The Dark Side of Mars. Some Dissident Voices on War in Ancient Literature

Armin Eich

Introduction

War was a universal phenomenon in ancient societies, and its often-dire consequences made themselves felt on nearly every field of human existence. Indeed, war was almost universally recognized and accepted as an inevitable evil, the bewailing of which is a fairly common occurrence in ancient literature. The *Iliad*, for instance, contains many such complaints on war-related brutality.[1] Pindar's appeal to his Theban compatriots not to take part in the war with Persia because γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπέροισιν ("a sweet thing is war to those who have not experienced it") belongs here,[2] as do the choruses' hymns of mourning in the Trojan Women of Euripides[3] as well as Thucydides' lamentations about the disintegration of moral order in times of war.[4] A long list of similar statements could be drawn up that would extend to Procopius of Caesarea and beyond.[5] However, although war was seen as a scourge of humanity, genuinely sincere suggestions as to how to overcome it as a type of human behavior are of only rare occurrence in ancient literature. Moreover, almost absent from the record are affirmative reactions to pacifist proposals.

---

[1] Suffice it here to refer to Simone Weil 1989 (originally published in 1940).

[2] Fr. 110 ed. Maehler (Pindarus, pars II: Fragment, Indices. Leipzig 1989). Such criticism as that of Polyb.4.31.6 could be expected as routine.

[3] See Rabinowitz 2014, esp. 201: "From this consideration of the plays, we can both see the madness of battle and the consequences for women (and children), who suffer their own form of combat trauma as a result of men's licensed warrior behavior." There is, however, a trend in contemporary literature to regard scenes of mass violence, enslavement, or violence against the defenseless as examples of "normative transgression." See, e.g., Des Bouvrie 2004 (with special reference to the *Troiades*) or—in general—Bonnard 2022. However, these approaches are misleading. The structural and physical violence depicted by Euripides in the *Troiades* was absolutely in line with the norm and was by no means the exception. See, e.g., Raaflaub 2014.

[4] Thuc. 3.82–83.

[5] For a full discussion, see Eich 2021.

This general mood may have resulted from the concern that the defense capability of one's own state might suffer if pacifist ideas were permitted to circulate freely. If young people learned from their books that taking part in warfare usually led to terrible experiences, they learned at the same time that these experiences had to be endured. *Paideia* had as one of its standard references the thorough beating endured by Thersites[6] for daring to seriously urge his comrades to stop the siege of Troja and embark on their journey home—and of course not Pindar's *dulce bellum inexpertis*. Thersites is portrayed in the *Iliad* and elsewhere as abysmally ridiculous and contemptible, which serves as an ever-present reminder that avoiding war was not an option that was seriously available for the individual or for society as a whole. There is no need here to recall the plethora of *kaloikagathoi* and *summi viri* provided by ancient authors to serve as role models for young citizens who did not wish to be treated like another Thersites. On the other hand, those who were publicly honored for having avoided a war with the purpose of reducing human suffering are virtually irrelevant in ancient sources. In other words, despite all its horrors (or—one might perhaps better say—because of these very horrors), war was the most prominent occasion for proving one's valor and usefulness to the *patris* or *res publica*. Thousands and thousands of *epitaphioi logoi,* commander's speeches and the like indulged in this topic, whereas *elogia* of peace—although they existed—were by comparison an exception to the rule.

To say that one discourse was hegemonic does not mean that others were automatically wholesomely repressed or even sanctioned with heavy penalties. Indeed, Empedokles, Theophrast, Tibullus, Lactantius, and others could write about war as a universal evil without being censored or blamed for doing so. On the other hand, their ideas had absolutely no impact on political or social reality. From this perspective, pacifist ideas were mostly confined to small circles of philosophers or poets. That war would have been generally discouraged in an official speech—for example, to a popular assembly—because it would bring death, destruction, and suffering to the people was beyond the bounds of what was socially approved. Remaining outside of what was publicly acknowledged and accepted, however, had far-reaching consequences for discourses that addressed aspects of war and militarism. Those views that were not accepted or tabooed by the majority did not coalesce to form linguistically homogenous structures and accordingly showed a marked tendency to be seen as bizarre and absurd. The core statements of dissident insights in particular can be assumed to have been obscured and distorted when handed down through literary tradition. Consequently, it seems to be comfortably easy for researchers who want to do this to

---

[6] Hom. *Il.* 2.225–242.

disregard any deviating discourse and to remain within the realm of clearly stated truths. Take, for instance, war-related trauma: In a recent publication, attention is drawn to the fact that no diagnosis is available in Latin sources that would list the symptoms of PTSD as the disorder is understood today. Furthermore, as war-related trauma was historically first described in connection with explosive blasts (shell-shock) and because explosive devices were not used on ancient battlefields, speaking of trauma with regard to ancient battles can be—according to this view—regarded as obvious nonsense.[7]

However, the present article takes the view that the bizarre and absurd belong no less to history as conventional wisdom. Incidentally, hegemonic thinking serves in part precisely to prevent discourses that are not accepted by the moral majority from coming to the fore. These discourses withdraw—so to speak—into mythological, poetic, or philosophical retreats in which they are bound to become disintegrated into unconnected parts. Bringing these parts into thematic unity therefore means creating an artificial structure that never existed in historic reality. Thus, the rejected bits and pieces of counter-discourses in antiquity were already—to use the words of Thomas Eliot—only a heap of broken images. This being so, it appears justified to consider these fragmented counter-discourses in their due historical form: namely as fragments. The following aspects have been selected as examples: (1) the militarization of societies as a means of creating a gender hierarchy, (2) the recruitment process as an act of structural violence, (3) declarations of war as a means of gaining power over the life and death of one's fellow citizens, (4) traumatization and the dynamics of the war machine, and (5) the army as a social association and coercive institution in which everyone serves as the moral supervisor of their comrades (including their superiors up to the commander-in-chief).

The Violence Within: Male Dominance Over Women as a Consequence of Militarization

War-related violence is not wholly about inflicting wounds or destroying living bodies. Indeed, war-related violence begins long before the first blows are delivered. In fact, shaping a society into a militaristic form requires upholding the constant threat of using violence against its constituent parts as well as against its individual members (see the following sections). By far the greatest single group in every ancient society that was continuously exposed to the disciplinary effects of inner militarization was

---

[7] Fear 2022. See 89 for the aspect of shell shock: "There is growing evidence that many forms of PTSD have a physical component in the damage done to the brain by concussive explosions. Clearly the Roman soldier was not faced with any similar danger."

women. Of course, women did not live under the permanent threat of being attacked with war weapons wielded by male soldiers; rather, war weapons served as a marker of physical and moral superiority that legitimized the maintenance of a strict gender hierarchy.

Interestingly, one myth survives (in different versions) that betrays a curious idea of how the mechanisms of militarism, structural violence, and gender oppression could be imagined, but in the inverse form of a phobic fantasy: In this narrative, it is women who militarize society in order to oppress men. In the phobic fantasy, an integral part of social discipline consists of hurting and mutilating the bodies of the oppressed.

