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SACRIFICE AND BATTLE

Robert Parker

As every reader of Xenophon and Herodotus knows, the first blood to be shed in any battle was that of an animal. Before leading an army out from camp, the general oversaw a consultative sacrifice – one primarily intended to provide omens, though the meat could also be eaten later – and in principle might decide not to move if the omens were bad. A further ‘slaughter sacrifice’ (*sphagion*), which provided further omens (but no meat), was performed just before the moment of engagement. And the consultative sacrifice made ‘with a view to marching out’ might be only the last of a series of consultations conducted at every stage of a campaign. This paper will pose three questions about this complex of practices. The first is historical: can we circumscribe a period within which Greek warfare, in its religious aspects, took this form? The second follows closely from the first. If a change did indeed occur, what were its wider implications? This is a question about the influence of religion upon tactics, about the relation of general and seer. A third is different in character, and concerns the theory of sacrifice. On the battlefield, the killing of animals, in sacrifice, leads rapidly to the killing of men. What place should we grant to this distinctive case in any attempt to construct a general rationale of Greek sacrifice?

Much the most informative source for the various forms of military sacrifice is Xenophon. There were some six regular contexts for ‘consultative’ sacrifices, those that might, if negative, debar or delay action: before departure from home; before leaving the borders of one’s territory; before leaving camp each morning while marching in hostile country (before sallying in search of supplies is a variant); before crossing a river; and (in two forms) before engaging the enemy. Special circumstances such as founding a colony or seeking an alliance might also call for consultations of other types; and there were many further occasions on campaign for non-consultative sacrifices: to celebrate victories, to ratify oaths, to honour gods past whose precinct the army marched, and so on.¹

The general who takes the omens in Xenophon is typically a Spartan, or the philolaconian Xenophon himself, at the head of a land army. But Thucydides, describing the first battle of the Syracusans and Athenians in 415, speaks of the seers 'bringing out the traditional *sphagia*' as if this practice were universal;² and we know from various sources, including an inscription that relates to the Sicilian expedition of 415, that 'fair omens' were normally sought before an Athenian army could even, it seems, be mustered or at all events marched out for a campaign.³ Details, emphasis and enthusiasm may have differed from state to state, but the only practice we can say with some confidence to have been peculiar to Sparta was that of making 'crossing sacrifices' before leaving Spartan territory.⁴ Consultative sacrifices are also mentioned before two major sea-battles, Arginusae and the harbour-battle at Syracuse.⁵ Whether on land or sea, one sacrifice or succession of sacrifices was made for one force, and decisions in the light of them were taken by a single individual, the commander-in-chief. But when a detachment peeled off from an army, its leader acquired the right and duty to perform consultative sacrifices in his own right. This is perhaps why Xenophon is so insistent that the cavalry commander no less than the general must be a man of piety, and not one to lead out a force in defiance of omens.⁶

Such, in brief outline, was the scope of the military divination of the classical period, what one might call the Xenophontic system. The origins of this system cannot be exactly pinpointed, but they appear to lie, not far back in prehistory, but in the archaic period. The crucial consideration is that, though the practice of divination from entrails may be occasionally mentioned in Homer,⁷ it has there no military function; nor are omens solicited before engaging in battle by any other means. In one sense, it is true, the relation between general and seer or wise man is already charged with all that potential for conflict which it retains in the narratives of much later periods. Hector checked by a bird-omen when on the point of crossing the Greek ditch in *Iliad* 12 (195–250) prefigures Alexander held up on the banks of more than one territory-dividing river; and Hector's insistence on pressing on despite wise Poulydamas' dissuasion is a key decision in the poem, and leads in the end to a disastrous error.⁸ Crossings, therefore, are already fraught with peril for armies. But the omen that Hector is confronted with is one that occurs by chance, not one elicited by human design. The difference between Homeric practices and those of the classical period is unmistakable. That a real historical change had occurred does not necessarily follow.⁹ But the readiest alternative explanation – that the epic bards were suppressing, as unheroic, an institution with which they were familiar – is not very persuasive in this case. The bards would,

however, have been likely to ignore a custom that they believed to be of recent introduction. So the change, if change there was, is not necessarily to be dated to the seventh century or later.

