

At its core lies an inventory of forty-one descriptions of hoplite battles (234-292), selected by criteria such as narrative fullness and contemporaneity. Details of the battles, tabulated under 29 headings (such as name and date, time of year, duration of battle, decisive factors, exchange of bodies), punctuate the book throughout.

The analysis itself is contained in four chapters of uneven length. In Chapter 1 ('Introduction', 14 pages), Schwartz presents the aims and purposes of his study, traces the research history of the hoplite soldier and phalanx fighting, and comments on the sources and methods used. In Chapter 2 ('Hoplite Equipment and Its Limitations', 75 pages) he focuses on the minutiae of arms and armor, both defensive (the shield, the headgear, breastplates, corslets, cuirasses, greaves) and offensive (the spear, the sword), occasionally enlivening the monotony of the descriptions with sections such as 'Hoplite race and pyrrhic dance', 'Comparison with a modern combat shield', and 'Physiology'.

Chapter 3 ('The Phalanx', 96 pages) deals with the development of the phalanx, the role of the shield in fighting, and deployment (the width and the depth of files, and the maneuvers designed to make changes in the formations). Its high point is the suggestion, which the present reviewer finds plausible, that we should reject attempts by scholars such as Cawkwell and van Wees to deny the importance of *othismos*, and instead revert to its canonical interpretation (i.e. 'a common effort, ostensibly a common push or shove ... of the entire phalanx [or parts thereof] towards and into the enemy in order to drive them back, disrupt their lines and break their ranks entirely'; 183).

Chapter 4 ('Duration of Hoplite Battles', 24 pages) addresses the temporal dimension of hoplite battles. Warning that 'the exact duration of ancient battles is next to impossible to assess' (201), Schwartz attempts to get the picture right nonetheless through the assessment of points of reference such as the phraseology of battle duration, battle phases, and contemporary perceptions of battles as abnormally short, long or unusual. His generalization, that 'the fighting itself was usually confined to a rather small amount of time, and that other, necessary phases of battle took up much of the day' (222), seems to fit in well with the details of the evidence.

Schwartz processes mountains of evidence that had formerly been scanned scrupulously by other scholars, and reaches a series of judicious conclusions. Thoroughly empirical and allowing little room for inspiration and grand theory, his research strategy more closely resembles that of the IBM supercomputer Deep Blue than that of a Garry Kasparov. In a book of this sort one would expect, however, to read about issues such as: the psychology of the hoplite warrior, the way he confronted the basic problem posed by phalanx fighting, i.e. how to impale without being impaled; the envisaging of enemy armor, which by the logic of the arms race must have been involved in shaping the hoplite equipment; and the social consequences of the transition to the hoplite mode of fighting. One would expect, moreover, an extension of the book's theoretical horizons through the establishment of a link with the burgeoning literature that exists on why people go to war. (Robert A. Hinde, ed., *The Institution of War*, Macmillan 1991, could provide a starting point.) Let us hope that Schwartz will use his wide accumulated knowledge on hoplite warfare to tackle issues such as these in his next book.

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Yoon Florence. *The Use of Anonymous Characters in Greek Tragedy: the Shaping of Heroes*. Mnemosyne Supplements 344, Leiden: Brill, 2012. ISSN 0169-8958.

This monograph, a revised Oxford dissertation, is at once valuable and frustrating. The book examines the unnamed characters of tragedy, with the exception of messengers. These are ubiquitous; not just the slaves and unnamed heralds, but the Pythia in *Eumenides* and *Ion* and the Priest in *Oedipus Rex*, the daughter of Heracles in *Heraclidae*. The book presents a straightforward argument: the anonymous minor characters serve to characterize the heroes. In the

most interesting cases, an anonymous character who ought to be a simple representative of his principal turns out to stand in contrast to him — that the herald of *Heraclidae* is so thoroughly nasty makes it all the more surprising that Eurystheus, when he finally appears, is not a cardboard villain. Yoon convincingly argues that the herald in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* probably functioned similarly, so that when the Egyptians themselves appeared later in the trilogy, they could be relatively sympathetic by contrast.

This close study of anonymous characters produces several helpful clarifications. For example, the female Servant of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* is not a nurse, though she has often been called that. She is more deferential to Deianeira than a nurse should be, and not especially intimate, while her report of Deianeira's death lacks real emotional engagement. Similarly, the Nurse in *Medea* has no special intimacy with Medea — she is the Nurse of the children, not Medea's. Y. also makes the excellent suggestion that the Nurse in *Choephoroi* is named instead of being left in anonymity because her ethnic name, Cilissa, clearly distinguishes her from Pindar's Arsinoe and Stesichorus' Laodameia. Pindar's Nurse is the rescuer of baby Orestes (*P.* 11), and Stesichorus' may have been so too. Cilissa's less significant role does not call for a name that implies an aristocratic origin.

The book's thesis is in general surely true. It is frequently presented, however, reductively — the anonymous characters become purely functional, and indeed each serves the presentation of only one major character. Even the Queen in *Persae*, the book claims, is consistently defined in relation to Xerxes and serves to characterize him. The argument deprives the anonymous characters of any real interest in themselves. While the anonymous characters are forgotten once they exit, this can happen even to named characters (Aeschylus' Electra), while some of the anonymous characters (the Guard in *Antigone*) seem too vivid to be dismissed entirely as foil. That the case may be overstated, however, does not make it any less valid once it is qualified. I am not convinced by Y.'s argument that Ion agrees to go to Athens at *Ion* 668 because Xuthus has named him, but the naming is surely more significant than I had realized before.

The book's reductiveness, however, is one aspect of a pervasive narrowness of vision. Much of it debates small differences with scholars whose interpretations are generally similar to the author's. Y. comments in the introduction (p. 8): 'the interpretation of character depends considerably on subjective response,' and acknowledges that readings may differ. Surely this 'subjective response' deserves some closer and richer thought. The comment on the subjectivity of views of character appears in the book's nearest approach to a theoretical or methodological framework, a few sketchy paragraphs defending the importance of characterization and claiming that anonymous characters do not demand evaluation as moral agents. Although Y. cites some theoretically informed work on tragedy, she engages only with particular interpretations.

Y. thus sidesteps the underlying issues. That she avoids textual issues, treading very warily where the text is uncertain, is not a problem, but this is a book about characterization in drama that avoids any basic questions about how drama works or what characterization is. Several passages debate relatively small disagreements. Y. simply argues for her own interpretations — for example, that the purpose of Menelaus' encounter with the Doorkeeper is to communicate to the audience that Helen will be the protagonist of the play, without diminishing Menelaus' tragic stature (77-81). The Doorkeeper is a comic character, and the tragic character cannot handle her; the scene therefore arouses 'laughter, but not scorn'. This is a reasonable reading, but nothing in the book convinces me that that within a certain range of responses there is much to be gained by debating exactly how unheroic Menelaus is, especially because in performance so much depends on the actors. The book would have benefited from a stronger theoretical basis.