Diodorus relates this myth at two different places in his work in slightly different versions,[8] both of which deal with the prehistoric empires of the Amazons.[9] The two versions of the myth are not so much recollections of a distant matriarchic past, but rather "inversion tales"[10] that play with the possibility that power relations could have been different from those that existed in the contemporary reality of the historian. Even if Diodorus reproduced his sources in a quite mechanical way and without much personal insight into the deeper layers of meaning contained in the narratives he recounts, as he was wont to do, the overall message of the tales could not be lost on the readers: The Amazons indulged in military training and constant fighting not so much because they wanted to rule an empire, but rather because they wanted to dominate the men of their own people as a class. To that end, men were efficiently excluded from any serious activity or training, let alone from handling weapons, inflicting wounds, and mutilating bodies. As the story about a particularly successful queen of the northern Amazons goes,

> [...] as her fortunes [in war] persisted, [...] her heart swelled with pride, and she let herself be called "Daughter of Ares." To men, she assigned the spinning of wool and other household chores typical for women. Also, laws were introduced by her that provided that she would hold command over the women in war while imposing inferiority and servitude on men. They

---

[8] There are well-known differing versions, e.g., in Herodotus (see Cuchet 2013) or in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (see Wenskus 2000). Diodorus is taken as an example because he is explicit as to the hidden meaning of the myth cluster that concerns us here. The twin tales have many similarities and some notable differences, including the fact that the southern empire was dominated by women from the start, whereas the northern empire went through a revolution that brought women to power.

[9] The literature on the subject is vast. See, e.g., Wagner-Hasel 1986, 86–105; Blok 1995; Schneider / Seifert 2010, 74–80; Schubert / Weiß 2013; and the literature in the following footnotes.

[10] See Saïd 2013.

mutilated the extremities of the male infants in order to make them useless for war.[11]

Not much decoding work is necessary to uncover the message between these lines: If the ultimate purpose of the female empire is to reduce men to a dominated class, then the inverse order—in which the craft of arms is reserved for men—exists primarily for the purpose of oppressing women. Moreover, the psychological mutilation of men via the disparaging treatment they receive is complemented by physical mutilation. In this phobic imagery, the mere threat that an injury might be inflicted by the holders of military power becomes a *de facto* form of mutilation. Violating the skin and forcibly penetrating the body of another is an emphatic symbol of dominance, the employment of which was commonplace not only on the ancient battlefield, but also in the relationship between freeman and slave.[12] In myth, this symbol represents the structural violence that serves the militaristic hierarchization of society: a structuring process that also—or even especially—concerns the rank order of the sexes and that is often represented in military terms.

That the asymmetric relationship between the sexes within a political association could be described in mythological fantasy in terms of a military hierarchy that would be upheld—if need might be—by deadly force can be seen, for example, in Sophocles' tragedy Antigone.[13] In the fantasy of Creon, King of Thebes, society is imagined as a phalanx in which everyone has to stand their ground at every single moment; if the metaphorical battle-line breaks at one point (which happens regularly when a man gives in to the whims of a woman), the entire order is thrown into turmoil, and the existence of the state as a whole is acutely at risk:

> [T]here is no greater evil than anarchy. It annihilates cities, destroys families, tears apart the cohesion of battle lines, while the obedience of the upright preserves many lives. That is why the just must be protected, and a woman must never be allowed to prevail. If it must be, then it is better to fall at the hands of a man—and in no case do we want to be called "inferior to women."[14]

It is striking that Creon spontaneously considers the individual case to directly concern the whole of society: In Creon's eyes, if only one insubordination of *a* woman is permitted, the entire male hierarchy is endangered because the chain of command and obedience will break at its weakest point. Thus, in Creon's worldview, almost every man—no matter how low his rank—still has a woman under him to whom he can or

---

[11] Diod. Sic. 2.45.2–3.
[12] Grundmann 2019, 320–343.
[13] Zaidman 2015. On the history of the reception of this highly influential play, see Giovannelli 2014, 91–100.
[14] Soph.*Ant*. 672–678.

must pass on orders. Paradoxically, it is precisely this position of women at the bottom of the command hierarchy that makes their disobedience so dangerous: If they are persistent in their refusal, the entire power structure of society is turned upside down. According to this discourse, not obeying is equated with usurping command.[15] It goes without saying that this whole construct is absurd when taken as a realistic analysis. From a psychological point of view, however, the construct reveals a good deal about unconscious phobias. Given the mental disposition of the men in her social environment, Antigone's insubordination is bound to be viewed as being particularly dangerous because she not only refuses to obey the orders of the commander-in-chief, but she additionally gives reasons for her behavior: She knows what she is doing, and she speaks it out, all while being perfectly aware that this behavior will lead to her certain death.

However, it would have sufficed to bring about her death if she had merely done what she did without commenting on it because the penalty for burying the fallen was death. Next, let us take a look at another tale: the so-called *Travel Report* [or *Periplus*] *of Hanno*, which is a source of a completely different kind[16] that is nonetheless highly illuminating in this respect. In Chapter 18 of the report, we read:

> In the bay was an island similar to the first. In this, too, was a lake with an island, this one populated by savages, who were mostly women with hairy bodies. Our interpreters called them "gorillas." We could not catch any of the males as they were excellent climbers and defended themselves by throwing stones. We did catch three females, but they resisted being led away by biting and scratching. Therefore, we killed and skinned them and took their skins to Carthage.

Note the perfectly laconic transition from the phrase "(who) resisted being led away" to the conclusion "therefore, we killed and skinned them." The act of skinning in particular caused uneasiness among ancient authors who later retold the story, much as it has among contemporary researchers.[17] Clara Bosak-Schroeder[18] has pointed out that the author of the *Periplus* as well as the writers who later retold the episode (e.g., Pomponius Mela[19] and Pliny the Elder[20]) employed a number of narrative devices to dehumanize the victims, such as descriptions of the hirsuteness of the women, which potentially made them appear like wild animals whose flaying would then have been ethically permissible, even in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans. Such considerations

---

[15] Virtually the same reasoning is put into the mouth of Cato by Livy (34.2.2).
[16] See Seel 1961, 5–8 and Kroupa 2019, 793–820.
[17] See the chapter *Häuten* in Grundmann 2019, 344–359.
[18] Bosak-Schroeder 2019.
[19] Pompon. 3.91–93.
[20] Plin. *HN* 6.200.

certainly had an impact on the composition of the episode, but they do not appear decisive, at least to the early version of the story considered here. The author of the *Periplus of Hanno* is explicit with regard to why the women were treated so outrageously: The treatment was a result of the women's disobedience and their ability to resist being led away.