So much for origins. What of later history? Can anything be said about the fortunes of the Xenophontic system in the 200 years after Xenophon's death? An incident recorded in Livy¹⁰ might be thought to suggest that it had decayed. In the year 192 BC, an Aetolian ambassador is represented as abusing the leadership of Flamininus, who had done nothing but 'take auspices and sacrifice and pronounce vows in the front line like some little sacrificial priest' while his Aetolian allies were confronting the real perils of battle. Why such contempt if omens were still taken among the Aetolians too in the fashion familiar from Xenophon?¹¹ But the target might be Flamininus' direct personal involvement in the pernicky details of such a ritual, not the mere fact that such a ritual was performed. The question needs to be addressed a little more fully.

A case that is *prima facie* very strong can in fact be made that pre-battle divinatory sacrifice fell out of use in the time of Alexander. In none of the most authoritative sources either for the campaigns of Alexander or for the history of the following century and a half or so is the practice mentioned. It does not appear in the surviving works of Arrian or Polybius, and very probably was not mentioned in the account by Hieronymus of Cardia of the wars of Alexander's successors that is generally held to underlie the relevant parts of books 18–20 of Diodorus.¹² The silence on the subject changes in character, it is true, from case to case. There is nothing secularized or rationalistic about the narrative of Arrian. At a first reading indeed one may suppose oneself still in the world of Xenophon. The narrative is punctuated by mentions of games and sacrifices; the king's chief seer, Aristander of Telmessus, makes so many successful interpretations of omens that he becomes for us the best known of all practitioners of the art; and at a critical moment we even learn, on the authority of Ptolemy, that Alexander abandoned his controversial plan to cross the Hyphasis not because of the mutiny of his troops but because 'he did not secure the omens for crossing'.¹³ But the omens which Aristander reads so successfully are almost all, in Roman terms, 'self-offering': dreams, portents, flight of birds. The only context in the *Anabasis* where it is normal to make consultative sacrifices is before crossing a major river. This practice is in fact more prominent in Arrian than it is in Xenophon, and when Alexander insists on crossing the 'Tanais' in defiance of honest Aristander, who refuses to falsify the omens to please him, he falls dangerously ill. But before none of Alexander's great battles is there recorded an attempt to ascertain the gods' will by sacrifice. One story does, it is true, present

Alexander as sacrificing during the siege of Gaza, but not, so far as we are told, in search of omens; we hear of his sacrifice only because a bird dropped a stone on his head while it was in progress, and it was this chance event, not a regular divinatory procedure, that led Aristander rightly to predict danger to the king. When Parmenion and Alexander disputed whether or not to fight at sea before Miletus, they differed over the interpretation of a bird omen, but had nothing to say of other signs.¹⁴

The case of Hieronymus and Polybius is different. It is not that pre-battle sacrifice has vanished from what remains a rich repertory of prophetic signs. Rather, much more drastically, the gods have been banished from the battlefield, and almost from the world. In the case of Hieronymus, a lost writer, the proposition cannot indeed be proved formally. But book 19 of Diodorus contains three full-dress accounts of major battles, the source, it has been said, for 'most of what we know about early hellenistic warfare',¹⁵ and richly detailed though they are in comparison with the conventional battle narratives elsewhere in Diodorus they say nothing of seers or their offerings. Diodorus is not in general averse to talk of omens, and it is hard to see why he should have suppressed information on the subject if he found any in his source. For Polybius, we can say with certainty that an account of a battle is an account of terrain, of manoeuvres, of the complex mosaic of units that made up a hellenistic army.¹⁶ The gods' obscure will is, it seems, no concern of a commander.

In sources of a different type, however, the old practices come back into view. Curtius describes a clash between Alexander and a seer Demophon (probably a successor to the now deceased Aristander¹⁷) who on the basis of sacrificial omens seeks to restrain him from assault on a town. And two further vignettes deriving from the vulgate tradition presuppose that hepatoscopy of traditional type was performed in Alexander's camps before battle. Plutarch records a prediction from entrails made by Aristander during the siege of Tyre, and Polyaeus even tells, amid a list of 32 'stratagems' of the great general, that, when good sacrificial omens were reported, Alexander would have the relevant parts of the victim carried round and displayed to the troops.¹⁸ So too for the later period references to the practice occur here and there, whether in narratives less austere than those of Hieronymus and Polybius or as anecdotes preserved in a different kind of source. On the famous occasion when Agathocles of Syracuse literally burnt his boats, one of his pretences to his troops was that 'the goddesses (Demeter and Kore) had predicted victory in the whole war through the sacrificial omens'. Attalos gave his men courage to face a Galatian horde by causing the words 'Victory to the King' to appear

miraculously on the lobe of a victim's liver. Confused in the heat of battle, Pyrrhus forgot the evil sacrificial omens his seer had reported, and sent his son to his death. There was even an occasion when the great Hannibal, in exile, had to urge his host (whether Antiochos III or Prusias) to pay more heed to the advice of a great general than to the entrails of a dead sheep.¹⁹

