place to hide. Ancient battles took place on open terrain, and this infantryman's behavior under stress would be visible to many, if not to all. For success, the modern army depends on the courage of the minority of men who actually fire their guns. The Greek phalanx depended on the effort of every man. The strength of this chain of men was no greater than that of its weakest link, for it took a breach at only one point for the formation to collapse. As a result, the behavior of a single hoplite could sometimes spell the difference between victory and rout. The man who betrayed his fellows, leaving them to die by breaking ranks, would not soon be forgiven and could never be forgotten. In a sense, he had spent his entire life preparing for this one moment of truth.

The process of preparation for that moment of truth required a great deal of time and effort. Toil undertaken for the sake of profit might be regarded as shameful, but toil undertaken for the sake of good order and victory in battle was honorable, and its avoidance was a source of unending shame. This fact explains the centrality of athletics in ancient Greek life. If the wealthy young men of the town spent their idle hours at the palaestra and the gymnasium, it was not simply or even chiefly because they were driven by narcissism. Indeed, their primary concerns

were public, not private. In a tyranny such as the one established by Aristodemus at Cumae on the northern marches of Italy's Magna Graecia, there was to be no public sphere, and it might therefore seem prudent and even appropriate for the despot to do what he could to suppress the noble and manly disposition of the young by closing the gymnasiums and banning the practice of arms, by draping the young boys of the town in finery and keeping them out of the hot sun, and finally by sending them off, their long hair curled, adorned with flowers, and doused with perfume, to study with the dance masters and the players of flutes. But where the public sphere survived, this would never do. Republics needed real men, and citizens with the leisure in which to ready themselves for the ordeal of battle were expected to do so. "It is necessary," as Montesquieu observes, "to look on the Greeks as a society of athletes and warriors."

The historian Herodotus hammers away at the need for toil with particular vehemence. The manner in which he turns his description of the Battle of Lade into a parable is a case in point. In 499 B.C., the Greeks who inhabited the coastal communities of Asia Minor and the islands of the eastern Aegean had joined together in rebellion against their royal master, the Great King of Persia. A few years later, they sent naval contingents to the island of Lade, which lay off Miletus, the largest and most prosperous of the coastal towns. There, the rebels intended to make a concerted effort to prevent the Phoenician fleet of the Mede



from regaining control of the sea and putting an end to their revolt. Upon the arrival of the various contingents, Dionysius of Phocaea reportedly addressed them in the following fashion: "Men of Ionia, our affairs—whether we are to be free men or slaves (and fugitive slaves at that)—stand balanced on a razor's edge. If, for the time being, you are willing to subject yourselves to hard work, you will have to submit to toil on the spot, but you shall be able to overcome those opposed to you and so go free. If, however, you prefer softness and disorder, I have no hope that you can avoid paying to the king the penalty for your revolt."

The Ionians initially took Dionysius's advice. According to Herodotus, they toiled for seven days from dawn to dusk, rowing their ships and practicing maneuvers under the Phocaeen's direction. But because the men of the islands and coast were soft and unaccustomed to toil, many among them soon became ill, and in due course the rowers wearied of hardship and rebelled. Then they labored no more but instead erected tents on the island and took shelter there from the harsh rays of the sun. The Ionians paid dearly for their weakness. The Persian generals had promised to pardon any among the rebels who turned coat, and as a consequence of the rowers' indolence and insubordination the Samian generals became persuaded that the cause was hopeless and elected to accept the king's offer. Thus, just as the battle began, the contingent from Samos—followed quickly by the triremes from Lesbos—sailed off, leaving the remaining Ionians to certain defeat. He-

rodotus might have added that these men got precisely what they deserved, but he had no need to spell out his point.

Needless to say, toil, endurance, and good order were no less necessary for those destined to engage in combat on land. When Xenophon singles out farming as a profession likely to prepare men for war, he has more in mind than the fact that those who cultivate the soil have an interest in its defense. "The earth," his Socrates remarks, "supplies good things in abundance, but she does not allow them to be taken by the soft but accustomed men to endure the wintry cold and summer's heat. In exercising those who work with their own hands, she adds to their strength, and she makes men of those who, in farming, take pains, getting them up early and forcing them to march about with great vigor. For in the country as in the town, the tasks most fitting to the time must be done in season." Xenophon's Ischomachus even asserts that agriculture teaches generalship, noting that victory generally depends less on cleverness than on the thoroughness, diligence, and care exhibited by the sort of men who have learned from long experience the necessity of taking precautions.