The logical link here is so self-evident that giving any reasons for the treatment is considered superfluous. Indeed, the simple word *mentoi* ("therefore" or "of course") is sufficient to clarify the sequence of thoughts. The barbarian women showed a disinclination to obey, and they were therefore killed. By liberating the Earth of women-led empires via the eradication of the Amazons, Heracles had thereby paved the way for true civilization, or so it is handed down by the tradition that is followed by Diodorus in the myths related above.[21] Thus, wherever there were signs of a resurgence of this archaic form of female domination, it had to be blocked immediately with all due determination. Antigone had transgressed the line that separated the sex that—in accordance with the laws of nature—gives orders from the sex that receives orders,[22] and this transgression thus entailed death.

The same taboo can be found in the *leitmotif* of the popular myth of Kainis,[23] who—after having been raped by the god Poseidon—demands as a redress for the deed of violence to be transformed from a helpless woman into a male warrior hero. Poseidon immediately grants the request and thus makes Kainis invulnerable to the blows of metallic weapons. Kaineus—as Kainis is now called—develops into an all-but-invincible hero: a so-called Lapythe, whose favorite hobby becomes killing all kinds of primeval monsters. When confronted by a gang of centaurs, as Ovid tells the story, Kaineus deals out terrible blows but is nevertheless addressed with the following speech by the most formidable of the attackers:

---

[21] For this tradition, see, e.g., Tiersch 2013, 111–135.

[22] Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1.2 1254 b13–14: "So the male is by nature superior with respect to the female (and *vice versa*), and the one is ruler and the other is ruled." Admittedly, Aristotle does not say that men rule women by giving orders (as slaveholders rule slaves); rather, he conceptualizes the rule of men over women as *politikos*, whatever this word means exactly. However, to conclude from this observation that Aristotle's concept of the relationship between man and woman was not patriarchal—as Beate Wagner-Hasel 2000 does (she places the emergence of the concept of patriarchal rule as late as in the age of Sir John Filmer)—would be to take things too far. Indeed, the Aristotelian terms *archon* and *archomenon* clearly include the idea of a patriarchal household structure, and the idea of patriarchal rule is much more strongly present in the quoted passages from Sophocles.

[23] For a comprehensive treatment and bibliography, see Waldner 2000, 51–81 ("Kainis und Kaineus"). Waldner interprets this *leitmotif* quite differently than I do; nevertheless, our interpretations are not mutually exclusive. Typically, myths are capable of sustaining different readings depending on the reader's perspective.

> I must also endure seeing you, Caenis. Because for me, you will always be a woman, you remain Caenis. Is not your origin a reminder to you? Doesn't it spring up in your memory what you have paid so that you may now walk around as a pseudo-man? Remember who you were born as and what happened to you. Reach for the distaff, grab the wool basket, and twist the threads with your thumb. Leave war to men![24]

Before he was turned into a formidable hero, Kaineus had done the textile work typical of women, which will never be forgiven or forgotten. Having now been transformed into a super-hero, he haunts the imagination of the centaurs, who have been monster-warriors from ages long past and have never thought of being something other than that. Never would they suffer a woman-turned-warrior to live, let alone to be their superior. However, shaken by a series of defeats, the centaurs gradually realize that it is virtually impossible to kill the despised adversary. The centaurs' leader breaks out in desperation:

> Oh, what a tremendous shame! [...] We, a whole nation, are overpowered by one, and he is not really a man. And yet, this one is a man, and we are because of our lame performance what he was before. What purpose do our monstrous limbs serve now? (Ov. *Met.* 12.499–501)

In their desperation, the mythical warriors direct an act of extreme violence at their enemy, who in a sense embodies the violence-based structure of their society and the dangers of undermining this structure through counter-violence. In a final, supernatural effort, the centaurs beat Kaineus into the ground using uprooted trees (since they cannot touch him with iron). The blows are so violent that Kaineus immediately enters Hades through the surface of the Earth. Of course, ramming someone through the surface of the Earth into Hell is a very powerful image for getting rid of an evil or dispelling a nightmare. There is thus something more to the behavior of Kainis/Kaineus than the mere refusal to obey, as described, for instance, in the Antigone myth referred to above: Indeed, Kaineus is a nightmarish phenomenon, the symbolic embodiment of a woman-turned-man who has suffered injustices typical of militarized societies and who then returns with a vengeance to haunt the consciences of the male warriors.

The Recruiting Process as a Means of Structural Violence for Breaking the Spirit of the Unwarlike

The danger of women changing into invulnerable warriors who slay dozens of centaurs was of course non-existent in antiquity outside the mythological discourse.

---

[24] Ov. *Met.* 12.470–76.

However, the mere existence of such fantasies suggests that philosophically minded people had at least a semiconscious knowledge of the historical process through which egalitarian primitive society could be gradually replaced by a society based on the division of labor. Warfare—as the most conspicuous form of labor—held privileges and glory for the brave. Paradoxically, the very imagery through which the repression of the female sex and the privileging of men was legitimized calls into question its own *raison d'être* when examined from a different angle. For instance, what if the female way of life[25] turned out to be attractive to some men, who would thus refuse to be enthusiastic about the prospect of bleeding to death on the battlefield?

The archetypal expression of this angst-ridden fantasy (or, from the opposite point of view, the fantasy of wish fulfillment) is the myth of the goddess Thetis and her son, Achilles, which has been told and retold in different versions, the most extensive of which (among those that happen to survive) is in the first book (the only one the author completed) of Statius' epic poem *Achilleis*. The plot unfolds as follows: As the decision to go to war with Troy has been made, a mass mobilization of all the able-bodied men of Greece is ordered by the Achaean kings. Thus, Thetis—a goddess who in mythological lore has a wealth of supernatural capabilities at her command—archetypically represents every mother who does not want to lose her child to the army or to a culture of glory and death.[26] As a frightened mother, Thetis is obsessed with the thought of hiding her son from the eyes of the recruiting officers: But Thetis stood throughout the night on the sea-resounding cliffs (...) pondering where to hide her son and in which country to conceal him. (Stat. *Achil.* 1.198–200).

Meanwhile, the commander-in-chief (i.e., the *rex*; 1.458) makes it inescapably clear that *every* young man is expected to take part in the expedition against Troy and that no exceptions whatsoever are to be made.

In a deeply impactful image, the poet compares the effect of the search operations conducted by Agamemnon's recruiting services with the way a hunting net works: "Similarly, the curved hunting net traps wild animals in their hiding spots and tightens around them as the meshes close. In a panic, they flee from their vast, pathless terrain, frightened by the torches and noise." (1.459–461). As the whole of Greece turns into a place of horror, the gaze of the goddess Thetis falls on the island of Scyros, where from the royal hall of the unwarlike Lycomedes, the sound of girls' gatherings and the beach echoing with their game had recently come to her ears. [...] This she liked and

---

[25] Not as it actually was, but as how it was imagined to be in patriarchic discourse: playful, filled with the joys of dancing and music, or at least full of the (allegedly) non-strenuous work of spinning and weaving.

[26] However, see also Leach 1997–1998, 347–371.

it seemed to the timid mother the safest place." (1.207–211). In order to get her son access to the maiden bands of Scyros, Thetis transforms him into a girl, using her divine powers to remodel him like an artist reshaping a figure of wax (1.332–334). The whole scheme seems to work, but it then becomes known in the Greek camp that a single young man has slipped through the meshes of the net, thereby eluding the authority of King Agamemnon.