Most of these stories are not very reliable historically. Alexander's rejection of Demophon's advice in Curtius, for instance, has as a consequence, according to a familiar story pattern, a nearly fatal wound; here as elsewhere Curtius is ensnared in inherited story types that undermine his own declared rationalism. (Arrian mentions the wound, a historical fact and a famous one,²⁰ but not the prior warning.) But it is scarcely plausible to suppose that the motif of hepatoscopy is a misplaced or anachronistic intruder in every case. Indeed Onasander, writing a manual on generalship in the first century AD, could still insist in Xenophontic vein on respect for omens as one of the prime obligations of a commander.²¹ And we should not suppose that the religious world of Arrian's *Anabasis* is a simple photograph of reality. The Aristander of Arrian too is a figure of story. His duty in the text is to provide interpretations that are piquant, picturesque, paradoxical. Self-offering omens, diverse and unpredictable as they are, are grist to his mill. The routine of consultative sacrifice, it might be argued, lacked narrative potential by contrast.

Elements from the Xenophontic system, then, probably survived into the hellenistic period.²² This does not necessarily mean that every individual item was still in use – the slaughter-sacrifice performed immediately before the clash of front lines, for instance, drops from view – nor that the significance of what remained was still the same. The matter is all but impossible to assess, given the character of our sources; some possible changes of emphasis will be touched on later. Were we to suppose that the Xenophontean system operated in its familiar way only within a circumscribed period, from say about 700 to 350 BC, how might this restriction in time be explained?

Two possibilities suggest themselves. 700–350 BC is roughly the period within which the hoplite battle fought between armies of amateur soldiers was, as it were, the ideal type of warfare. Divination can be seen as a mechanism of reassurance, which helped men accustomed to the pursuits of peace to confront the sheer terrors of the hoplite engagement (so van Wees 1996, 11–12). 700–350 BC is also the great period of 'polity' in Greek society, of outspoken and successful hostility to individual power. Divination might concurrently be seen as a control, or a semblance of control, indirectly and unconsciously exercised over the general by the

community. The former function, it might be argued, was less necessary when battle held less intense terrors (in the pre-hoplitic world) or when soldiers were better trained to face them; the latter was an embarrassment in a world of kings.

To speak of divination as a 'control', however, invites a question about the kind of importance that the Xenophontic system possessed even in the period when it unquestionably flourished.²³ Xenophon records pre-battle consultative sacrifices on, as it were, every page; but the mention of 'the traditional *sphagia*' at the first battle of the Syracusans and Athenians that was cited earlier is the only reference to pre-battle sacrifice in the whole narrative of Thucydides. (He also puts a morale-building appeal to the good omens that the Boeotians have received into the mouth of Pagondas, in his speech before the battle of Delion; 4.92.7.) And this one authorial allusion serves in the text merely as a piece of colour, a scene-setting detail in a battle-description of unusual amplitude. The difference between the historians is not simply that between piety and unbelief. Xenophon's constant emphasis on taking the omens is, no doubt, prescriptive, an attempt to insist not only that generals do perform these rites but that they should. But Thucydides' neglect cannot be taken as simply the obverse of Xenophon's prescriptiveness, an assertion from the other side that such rites deserve to be scorned. Divinatory practices did sometimes, rightly or wrongly, influence outcomes, and when this was so Thucydides records the fact. We hear from him of the three Spartan expeditions against the Argolid that were abandoned when crossing-sacrifices proved adverse, and also of Nicias' disastrous response to the eclipse at Syracuse.²⁴ If he can, by contrast, ignore pre-battle sacrifices, he must have judged that, in the long run, they did not influence tactics, or not very much. Thucydides wrote from experience. Indeed it is a pleasing if idle fantasy to let the mind play on the general Thucydides' dealings with his own seer.