Courage, strength, endurance, and diligence were vital, but they were not the only virtues demanded of the citizen-warrior in classical times. In certain crucial respects, the hoplite was quite unlike the heroes of *The Iliad*. He and his opponents fought not on their own but in formation. Therefore,

he could not afford to be a berserker, driven by rage to run amok among the enemy host, for he could not break ranks to charge the enemy line without doing himself and his own side great harm. To achieve victory, the hoplite and his comrades had to display what the Greeks called *sophrosune*—the moderation and self-restraint expected of a man required to cooperate with others in both peace and war. Consequently, in considering the education to which young Greeks were customarily subjected, one would err in dwelling on athletic contests and military maneuvers to the exclusion of all else, for Greek boys were expected to toil at music as well. In fact, to judge by the remarks made by the greatest of the ancient philosophers, the study of music played a vital role in giving a young man the psychological preparation he needed for the assumption of his duties as a citizen and soldier. In Plato's *Republic*, the interlocutors of Socrates take it for granted that education consists of gymnastic exercise and musical training. Initially, Socrates treats exercise at the gymnasium as a hardening of the body. But as the argument unfolds, he introduces another, more important consideration—the effect of that hardening on the soul, and the danger that guardians subjected to gymnastic training alone will be savage toward one another and toward their fellow citizens as well. Poetry set to music he presents as an instrument capable of moderating and harmonizing—in short, of civilizing—the all-important quality of spiritedness.

In *The Laws*, Plato's Athenian Stranger takes a similar tack, arguing at length and with considerable psychological insight that participation in choral singing and dancing can habituate the young and the not so young to take pleasure in that which is good and to feel loathing and disgust when presented with that which is not.

Even Aristotle thought such pursuits an antidote to the savagery bred of the ancient city's obsessive preoccupation with war. In fact, like his mentor, he was persuaded that a *polis* devoted to music and the arts would be a far healthier and saner polity than a community dedicated to conquest and imperial rule and consequently riven by political ambition and strife.

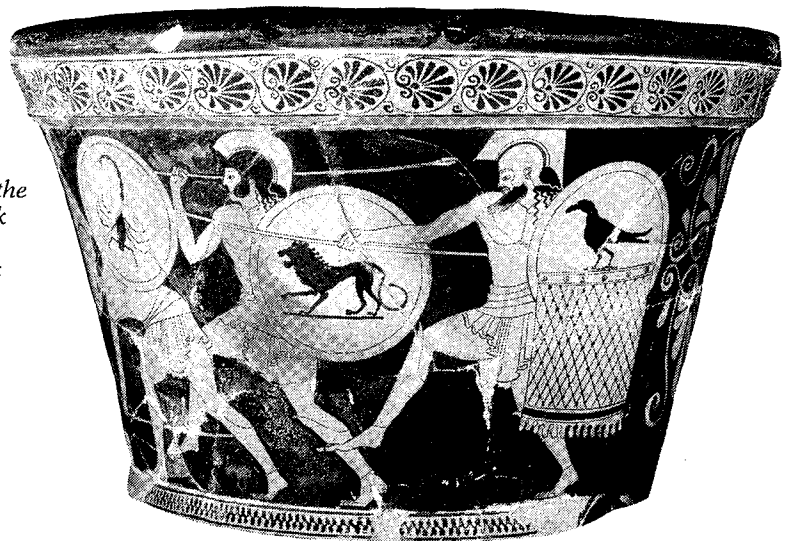
One of the more telling indications of the degree to which the warrior ethos permeated every aspect of Greek life is the prevalence of pederasty throughout Hellas. No ancient author gives us a full and detailed report of the conventions that guided Greek behavior in the various cities, and the surviving plays, courtroom harangues, philosophical dialogues, and vase representations that throw light on the elaborate code of homosexual courtship pertain chiefly to Athens. But though the evidence is fragmentary, the general pattern is clear: The Greeks seem to have practiced pederasty as a rite of passage marking a boy's transition to manhood and his initiation into the band of citizen-soldiers. And even where wooing adolescent boys was the fashion only among men of leisure, pederasty was conceived of by its many proponents as a reinforcement of those ties of mutual acquaintanceship that were universally recognized as the foundation of civil courage.