The situation is reminiscent of the one mentioned above in which Antigone—accused of having endangered the entire social structure with a personal act of defiance—stands alone before Creon, King of Thebes. In both cases, allowing a single exception to be made would amount to calling into question the integrity of the existing power structure and risking the destruction of the social order. In the case of Achilles, the crossing over of men into the female realm of joyful togetherness is the nightmarish option that other men could find attractive. It thus goes without saying that the goal is to prevent such a transgression immediately and by all possible means. As the poet makes clear, the whole army is obsessed with the thought of completing its ranks with the one missing soldier: Indeed, "the entire army eagerly longed for Achilles to return." (1.472). Finally, the "horrible deed" (1.533) of Thetis is revealed to a seer by Phoenix Apollon (as are the hellish machinations of a "wicked girl" [1.535]—the king's daughter Lycomedes, under whose influence Achilles has fallen). A search team of high-ranking commanders (i.e., Odysseus and Diomedes in Statius' version) is immediately assembled with the single mandate of finding the deserter-turned-girl. As the end of the story is well known, following the plot to the bitter end is not necessary here.[27]

In the Thetis/Achilles myth, attention is drawn to the danger that existed in the ability of the world of women (fanciful as it appears to be in myth) to lure unsuspecting victims into the world of love and beauty if not attentively monitored. The entire apparatus that hunts down reluctant conscripts, imperiously casts aside even the wish of the powerful Mother Goddess, and finally sends the deserter to the front lines—where he later dies—exerts structural violence. The poet is one of the first authors to address the fact that in almost every war, two front lines come into contact: one point of contact is between the two parties that fight out the war, and the other is between those on both sides of the front line who "exult in fighting"[28] on the one hand and those few who do not want to participate in perpetrating or suffering violence on the other hand. One element of the structural violence exerted by the moral majority of society against the moral minority that both Sophocles and Statius capture very well

---

[27] Bessone 2020, 80–112.

[28] "The epic hero was supposed to exult in fighting"; see West 1966, 144.

is the administratively produced isolation of the opponents of war, who are defenselessly exposed to the grip of the war apparatus.

Sending Others to Their Deaths

Cautionary tales such as the Thetis/Achilles myth were plausibly deemed necessary in antiquity in order to—if necessary—set boys' heads right and make them "exult in fighting." Pressure to unite forces in common war efforts was indeed immense, but some clues can be found in mythology to suggest that there was at least a subconscious awareness of other factors than social pressure that had an impact in that matter. To begin, we have the *Supplices*—a drama brought to the stage by Euripides sometime after 424 BCE.[29] The tragedy tells the story of a prehistoric diplomatic crisis that is brought about via unprovoked aggression levied by Argos against Thebes, two *poleis* of Central Greece that—according to tradition—were under the sway of tyrants during this stage in their (mythological) history. After the act of aggression has utterly failed, the King of Thebes prohibits the bodies of the fallen enemies from being buried in order to induce a deterring effect on other warmongers. Not having sufficient forces to enforce the burial of his country's dead, Adrastus—the King of Argos—now turns to the King of Athens for help against Thebes. While the consultations in this matter are still taking place, a herald of Thebes enters the stage to advocate for the position of his king. The herald's expositions (which are, of course, Euripides' lines) are of fundamental importance and deserve to be quoted at length. First, however, a few additional remarks are in order. In the fictional setting of the play, prehistoric Athens is understood to be a democracy whose values and functional principles are defended by its ruler, as represented on stage by King Theseus. Consequently, the Theban herald—who is portrayed as a rather cheeky and insolent fellow—is pushed into choosing an anti-democratic stance. As the drama was written for an Athenian audience, all public sympathies can be expected to have been on the side of Theseus and democracy. In other words, the herald is made to speak from an outsider's position.[30] Nevertheless, it is in itself remarkable that the herald is allowed to make his anti-militaristic statements at all. He has the floor now:

> Look to it! And don't answer me in an angry manner —saying, "I rule over a free city after all"—relying on the strength of your arms. The least reliable thing is hope, which has seduced many poleis to go to war with each other. It leads the mind to imprudence. Whenever a decision to go to war is put to the vote, no one anticipates their own demise; instead, they project that misfortune onto others. If everyone who voted considered their own death,

---

[29] See Eich 2021, 48–53.
[30] Sagredo 2016.

> Greece would not be ruined by crazy war lust. Nevertheless, every people can, in principle, choose the better argument, distinguish good and evil, and recognize how much better peace is for humanity than war. The former is adored by the muses, hated by the goddesses of vengeance, rejoices in the number of children, delights in wealth. Putting this aside (evil people as we are), we opt for war, enslave the weaker: the men the man, the city the city.[31]

Looking only at this section, it is easy to get the impression that Euripides is speaking through the *persona* of the herald to his countrymen, most of whom were uncompromisingly following the policies of the warlike demagogues of the time. To the Athenians, the poet addresses the following reproaches: (1) Decision making by majority vote is conducive to self-righteous striving for dominance over others; (2) the driving factor is greed, which tends to make voters blind to dangers and suffering with respect both to themselves and to others; (3) voters are guided by the strong belief that death will always and only meet their comrades while the profits of war (in terms of booty, dominance, and glory) will be reserved for them; and (4) if they had the least idea of what death on the battlefield is like, Hellas would immediately be freed from the plague of war.

Reading these lines today, the modernity of their central themes is striking. During World War I, Viennese journalist Karl Kraus placed the "lack of fantasy" or imaginative powers at the center of his explanation of the persistent militarism of his contemporaries.[32] Moreover, British author Wilfred Owen did virtually the same in his famous poem *Dulce et decorum est*. The mass psychology employed by Euripides has theoretical similarities with Gustave Le Bon's *Psychologie des foules*, Theodor Lessing's *Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen*,[33] and Elias Canetti's *Masse und Macht*, to name but a few works. However, these are scientific, poetic, and journalistic texts whose authors did not bother to throw the veil of myth over them as Euripides does when he puts his *words of admonition* into the mouth of a supporting actor whose outrageous opinions are triumphed over by righteousness, democratic spirit, and military expertise as the dramatic action unfolds. The military intervention led by Theseus in support of Adrastus' plea results in an internecine battle, suicides, and desperation. The number of deaths may have multiplied, but this is more than balanced by the fact that all the dead receive a dignified burial.

---

[31] Eur. *Supp.* 476–493.

[32] The idea is present throughout the ca. 800 pages of his drama *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*.

[33] Lessing 1962, 217.

As is more often the case with Euripides, a certain ambivalence remains[34]: Although Theseus' decision to bring assistance to the aggressor—Adrastus—is coupled with a clear positioning for justice and dignity that was surely appreciated by Athenian patriots, at the end of the drama, there is only grief, death, and despair.[35] Eventually, the messenger's plea for peace echoes in the mourning speeches and songs of the survivors.