At the limit, the general could simply impose his authority. 'The law prescribes that the general commands the seer, not the seer the general.'²⁵ Quote Hector's 'One bird of omen is best, to fight for your country' if you wish to lead out troops without having sacrificed, is Aristotle's advice.²⁶ Successful instances of such high-handedness are not recorded (whereas unsuccessful instances are a fixed story type), but, as has been pointed out, it was not in anyone's interest to emphasize them even if they occurred (Jameson 1991, 198). All the same, if a main function of taking omens was to fill the troops with 'good hopes', a consistent policy of confrontation would have been very counterproductive. Quintus Curtius makes the bold claim that, after the final defeat of Darius in 330, Alexander abandoned

all concern for divination, and only reverted to 'superstition' in the difficult circumstances of 329, with Bactria in revolt and Scythia hostile.²⁷ The notion has been accepted in modern times that, after Gaugamela, Alexander's person substituted for omens as the guarantee of military success for his troops.²⁸ If it could be firmly established that pre-battle divination declined in importance outside the context of the polis, an explanation on these lines would be attractive, and not in regard to Alexander alone: the civic general, obedient both to the gods and the city, gave way to the charismatic king, guarantor of success and divine favour in his own person. Curtius, however, was much exercised by the evils of superstition, and might have been drawing his own conclusion about a period in which no prophecy of Aristander happened to be recorded in his sources. At all events, simply to opt out of the Xenophontic system had not been a possibility in earlier times.

What a general could do was to gain the services of a sensible seer. It is wrong to assume that seer and general were natural adversaries. Not always, perhaps not often, are they in conflict. Miltas, the seer of Dion, was, according to Plutarch, an educated man, who assuaged the superstitious fears caused to the troops by an eclipse of the moon by explaining that the eclipse of their enemy Dionysius was portended. Plutarch again records that Nicias would not have reacted so drastically and disastrously to the eclipse at Syracuse in 413 BC if Stilbides, his usual seer, had not recently died. Lampon was a friend of Pericles and a member of the Periclean elite. Aristander of Telmessus had been active at Philip's court before Alexander, whom he served so famously, was even born.²⁹ Such men must have had some understanding of their commander's intentions, and normally some sympathy with them. And commanders normally shared the broad religious assumptions on which the practices of divination were based, inconvenient though they might find their consequences in particular cases.

There were, it is true, certain objective constraints upon the interpretation that a seer could put upon any set of entrails that he inspected: no casuistry could transform a liver without a lobe into an encouraging sign. But why, for instance, did such a lobeless liver portend to Pyrrhus 'the loss of one close to him' (Plut. *Pyrrhus* 30.5) and not disaster to the whole army? The one interpretation permitted an attack which the other would have debarred. (From the time of Alexander onwards, recorded signs show in fact a tendency to relate to the leader rather than to his army.) Struck on the banks of the Tanais, Alexander according to Curtius referred back to Aristander the negative interpretation of the crossing-sacrifices that he was reported to have made. 'Great labour, but not vain', the terrified seer now

declared that he had seen predicted; and this revised interpretation the confident Alexander was happy to take as a mandate.³⁰

That story continues, in Curtius, with Aristander coming back to say that he had repeated the sacrifice and had never seen such favourable omens. (But in Arrian the seer stood firm and was overruled. In both accounts Alexander pays for his temerity.) This possibility of repeating consultative sacrifices is, as has often been noted, the most important factor of all. Polyaeus records (it is most frustrating that we do not know from what source) two 'stratagems' of the general Iphicrates: even when the sacrifices were favourable, he would not necessarily advance (not until 'the omens in his mind' were favourable); and, if they were adverse when he was eager to march out, he would change position and try again (3.9.8–9). All that is surprising about the second of these items is that it should count as a stratagem and be thought worth recording; for Xenophon often mentions the immediate repetition of consultative sacrifices that have initially proved unsuccessful, without any suggestion that the practice was tricky or irregular. Possibly convention set an upper limit of three on the number of attempts that could be made.³¹ But how likely is it that three animals in succession should each have had misshapen livers? A deeper reluctance must be suspected where omens refused to come right so many times in a row.