The pattern is evident in Ephorus's description of prevailing practice in the region of Greece where the *polis* as a religious and military community governed by constitutional forms seems first to have emerged. In Crete, the younger boys attended the men's mess with their fathers. Under the direction of the warden associated with that mess, those slightly older learned their letters, memorized the songs prescribed by the laws, and tested their strength against one another and against

those associated with other messes. When the boys turned 17, the most distinguished among them gathered their less well-born contemporaries into herds, each collecting as large a personal following as possible. Fed at public expense and subject to their recruiter's father, they practiced hunting, participated in footraces, and—at appointed times—joined in battle against rival herds, marching in formation to the cadence of the flute and the lyre. This period of apprenticeship reached completion when a man of distinguished family took as

land that the custom spread to the remainder of Greece. Concerning the other Hellenic cities we are less well informed, but all that we do know suggests that pederasty elsewhere served precisely the same function. Hunting, which was everywhere considered a form of training for war, and homosexual courtship appear to have been as closely connected in Athens as they were on Crete. On Thera, sodomy seems to have been linked with rituals honoring Apollo Delphinios and marking the boy's transition to manhood. At Thebes, when the be-

A vase painting dating from the 5th century B.C. depicts Greek soldiers, or hoplites, running forward in the close phalanx formation.



his beloved the boy who had gathered the herd in the first place.

This ritual abduction marked the first stage in the process by which an aristocratic boy and his followers were prepared for initiation into manhood. Together, they were forcibly withdrawn from the community of ephebes, and for a transitional period they slipped off to the wilds. When they came back, they immediately took wives and joined the community of men.

Pederasty was evidently one of the central institutions of the martial communities of Crete, and it was probably from this is-

loved one was enrolled as a man, his lover conferred on him the hoplite panoply; in fourth-century Elis, as well as in Thebes, the couple would fight as a pair in the ranks. "It is the part of a prudent general," Onasander would later remark, to encourage his heavy infantrymen to take risks on behalf of those alongside them in the battle line by stationing "brothers next to brothers, friends next to friends, and lovers next to the boys they love."

Classical Hellas encompassed an array of independent communities stretching from the east coast of the Black Sea to the

far reaches of the western Mediterranean. Language, literature, religion, culture, republican institutions, proximity to the sea, and diminutive size—these common characteristics made the ancient *poleis* much alike and very different at the same time. The last on this list of characteristics may well be the most important. Smallness in size gives rise to familiarity, and familiarity breeds contempt in more than one way. The defense of familiarity requires xenophobia, since all outside contact is a threat to the integrity of the community. The *polis* was akin to a party of zealots, and Alexander Hamilton was right when, in *The Federalist*, he described Hellas as “an infinity of little, jealous, clashing, tumultuous commonwealths.” There was variety enough in the local circumstances and traditions of these apparently similar communities to set them incessantly at odds. And, strange to tell, the unity of the Greek world owed much to this very variety and to the conflicts it engendered. Radical particularity makes for a certain uniformity. Athenaeus, a Greek who wrote in the third century A.D., rightly made no distinction among *poleis* when he wrote that “the men of olden times thought courage the greatest of the political virtues,” and what he had to say was as true for Rome as it was for the republics of Greece. Even where the institutions of the various cities were structurally different, the constant threat of war made them functionally similar.

As a type of community, the *polis* rested on its citizen militia and fell only when that militia was overwhelmed. The modern distinction between soldier and civilian did not pertain in the classical republics, and when that distinction emerged and the professional soldier became a figure of genuine importance—initially in Greece in the age of Philip of Macedon (359–36 B.C.) and

Alexander the Great (336–23 B.C.), and again later at Rome in the time of Marius, Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar—freedom’s existence became quite tenuous. Even where the city survived and retained a modicum of local autonomy, it did so on the sufferance of monarchs.

Something of the sort also could be said regarding the quasi-autonomous urban republics of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As Machiavelli makes clear in his *Art of War*, their failure to establish a militia capable of securing their defense rendered their retention of liberty largely a matter of chance. Indeed, it was only with the rise of popular armies at the time of the French Revolution that modern republicanism gained more than a foothold on the European continent. The degree to which the modern, democratic nation-state owes its solidarity, its sense of identity, and even its existence to the threat and experience of war cannot be overestimated. To date, at least, no lawgiver or state-builder has discovered what William James once termed a “moral equivalent of war.”

Modern republicanism may be at odds with its ancient prototype in many particulars. But until such a moral equivalent has been discovered and deployed in practical, political form, Mr. Dooley’s preoccupation with what could be seen every day on Halsted Street will render him and those similarly focused on domestic affairs as incapable of making a correct diagnosis of the modern condition as they are of understanding the history of ancient Greece and Rome. In the absence of a pacific equivalent of war, the breach between modernity and antiquity will remain incomplete and the martial republicanism of the classical Greeks will still be with us in one, crucial regard.