Everyone familiar with Athenian history might wonder at this point whether it was truly necessary (given the extreme frequency of war events in this history) to teach Athenians lessons about what the realities of war looked like. One possible response to this question is that Euripides obviously thought that there was room for such pedagogics. As mentioned earlier, one aspect of the herald's speech involves the satisfaction of sending others to their deaths because the possibility of one's own death is outside the imaginative capacities of most participants in decision making.

Euripides is not alone in crediting decision makers and pro-war activists with this special character trait. Indeed, Plutarch famously tells the story of how the Athenian assembly passionately demanded military action against their Boeotian neighbors due to these neighbors' pro-Macedonian attitude. The great military leader Phocion spoke against the war, but to no avail. Then, Phocion immediately ordered every man of military age (i.e., up to the age of 60) to get ready to march out against the enemy. Senior voters in particular were thunderstruck. The proposal was once more put to a vote and was rejected (Plut. *Vit. Phoc.* 24). There is no better illustration of the reproach of the Euripidean herald than the fact that majorities of popular assemblies were heavily inclined to send their fellow countrymen to war in the hope that they themselves would be spared from conscription. The chorus of Attic peasants in Aristophanes' comedy *Peace*—written in 422/21 BCE—gives expression to the crushing surprise these peasants felt when they found their own names on the conscription lists[36] (which were posted in the city near the statue of Pandion, a hero of the city's pantheon) during a visit to the city market:

> Marching orders are set for tomorrow morning. He [a citizen] did not
> purchase any provisions: He did not know that it was his turn to go. He stops

---

[34] With regard to this ambivalence, Euripides' intentions may be interpreted as being ultimately patriotic or even bellicose. According to Daneš 2019, one of the main aims of the play is to deconstruct pacifism. Given the wide scope of interpretation that is inherent in myth, such a view could be adopted. With the same right, however, the exact opposite perspective could be taken: namely that Euripides' aim is to deconstruct bellicosity. See Hamamé 2019, 77–102.

[35] However, note the different opinion of Toher 2001, 332–343, who finds a cathartic function in the mourning scenes of the play's finale.

[36] On the subject of draft evasion in Athens, see the valuable article by Christ (2004).

> in front of the statue of Pandion, sees himself [i.e., his name written in the conscription list], he is left dumbfounded, runs away, cries.[37]

Aristophanes does not explicitly state that the man depicted in the scene as dumbfounded when reading his draft notice had voted for war when the issue was brought before the assembly, but being portrayed as a typical representative of his class, this man might legitimately be assumed to have done so. In any case, the overwhelming majority of Athenian citizens supported the politics of armed conflict with the Lacedaemonians, and it is precisely the political shortsightedness of this majority that is targeted by the mockery of the author: Voting gleefully for going to war with a strategic rival and then being dumbstruck with amazement when this decision materializes in receiving marching orders is representative of a state of mind that is responsible for the everlasting perpetuation of the state of war.

Trauma

Another phenomenon that was anticipated to some extent in ancient mythology and that is described in modern times with some precision by psychologists is war-related trauma.[38] As is well known, psychiatrist Jonathan Shay recognized symptoms of severe traumatization in the Homeric figure of Achilles.[39] Shay had observed that for many of the Vietnam veterans whom he had been treating, their actual traumatization had been preceded by a period of deep alienation from the army as a social frame of reference. This preliminary stage is not necessary, but it creates a strong predisposition to traumatization and was often followed by a serious experience of loss, such as the death of a dear comrade. As a result, affected individuals lost all interest in their own survival, fought in a berserk manner, and were driven by a manic thirst for revenge. These patients often reported that they no longer found satisfaction in "normal fighting" and desired to kill their opponents as cruelly as possible, such as by "eating them alive." All these elements can be detected in the way Achilles is depicted in the *Iliad*: the deep humiliation he experiences at the hands of Agamemnon, the isolation from his comrades, the loss of his childhood friend Patroclus, his intemperate fighting frenzy, the cruelties he commits on the defenseless (including

---

[37] Ar. *Pax* 1182–1184.

[38] Today, a growing number of textual analyses are available that teach us about the ancient knowledge of traumatization caused by suffering war violence. In addition to the analyses mentioned below, only a few important works can be cited here as examples: Epic poetry: Maiullari 2016, 11–27 and Matsakis 2007; Aeschylus: Proietti 2022; Euripides: Lush 2014; Thucydides: Morley 2017; and Lucan: Walde 2011. For traces of awareness of PTSD in Roman legislation regarding military service, see van Lommel 2013; *contra* Fear 2022. For a comprehensive overview of symptoms of trauma in ancient historiography, see Lerner and Micale 2001. A valuable article on the awareness of war-related trauma in ancient Mesopotamian sources is provided by Abdul-Hamid / Hughes 2014. See also Birmes *et al.* 2010.

[39] Shay 1994; see also Horn 2018.

human sacrifice), and finally, the breakdown when he comes face to face with the father of Hector (whose corpse he had brutally mutilated).

However, serious concerns have been raised over the interpretive pattern underlying this reasoning. First, attention has been drawn to the fact that trauma symptoms can vary widely depending on both cultural conditioning[40] and the intensity of the stress of combat (which researchers who follow this line of argumentation assume to have been relatively low in ancient warfare when compared with modern trench warfare). Giorgia Proietti, on the other hand, argues that violence was so present as a normal factor of life in antiquity (including in civic life) that war violence was not perceived as something extraordinary.[41] Furthermore, the unsuitability of the surviving sources for making precise diagnoses has been emphasized in the articles cited in the preceding footnotes. These objections are important and must be taken into account in each individual case. On the other hand, it should also be noted that modern trauma research has found that traumatizing experiences of violence do not necessarily have to have occurred over long periods of time in order to produce lasting effects. Indeed, one bloody battle would be quite sufficient,[42] just as a single instance of rape or an accident can deeply traumatize a person for life. Material for exact diagnoses is indeed lacking from antiquity, which comes as no surprise given the long-standing and strong taboo against the recognition of war-related trauma. However, the vague ideas expressed in mythological and other literature are immensely useful as indicators of pre-scientific knowledge on this matter. Methodological soundness requires that we base our research on this philological evidence rather than on the abstract claim that this evidence cannot exist.[43]

---

[40] Crowley 2014. See Melchior 2011, who argues that violence for Romans "was both the means and the expression of Roman power" (222) and was therefore viewed positively. Modern studies, however, indicate that the successful application of violence by no means protects against traumatization. See Solomon 1993. The various positions of the controversy are conveniently summarized (with a rich bibliography) by Reinhard and Rollinger 2020. The authors regard one single source—namely a letter written by a man (who, along with his family, had been the victim of a predatory robbery in the Egyptian Lycopolites) to his father (5th century CE?) about his own experience with violence (*P. Oxy.* XVI 1873)—as the only authentic piece of evidence of war-related trauma that survives from antiquity. Strictly speaking, however, the letter contains rather general signs of anxiety and stress and no concrete indications of post-traumatic stress disorder in the narrower sense.