When in Curtius the seer Demophon sought to restrain Alexander (on the probably unhistorical occasion mentioned earlier), the king turned to reason with him. 'If anyone interrupted you in this way when you were busy with your craft and inspecting entrails, I do not doubt that you would find him a troublesome nuisance.' And when Demophon agreed that it would be so: 'To a man who has his eyes set on great achievements, not on the inner parts of sheep, can there be a greater obstacle than a superstition-ridden seer?' (9.4.26–9). The values of a 'king and realist' (πραγματικὸς βασιλεύς) and a 'seer' were similarly contrasted in a conversation between Philip V of Macedon, Demetrius of Pharos and Aratus recorded by Polybius.³² Philip had climbed to the citadel of Messes on the pretence of wishing to sacrifice to Zeus Ithomatas, and now asked his companions 'what the signs portended, that he should abandon the citadel or seize it' (treacherously). 'Withdraw at once, if you have the temperament of a seer', said Demetrius, 'but, if you have the temperament of a king and realist, seize it!'. Alexander's speech in Curtius is a striking formulation of that sense of professional pride which, one may feel, would indeed have led Alexander and many a later specialist in the art of war to have little patience with a Demophon.³³ But a more truly professional response might simply have been to instruct Demophon to sacrifice again.

(Of course one must allow that to halt operations and wait for the result of a second sacrifice could on occasion be tactically undesirable.³⁴) The Xenophontic system was far less of a straitjacket for the general than it may appear. Xenophon himself on one occasion, having failed to secure satisfactory omens by full divinatory sacrifice but desperately needing to make haste, made do with a rapid 'slaughter sacrifice' instead.³⁵ Any commander who knew how to work with the system could, in principle, almost always enter battle with the best possible omens, to the great advantage of his men's morale – and often no doubt also of his own.

And now for something almost completely different. We have been chiefly concerned so far with the consultative sacrifice that took place in camp a little in advance of the march out. A further 'slaughter sacrifice' (*sphagion*) was performed, in the classical period at least, just before the actual clash of the front lines. Fortunately it has recently been the object of a masterly study, by Michael Jameson, and we can concentrate on a single issue, that of its importance for any theoretical account of Greek sacrifice.

Jameson summarizes his interpretation with vivid clarity in the final sentences of his study:

Battle was slaughter, 'us' killing 'them'. In the act of sphagia everything was reduced to a single action, a single stroke. Expressed fully, what the sacrificer said was 'O gods! We destroy this life. We wish to kill and not be killed. Support us.' Put even more simply, it is an act and a wish: 'We kill. May we kill.' (1991, 221)

To anyone interested in the theory of sacrifice, this final formulation will inevitably evoke Walter Burkert's argument that ritual killing is a controlled expression of human aggression.³⁶ It may seem indeed to lend that thesis much-needed support. The great problem with Burkert's case, for all the brilliance of its presentation, is that of reconciling the grim play with motifs of guilt and violence that he evokes with the relaxed good humour that appears to have been the characteristic mood of Greek sacrificial feasts.³⁷ Here by contrast sacrifice is unmistakably performed at a moment of high tension³⁸ and as a prelude to violence.

But before entering some caveats about the power of Burkert's theory to explain the pre-battle sacrifice, let us note how completely ineffective is its chief rival in this regard. According to this theory, the one associated with the Paris school, 'the ceremony of sacrifice could be defined as the complex of procedures permitting an animal to be slaughtered in such conditions that violence appears to be excluded and the killing unequivocally has a character which distinguishes it clearly from murder'. And, as Vernant,

whom I have been quoting, said in direct debate with Burkert: 'To sacrifice is fundamentally to kill in order to eat. But, within this formulation, you put the accent rather on the killing, I put it on the eating.'³⁹ Such an approach is obviously not going to help at all with the phenomenon we are considering. This criticism is in a sense trivial, in that the French theory is quite explicitly designed to give an account of standard Olympian sacrifice and that only, the type followed by a feast. To the objection that it has nothing to say of pre-battle killing, it shrugs its shoulders and answers 'of course not; the point was precisely to differentiate where differentiation is required'. But is it legitimate to treat participatory sacrifice as one thing and pre-battle killing as quite another, rather than as sub-divisions of a single phenomenon? It is true that 'sacrifice' in regard to Greece is no more than a cover term for a variety of practices that were variously described. But the terms used to describe the various practices constantly overlap (Casabona 1966). The immediate pre-battle sacrifice, for instance, is a *sphagion* or 'throat-piercing' offering, a term not used of a regular Olympian offering followed by a feast. But the underlying verb *sphazo*, 'I pierce the throat', is regularly used for the killing of an animal at a sacrifice of any type whatsoever.

This, however, is by the way. Our main question was about the pre-battle sacrifice as an expression of aggression. One obvious complication is that this sacrifice too had a divinatory function. Details of how omens were drawn are controversial and need not concern us; from expressions of the form 'the *sphagia* are propitious' the fact is clear (Jameson 1991, 204–5). Distinct practices have been contaminated, it has been suggested: the slaughter-sacrifice has been infected by the more elaborate and more properly divinatory offering made in camp (Szymanski 1908, 89–90). Even if this were so, even if we take the meaning 'We kill. May we kill' to be primary, it is significant that this primary message was not resonant enough to exclude secondary elaboration.

A more crucial question concerns 'We kill. May we kill' itself. At a non-literal level, what is it that 'We kill'? Jameson's analysis suggests that the animal stands for two distinct kinds of human victim. On the one hand it is the enemy, and this first death is designed to be a harbinger of many. On the other hand it is us, or rather our substitute. It dies that we may not. Neither interpretation is explicitly attested, of course. But both are strongly supported by ritual or mythical analogy, or by the logic of the situation. Before the battle of Marathon, the Athenians vowed to sacrifice as many goats to Artemis Agrotera as they might kill Persians (Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.12). Here an equivalence between animal victim and dead enemy is explicit, and the only certainly attested recipient of pre-battle

sphagia (which are usually and revealingly mentioned without reference to a specific god) is precisely Artemis Agrotera. Unfortunately it is to Sparta that that item of evidence refers, and we cannot be confident that the Athenian custom was the same.⁴⁰ The very timing of the rite, however, makes a reference forward to the killing that lies ahead almost inevitable.⁴¹ But 'one head given for many' (*unum pro multis dabitur caput*) is a common mythical theme, and we find such saving sacrifices spoken of as *sphagia* in Euripides.⁴² Thus the animal victim seems no less clearly to evoke, say, 'Macaria' in Euripides' *Heraclidae*, who offers herself as a victim to ensure 'rout of the enemy and safety for the city' (402). Symbolically the animal is both one of us and one of them. It dies to save us, and it embodies their death.

On such an analysis, the pre-battle sacrifice is an act both of aggression against an enemy and of a kind of precautionary self-maiming. The self-maiming is a violent act, but not one that it seems helpful to re-describe in terms of aggression. What is common to both 'readings' of the ritual is that to both the death of the victim is essential. To say that the killing of animals is fundamental to the religious force of sacrifice will doubtless not seem a very radical proposition. Yet it is not quite what the theories of Greek sacrifice that we currently dispose of are saying: one plays down killing, the other emphasizes it, indeed, but only as an expression of something different, aggression. But to give the proposition real force, there would certainly be needed a vast conceptual elaboration that cannot be attempted here. (Such an elaboration could doubtless do much worse than start from J.Z. Smith's tentative suggestion that 'sacrifice is an elaboration of the selective kill, in contradistinction to the fortuitous kill...the artificial (i.e. ritualized) killing of an artificial (i.e. domesticated) animal': 1987, 200, 201.) The case of sacrifice illustrates, one may feel, how little is yet understood about fundamental forms of human behaviour.

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Notes

¹ See the useful collection of material by Szymanski (1908). For a full bibliography see Jameson 1991, at 221 n. 1.; especially helpful is Pritchett 1971–1991, vols. 1.109–15; 3.47–153.

² 6.69.2; cf. e.g. Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.18 (Boeotians), 7.4.30 (Eleans). Note too that the perspective of Xenophon's *Hipparchicus*, with its strong stress on divination, is Athenian.

³ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.49, with Szymanski 1908, 16; *IG I³* 93.23 (ML no. 78 c 14), money set aside ἐς καλλιέρειν; Aeschin. 3. 131, 152.

⁴ Szymanski, 1908, 18: even here the argument is a (strong) *ex silentio* one.

⁵ Diod. 13.97.5 and 7; Plut. *Nic.* 25.1.

⁶ Detachment: e.g. Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.22. Cavalry commander: see especially Xen. *Hipparch.* 3.1; 6.6; 7.1; 9.7–9. But it is conceivable that a separate offering was made in order to καλλιέρειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἵππικοῦ (*Hipparch.* 3.1) when the pre-campaign offerings (above, n. 3) were brought.