[41] Proietti 2019, 83. Nevertheless, such a perspective may amount to underestimating the experience of being close to death in a phalanx battle or inside a warship.

[42] See, e.g., Solomon 1993. Note that Solomon's study both makes it equally clear that the human mind does not get used to fighting battles and indicates that fighting in more battles deepens (rather than alleviates) trauma.

[43] We are otherwise in danger of repeating the error of such modern psychiatrists who could not recognize trauma symptoms in soldiers (e.g., during World War I) because they did not want to do so. See Riedesser / Verderber 2011. See also the important remarks by Tritle 2014, who rightly insists that

Ancient poets and philosophers—or at least some of them—understood that the psychological effects of experiencing war violence were severe and long-lasting. For example, in a play named after Heracles, Euripides depicts the hero like a soldier returning from duty who encounters his family in a life-threatening situation.[44] Heracles succeeds in rescuing his wife and children in a brutal fight, only to suffer an intense flashback a short while later in which he imagines himself at war again and perceives his own family through hallucination as enemy soldiers, whom he consequently kills in a fighting frenzy.[45]

Seneca—drawing from Stoic literature—understood the underlying mechanisms of psychological phenomena like the ones just mentioned:

> They laugh, rejoice, enjoying life to the fullest, their facial expressions showing no signs of anger; they are cruel to pass the time. Hannibal is reported to have said, on seeing a trench full of human blood, "What a beautiful spectacle!" How much more beautiful it would have seemed to him if the blood had filled any river or lake! What is amazing about it if you are spellbound by this sight, born to shed blood and surrounded by murder from childhood?[46]

Making children familiar with bloodshed and slaughter as early in their lives as possible—as Plato demanded (*Resp.* 7.16 537a)—was the best way to keep the war machine turning. In Seneca's eyes, the only way to stop this war machine was through rational education. His suggestions are almost reminiscent of methods used by peace-loving prehistoric peoples to pass on their peaceful ways of life to the next generation[47]:

> It would be most beneficial (I should say) to give the boys a wholesome education as early as possible, because we must be careful not to nurture in them a disposition toward anger or to stifle their talents. The matter requires careful observation, because both what we aim to discourage and what we want to promote can be influenced by similar methods.[48]

---

the human neurological system has been identical for the past 200,000 years and that its susceptibility to violent traumatization cannot simply be "culturally" conjured away.

[44] See esp. Torrance 2017.

[45] Some researchers regard typical PTSD symptoms (e.g., hyper-realistic flashbacks and impulse-driven actions of violence committed against imaginary enemies) as being relatively recent occurrences in the nosological phenomenology of war trauma. See, e.g., Jones *et al.* 2003, 158–162. However, the behavior of Heracles in the Euripidean drama displays considerable similarities with that of traumatized veterans in the present. Essential reading on flashbacks (of war veterans and others) can be found in Herman 1992. Meineck 2012 provides a vivid description of how vehemently present-day veterans react when confronted with the slaughter scenes of the Euripidean Heracles (as well as similar scenes) on the stage.

[46] Sen. *De Ira* 2.5.3–4.

[47] Eich 2015, 38–53.

[48] Sen. *De Ira* 2.21.1–2.

Such considerations were clearly absolutely utopian in the war-torn societies of antiquity. At best, it would have been conceivable to educate a kind of Émile, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau conceived of him one and a half millennia later—that is, as a reasonable, peaceable person who realizes his ideal in the self-sufficient way of solitary life separated from the rest of society.

There is a curious piece of evidence that may be called *The Confession of Alexander the Great*: It has as its subject the discussions that the Macedonian king allegedly had with the so-called gymnosophists in the land that was then known as "India." These gymnosophists are portrayed by the Greek sources as a kind of sect whose members lived in absolute needlessness, were considered extremely wise, and thus aroused the curiosity of the conqueror, who reportedly sought them out to talk. The resulting discussions (the historicity of which is anything but certain) have been used in later literary history as an archetypical example of dealing dialectically with fundamental questions of the philosophy of history.[49] One late example is a version of Alexander's conversation with the most renown representative of the gymnosophists: Dandamis. The dialogue was written in the 4th century CE by a man called Palladius, who was most plausibly the bishop Palladius of Helenopolis.[50] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in this adaptation, Dandamis is credited with having formulated a Christian worldview,[51] although the meeting is said to have taken place some 350 years before the earthly ministry of Christ. (Religious truths, however, are timeless.)

The first part of the conversation is a lecture given by Dandamis on greed, violence, mass murder, and the destruction of cities and human life. The condemnation of actions or dispositions such as these leads Dandamis to condemn Alexander's entire war as being against the Commandments of God and therefore sinful. This classification of Alexander's Anabasis was common in Late Antique Christian literature, as in Arnobius (*Adv. Nat.* 1.5), Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* 2.7.19), and Orosius (3.7.5). However, Alexander's answer is more surprising because he unapologetically agrees with Dandamis. This answer is followed by the *Confessions of Alexander*, which contains the testimony of a deeply traumatized man:

---

[49] See Muckensturm-Poulle 2018 for a discussion of the evidence.

[50] Berghoff 1967, 2–55. To be more precise, the passage quoted below belongs to an excerpt that was allegedly (2.14B) taken from a book by Arrian, though this attribution is in all probability fictional. However, as papyrological evidence makes clear, dialogues—e.g., the one attributed to Arrian by Palladius—circulated independently of Palladius' framework narrative. The most probable assumption is therefore that Palladius inserted the dialogue into his booklet as a *trouvaille*. See Maraval 2016, XXIX–XXXI.

[51] For this phenomenon, see Jouanno 2010, 53–76, esp. 57–58 (with extensive bibliography referring to further editions and recently discovered fragments).

> But I, what should I do, who am haunted by constant fears and exhausted by incessant restlessness? My guards are numerous, and I fear them more than the enemy. More terrible than the military adversaries are my friends, who harass me every day. [...] During the day, I spread disorder among the peoples; at night, I am tormented by my thoughts that someone will come up to me and kill me with a sword. Alas! If I punish the attacker, I fall into mourning; if I let him go unpunished, I am despised all the more. And do I have a choice to refrain from such actions? And suppose I wanted to live in solitude: My companions [*hypaspistai*] would not let me. Even if I could run away, I would not be permitted to do so because I have been assigned this very lot. To what end will I defend myself before God, who has appointed me to this place?[52]

There are several noteworthy elements in this speech that the bishop put into Alexander's mouth. To begin, the deep mistrust of virtually everyone is immediately recognizable and is a disposition that Jonathan Shay understood to be a trauma symptom of the Homeric Achilles.[53] Even more than Achilles, the Alexander of Palladius lives in a world of enemies and counts the fiercest ones as his friends. Other well-known symptoms of trauma include sleeplessness, hyper-arousal, frequent nightmares, and persistent anxiety. However, the ill person in this case is not some random conscript, but (in Palladius' fiction) the commander-in-chief of the entire campaign, who ordered the invasion of the Persian Empire of his own free will or—in other words—who is the one for whom and by whom the entire conquest is carried out, at least in the common understanding of how power dynamics work. However, in Palladius' imagination, even the commander-in-chief would have been killed by his comrades if he did not fulfill the role requirements placed on him as a military commander. We rediscover here the message of the Thetis myth referred to above: No one is allowed to escape the imperatives of war, not even the leader of an arbitrary war of aggression. This is what Theodor Adorno refers to as a fatal "Zusammenhang von Verblendung" ("enmeshment colligated by delusion").[54]

Conclusions

Research into the more remote or even hidden zones of the social (un)conscious cannot by its very nature yield such unambiguous results as can be achieved via research on plain facts, such as battles or physical acts of violence. This is all the more true when one looks for traces of hidden knowledge in myths, which are almost by definition open to interpretation. On the other hand, subconscious knowledge that is not

---

[52] 2.33–34. The ideas expressed at the end of this paragraph can be found in Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance* 3.6.13–16.

[53] Shay 1994.

[54] Adorno 1966, 97.

normally allowed to be expressed in public debate plays an immensely important role in the inner functioning of every society. Repressing certain interpretations of reality can only work successfully when there is at least a vague idea of what these interpretations are about. Myths can fulfill the role of narrative outlets through which usually suppressed thoughts come forth into the public domain, albeit in a defamiliarized form. However, the present contribution could only address some aspects of a research area that remains largely undeveloped.

If this reasoning is correct, ancient societies possessed a kind of knowledge of structural violence (i.e., symbolic violence that implicated the threat of physical violence) and of the part played by this form of violence in shaping militarized societies. Structural violence was often directed against women, whose duty of obedience could be conceptualized through the lens of myth in military terms and was accordingly (from the mythological perspective) enforced via the use of deadly violence that mirrored the structural violence applied in everyday life. The omnipresent reality of structural violence in militarized societies is reflected in Statius' rendering of the Achilles myth, in which the power of society and its military apparatus over the individual is presented in powerful, nightmarish images. Another section discussed the tendency of ancient popular assemblies to regularly vote for war when faced with the choice between war and peace: According to one ancient interpretation, the individual voter ignored the possibility that death could befall him, was guided by lust for power and greed, and relished the opportunity to send others to their deaths. One final aspect addressed in the article is war-related trauma as dealt with in ancient myth, philosophy, and (pseudo-)history.

Bibliography

Abdul-Hamid, W. K. / Hughes, J. H. (2014), Nothing New under the Sun: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders in the Ancient World, in: Early Science and Medicine 19, 1–9.

Adorno, Th. W. (1966), Negative Dialektik. Frankfurt am Main.

Berghoff, W. (1967), Palladius. De gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus. Meisenheim am Glan.

Bessone, F. (2020), 'Nimis… mater': Mother Plot and Epic Deviation in the 'Achilleid,' in: Sharrock, A. / Keith, A. (eds.), Maternal Conceptions in Classical Literature and Philosophy. Toronto, 80–112.

Birmes, P. et al. (2010), Psychotraumatology in Antiquity, in: Stress and Health 26, 21–31.

Blok, J. H. (1995), The Early Amazons. Modern and Ancient Perspectives on a Persistent Myth. Leiden.

Bonnard, J.-B. (2022), Violences de masse et violences extrêmes en contexte de guerre dans l'antiquité. Introduction au dossier thématique, in: Kentron 37, 17–34.

Bosak-Schroeder, C. (2019), Making Specimens in the 'Periplus of Hanno' and Its Imperial tradition, in: AJPh 140, 67–100.

Chemouni, J. (2002), Mythologie et psychologie. Le mythe ou l'impossible pathologie, in: Kentron 18, 9–27.

Christ, M. R. (2004), Draft Evasion Onstage and Offstage in Classical Athens, in: CQ 54.1, 33–57.

Crowley, J. (2014), Beyond the Universal Soldier: Combat Trauma in Classical Antiquity, in: Meineck, P. / Konstan, D. (eds.), Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks. New York, 105–130.

Cuchet, V. S. (2013), Femmes et guerrières. Les amazones de Scythie (Hérodote, IV, 110–117), in: Boehringer, S. / Cuchet, V. S. (eds.), Des femmes en action. L'individu et la fonction en Grèce antique. Paris, 169–184.

Daneš, J. (2019), Manipulation of the Rhetoric of Peace and the Deconstruction of Pacifism in Euripides' 'Suppliant Women,' Mnemosyne 72, 369–383.

Des Bouvrie, S. (ed.) (2004), Myth and Symbol II. Symbolic Phenomena in Ancient Greek Culture (Papers from the Second and Third International Symposia on Symbolisms, Athens, September 2000 and 2002). Sävedalen.

Eich, A. (2015), Die Söhne des Mars. Munich.

Eich, A. (2021), Die Verurteilung des Krieges in der antiken Literatur. Münster.

Fear, A. (2022), Legal Evidence for Roman PTSD?, in: Rees, O. / Hurlock, K. / Crowley, J. (eds.), Combat Stress in Pre-modern Europe. Cham, 83–100.

Giovannelli, M. (2014), Antigone: dal mito al teatro, dal teatro al mito, in: Dike 17, 91–100.

Goldhill, S. (1986), Reading Greek Tragedy. Cambridge.

Grundmann, S. (2019), Haut und Haar. Politische und soziale Bedeutungen des Körpers im klassischen Griechenland. Wiesbaden.

Hamamé, G. N. (2019), 'Supplicantes' de Eurípides: una representación de la violencia extrema, la guerra, in: Saravia, M. I. / Featherston, C. A. (eds.), Expresiones de violencia en la literatura. De Grecia a nuestros días. La Plata, 77–102.

Herman, J. (1992), Trauma and Recovery. From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. London.

Horn, F. (2018), The psychology of aggression: Achilles' wrath and Hector's flight in Iliad 22.131–7, in: Hermes 146, 277–289.

Jones, E. *et al.* (2003), Flashbacks and post-traumatic stress disorder: the genesis of a 20th-century diagnosis, in: British Journal of Psychiatry 182, 158–163.

Jouanno, C. (2010), Des Gymnosophistes aux Réchabites: une utopie antique et sa christianisation, in: AC 79: 53–76.

Kroupa, S. (2019), Humanists and Travellers, Gorgons and Gorillas: Hanno the Navigator's 'Periplus' and Early Modern Geography (1530–1630), in: International History Review 41.4, 793–820.

Leach, E. W. (1997–1998), Venus, Thetis and the Social Construction of Maternal Behavior, in: CJ 92, 347–371.

Lerner, P. / Micale, M. S. (2001), Trauma, Psychiatry, and History: A Conceptual and Historiographical Introduction, in: Micale, M. S. / Lerner, P. (eds.), Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870–1930. Cambridge, 1–27.

Lessing, T. (1962), Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen. Oder die Geburt der Geschichte aus dem Mythos. Hamburg.