⁷ *Iliad* 24.221, *Odyssey* 21.145, 22.318–23: all instances of the noun θυσκόος, 'inspector of entrails'. But West 1997, 46, may be right to prefer the translation 'scrutineer of incense smoke'. On the early history of hepatoscopy see Burkert 1992, 46–52.

⁸ See e.g. Redfield 1975, 143–52; Taplin 1992, 156–60.

⁹ Van Wees 1996, 12, cites Singor 1988, 143, for the view that Homer plays down the religious element in early warfare, unrealistically.

¹⁰ 35.48.12–13 (cf. Plut. *Flamininus* 23.6).

¹¹ Thus the passage is cited by Liebeschuetz 1979, 4 n. 2, to illustrate Greek unfamiliarity with 'the meticulous attention to religious ritual' observable among members of the Roman ruling class.

¹² See Hornblower 1981, 18–49, for an excellent discussion. Note that the treatment of Agathocles in these books has a different origin, and tone (ib., 49).

¹³ Arrian, *Anabasis* 5.28.4 = Ptolemaios Lagou *FGrH* 138 F 23 ('certain μαντεῖα' are responsible in Strabo 15.1.27): generally seen by commentators as a face-saving device.

¹⁴ 'Tanais' (in fact Jaxartes): 4.4.2–3 and (Alexander's illness) 4.4.9 (aliter Curt. Ruf. 7.7.7–9, 21–29); Gaza: 2.26.4; Miletus: 1.18.6–9.

¹⁵ Hornblower 1981, 38, on 19.26–31 (Paraetacene), 39.6–43 (Gabene), 80.5–84 (Gaza). Note her comment on p. 35: 'There are no gods in Diodorus' narrative of the Diadochi.'

¹⁶ See e.g. 2.65–9, 5.82–86.6.

¹⁷ An alternative explanation has often been favoured (recently still by Pédech 1984, 40–1), whereby material about Aristander was drawn from Callisthenes' *Deeds of Alexander* and ceases with the cessation of that work (which must therefore have continued down to 328, despite the lack of certain allusions to events after 330). That would be most important for our theme if true. But the theory is not necessary, and takes too little account of the appearance of a successor to Aristander in the tradition (for references and criticism see Berve 1926, II.62).

¹⁸ Curt. Ruf. 9.4.26–9; Plut. *Alex.* 25.1–3; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 4.3.14. Note that pre-battle sacrifices of a different type (and raising different problems) are also known only from the vulgate tradition: secret night-time rites, including a sacrifice to Fear, before Gaugamela (Plut. *Alex.* 31.9; Curt. Ruf. has Jupiter

and Minerva Victoria as recipients, 4.13.15–16); something similar before Issus (*FGrH* 148 F 44 col. ii; Curt. Ruf. 3.8.22).

¹⁹ Diod. 20.7.3; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 4.20; Plut. *Pyrrhus* 30.5–11; Plut. *De Exilio* 16, 606c (Antiochos), Cic. *De Divinatione* 2.52 (Prusias). Plut. *De Exilio* 16 is taken as evidence for Seleucid pre-battle sacrifice by Bikerman 1938, 97.

²⁰ See Bosworth 1996, 53–65.

²¹ Ch. 10.25–8 (pp. 428–30 in the Loeb edition of Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander; Massachusetts, 1923). The whole passage is remarkable for the fidelity with which it echoes Xenophontic motifs (for instance that the general should summon his officers to inspect auspicious entrails, and then pass on the word) in a quite different historical context. How realistic is all this?

²² 'Opfer- und Eingeweideschau traten zurück, da sie hellenistischem Geschmäck widersprachen, doch fehlten sie nicht völlig': Schneider 1969, 913.

²³ On this compare the excellent pages of Jameson 1991, 219–20; also my comments in Parker 1989, 157–60.

²⁴ 5.54.1–2, 55.3, 116.1; 7. 50.3–4.

²⁵ Plato, *Laches* 199a: cf. Pritchett 1971–1991, 3.48–9.

²⁶ *Rhet.* 1395a10–14; cf. Plut. *Pyrrh.* 29.4 (where Pyrrhus substitutes 'Pyrrhus' for 'your country').

²⁷ 7.7.8. On Curtius' rationalism, see J.E. Atkinson's note on 5.4.1; Baynham 1998, 114–15, 162–3.

²⁸ Berve 1926, I.92. That changes in power structure produce changes in divinatory style (a slightly different proposition, however) is the thesis of an important paper by J. North (1990).