Lush, B. (2014), Combat Trauma and Psychological Injury in Euripides' 'Medea,' in: Helios 41, 25–57.

Maiullari, F. (2016), Andromache, a Post-Traumatic Character in Homer, in: QUCC 113, 11–27.

Maraval, P. (2016), Alexandre le Grand et les brahmanes: Les mœurs des brahmanes de l'Inde / Palladios d'Hélénopolis, suivi de Correspondance d'Alexandre et de Dindime (anonyme), ed., trad. and comm. Paris.

Matsakis, A. (2007), Three Faces of Post-Traumativ Stress: Ares, Hercules and Hephaestus, in: Cosmopoulos, M. B. (ed.), Experiencing War: Trauma and Society from Ancient Greece to the Iraq War. Chicago, 195–224.

Meineck, P. (2012), Combat Trauma and the Tragic Stage: 'Restoration' by Cultural Catharsis, in: Intertexts 16: 7–24.

Melchior, A. (2011) Caesar in Vietnam: Did Roman Soldiers Suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?, in: G&R 58: 209–223.

Morley, N. (2017), Thucydides and the Historiography of Trauma, in: Ktèma 42, 195–204.

Muckensturm-Poulle, C. (2017), L'expertise éthique et politique de Calanos et Dandamis, les conseillers indiens du roi Alexandre, in: Queyrel-Bottineau, A. / Guelfucci, M.-R. (eds.), Conseillers et ambassadeurs dans l'Antiquité. Besançon. 145–162.

Proietti, G. (2019), Can an Ancient Truth become an Old Lie? A Few Methodological Remarks Concerning Comparative Research on War and its Aftermath, in: Giangiulio, M. / Franchi, E. / Proietti, G. (eds.), Commemorating the War Dead. Ancient and Modern. Stuttgart, 71–92.

Proietti, G. (2022), A Collective War Trauma in Classical Athens? Coping with the Human Cost of Warfare in Aeschylus' Persians, in: Rees, O. / Hurlock, K. / Crowley, J. (eds.), Combat Stress in Pre-modern Europe. Cham, 37–61.

Quijada Sagredo, M. (2016), La retórica como competición: el debate entre el heraldo tebano y Teseo (Eurípides, Suplicantes 395–584), in Gallé Cejudo, R. J. / Sánchez Ortiz de Landaluce, M. / Silva Sánchez, T. (eds.), Fronteras entre el verso y la prosa en la literatura helenística y helenístico-romana: homenaje al Prof. José Guillermo Montes Cala. Bari, 605–615.

Raaflaub, K. A. (2014), War and the City: the Brutality of war and its Impact on the Community, in: Meineck, P. / Konstan, D. (eds.), Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks. New York, 15–46.

Rabinowitz, N. S. (2014), Women and War in Tragedy, in: Meineck, P. / Konstan, D. (eds.), Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks. New York, 185–206.

Riedesser, P. and Verderber, A. (2011)'Maschinengewehre hinter der Front.' Zur Geschichte der deutschen Militärpsychiatrie. Frankfurt am Main.

Reinard, P. / Rollinger, C. (2020), 'Meine Seele ist vom Sturm getrieben…': die Debatte um antike Kriegstraumata und posttraumatische Belastungsstörungen im Licht eines spätantiken Briefes (P.Oxy. 16/1873), in: Millennium 17, 163–202.

Saïd, S. (2013), Le monde à l'envers. Pouvoir féminin et communauté des femmes en Grèce ancienne. Paris.

Schneider, L. / Seifert, M. (2010), Sphinx, Amazone, Mänade. Bedrohliche Frauenbilder im antiken Mythos. Stuttgart.

Schneiderman, L. (1981), The Psychology of Myth, Folklore and Religion. Chicago.

Schubert, C. and Weiß, A. (eds.) (2013), Amazonen zwischen Griechen und Skythen. Gegenbilder in Mythos und Geschichte. Berlin.

Seel, O. (1961), Antike Entdeckerfahrten. Zwei Reiseberichte, übertragen und erläutert von Otto Seel, Erster Teil: Reisebericht des karthagischen Suffeten Hanno. Zurich.

Shay, J. (1994), Achilles in Vietnam. Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character. New York.

Solomon, Z. (1993), Combat Stress Reaction. The Enduring Toll of War. New York.

Stocks, C. (2018), Anger in the Extreme?: 'ira' , Excess, and the 'Punica,' in: Phoenix 72, 293–311.

Tiersch, C. (2013), Von den Gründen, eine Amazone zu besiegen. Bezähmung des gefahrvoll Weiblichen?, in Schubert, C. / Weiß, A. (eds.), Amazonen zwischen Griechen und Skythen. Gegenbilder in Mythos und Geschichte. Berlin, 111–135.

Torrance, I. (2017), Heracles and Hercules: Ancient Models for PTSD in Euripides and Seneca?, in: Maia 69, 231–246.

Toher, M. (2001), Euripides' 'Supplices' and the Social Function of Funeral Ritual," Hermes 129: 332–43.

Tritle, L. A. (2014), 'Ravished Minds' in the Ancient World, in Meineck, P. / Konstan, D. (eds.), Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks. New York, 87–103.

Van Lommel, K. (2013), The Recognition of Roman Soldiers' Mental Impairment, in: AClass 56, 155–184.

Wagner-Hasel, B. (1986), Männerfeindliche Jungfrauen? Ein kritischer Blick auf Amazonen in Mythos und Geschichte, in: Feministische Studien 5.1, 86–105.

Wagner-Hasel, B. (2000), Das Diktum der Philosophen: Der Ausschluss der Frauen aus der Politik und die Furcht vor der Frauenherrschaft, in: Späth, T. / Wagner-Hasel, B. (eds.), Frauenwelten in der Antike. Geschlechterordnung und weibliche Lebenspraxis. Stuttgart, 198–217.

Walde, C. (2011), Lucan's Bellum Civile: A Specimen of a Roman 'Literature of Trauma,' in: Asso, P. (ed.), Brill's Companion to Lucan. Leiden, 283-302.

Waldner, K. (2000), Geburt und Hochzeit des Kriegers: Geschlechterdifferenz und Initiation in Mythos und Ritual der griechischen Polis. Berlin.

Weil, S. (1989), L'Iliade ou le poème de la force, in: Œuvres complètes, vol. II 3: Écrits historiques et politiques. Vers la guerre (1937–1940). Paris, 227–253.

Wenskus, O. (2000), Geschlechterrollen und Verwandtes in der pseudo-hippokratischen Schrift 'Über die Umwelt,' in: Rollinger, R. / Ulf, C. (eds.), Geschlechterrollen und Frauenbild in der Perspektive antiker Autoren. Innsbruck, 173–86.

West, M. (1966), Hesiod, Works and Days, ed. with Prolegomena and a Commentary. Oxford.

Zaidman, L. B. (2015), Women and War: from the Theban Cycle to Greek Tragedy, in Fabre-Serris, J. / Keith, A. M. (eds.), Women and War in Antiquity. Baltimore, 82–99.