²⁹ *Dion* 22.6, 24.1–4 (interestingly, though Miltas is represented as having a 'scientific' understanding of eclipses, he takes other types of omen seriously); *Nicias* 23.7; Plut. *Praec. Ger. Rep.* 812d (Lampon: cf. P. Stadter's note on *Per.* 6.2); Plut. *Alex.* 2.5. On the social background of seers, see Pritchett 1971–1991, 3.52–3 (with criticism of the scholarly tendency to view them as outsiders).

³⁰ Curt. Ruf. 7.7.21–9; contrast Arrian, *Anabasis*, 4.4.2–3. The details of the narrative in Curtius are of interest, if hard to exploit without knowing their origin. Alexander claims to have decided to consult Aristander as a private person, not as a king (7.7.24). The consultative sacrifice is performed in the king's absence, according to a supposed *mos* not otherwise attested (*mos erat haruspibus exta sine rege spectare et, quae portenderentur, referre*, 7.7.8: not the norm in other Greek states). Alexander is outraged that Aristander should have revealed the outcome to a member of his entourage before revealing it to Alexander himself.

³¹ Szymanski 1908, 76–7, refers to two passages where Xenophon gave up trying to secure favourable omens for a march or a sally after three victims (*Anab.* 6.4.16, 19), and notes that he knows of no higher number of attempts. But in Rome pre-battle sacrifices could be repeated *ad infinitum* (Pritchett 1971–1991, 3.77, adducing Plut. *Aemilius Paullus* 17.11), and it is not clear that the convention in Greece was different.

³² 7.12 (Plut. *Aratus*, 50.3–10). The antithesis here has become metaphorical,

and the 'seer' stands for traditional straight dealing (which creates trust) against ruthless opportunism. Related antitheses are found in the Aetolians' insult to Flamininus and the exiled Hannibal's response to Antiochus/Prusias, both mentioned in the text. A distinctive hellenistic tension? – but in a sense it goes back to Hector and Poulydamas in Homer.

³³ 'Highly trained troops were led by highly trained officers': Adcock 1957, 92, commenting on the battles of the Diadochoi; on the unparalleled battle experience of Alexander's troops see Bosworth 1996, 25–30.

³⁴ Undesirable, but not suicidal: see the subtle discussion of the accounts of the battle of Plataia in Hdt. 9.61.3–62.1 and Plut. *Arist.* 17–18 by Jameson 1991, 207–8. In the former, adverse *sphagia* cause the Spartan advance to be delayed, with dangerous consequences, but only in the latter do the Spartans unrealistically decline to defend themselves in supposed obedience to them.

³⁵ *Anab.* 6.4.25, discussed by Jameson 1991, 205. The incident is isolated, and not wholly clear.

³⁶ Burkert 1972/1997 (paperback reprint with an important *Nachwort*, modifying many of the original theses). A recent anthropological theory of sacrifice also speaks of 'ritual violence', though with a different understanding of it from that of Burkert (and R. Girard): Bloch 1992.

³⁷ See Peirce 1993 (but note the qualifications of Bremmer 1994, 42 and 53 n. 40).

³⁸ This characterisation does not conflict with the ostentatious orderliness and calm affected by the Spartans at this time, noted by Vernant 1988 (English version in Vernant 1991, 244–257) from Xen. *Rep. Lac.* 13.8 and Plut. *Lyc.* 22.2–3.

³⁹ Vernant 1981, 1–21, and discussion 22–39 (English version of the text only in Vernant 1991, 290–302); quotations from pp. 7 and 26.

⁴⁰ Jameson 1991, 211. Artemis Agrotera at Sparta: Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.20. On Artemis' role cf. n. 38 above.

⁴¹ Jameson 1991, 216, also refers to the myth of a sacrifice of enemy prisoners before Salamis (Plut. *Them.* 13.2–5, and elsewhere), and a comparable story in Hdt. 7.180. This introduces a new emphasis (a kind of human first-fruits offering), but not one that supports the association with aggression.

⁴² *Ion* 278 (Ερεχθεὺς ἔτλη πρὸ γαίης σφάγια παρθένους κτανεῖν): cf. *Heraclidae* 408, σφάζει of a human victim, after a reference to animal *sphagia* in 399; for the theme of 'one for many' also e.g. Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.18 (the seer of the 'men from Piraeus', at the battle of Mounichia). For more detail and nuance see Jameson 1991, 213–16.

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