

THE SPARTAN ARMY AT MANTINEA AND ITS ORGANISATION IN THE FIFTH CENTURY BC

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1. *Introduction*

In classical Sparta there was no clear demarcation between civil and military organisation. An understanding of Sparta's society therefore requires some understanding of its army and vice versa. There is, however, hardly a topic in Spartan history on which there is so little scholarly agreement as the organisation of the army during the classical period. The main reason for this is that our primary source of knowledge about fifth-century Sparta, Thucydides, has been treated more as a stumbling-block than as an informative guide. Moreover, Xenophon's account of Spartan military organisation in the fourth century has almost invariably been used to tamper with Thucydides' description of the army during the Mantinea campaign of 418 BC, and sometimes even with Herodotus' description of the army at the time of the Persian Wars. In my opinion this is totally unwarranted. As I hope to show, Thucydides is not guilty of the ignorance or the errors of which modern scholars have accused him. I shall argue that his evidence is not only to a large extent self-consistent, but can also be combined with the scarce evidence we have from other sources to reconstruct the Spartan army of the fifth century BC and to help us understand how Sparta's military organisation reflected the structures of Spartan society at large.

The Spartan army that Xenophon knew in the fourth century consisted of six *morai* or divisions. Each of these was made up of both Perioikoi and Spartans, whereas Herodotus tells us that during the early fifth century BC Spartans and Perioikoi fought in separate regiments or *lochoi*. The information we can gather from Thucydides in my view points to an army organised along the lines suggested by Herodotus, since, as we shall see, the Spartan army at Mantinea in 418

BC consisted of five Spartan *lochoi* just as it had in 479 BC. From this it follows that there is no need to posit a major reorganisation of the Spartan army at some time between 479 and 418 BC, as many modern historians have done. Nor is there any need to postulate a dramatic drop in the Spartan population between these dates, as again many scholars have. The picture that will emerge from the following pages will be one of continuity in military and demographic essentials from at least the late sixth to the late fifth century BC. Admittedly the Spartan army described by Xenophon will not fit into this picture, but that army was the result of changes made during the last years of the Peloponnesian War. Xenophon's Spartan army is, however, a subject that I wish to treat elsewhere. Here I hope to offer some new insights into the makeup of Sparta's society and army during the greater part of the fifth century. The basis for these can and must be a vindication of Thucydides' famous but often abused description of that army at the first battle at Mantinea.¹

2. *An unusual mobilisation*

According to Thucydides, Sparta's position in the Peloponnese was seriously weakened in the aftermath of the so-called Peace of Nicias of 421 BC. Some of its allies had been alienated. When in 419 war again broke out between Sparta and its age-old rival Argos, Mantinea, in the heart of Arcadia and a long-time ally of Sparta, sided with the enemy, as did Elis, another former ally. Athens also came to the assistance of Argos, so that the great war between the Spartans and the Athenians was to all intents and purposes resumed. Sparta felt so threatened that in the summer of 418, with its entire army and all its remaining allies under the command of King Agis, it mounted a major

¹ For the Spartan army at the battle of Mantinea in 418 BC see Anderson (1970) 228–37; Andrewes (1970) 93–119; Bauer (1893) 314–5; Beloch (1886) 139–40; *idem* (1906) 58–67; Busolt (1905) 387–419; Cartledge (1979) 253–7; *idem* (1987) 429–30; Cavaignac (1912) 267–8; Cawkwell (1983) 385–6; Chrimes (1949) 384; Cozzoli (1979) 74–80; Figueira (1986) 187–92; Forrest (1968) 131–7; Gomme (1937) 132–55; Jones (1967) 61–2; Kromayer (1903) 191–4; *idem* (1924) 207–20; *idem* (1928) 33–37; Lazenby (1985) 41–5; Toynbee (1913) 269–71; *idem* (1969) 365–404; Woodhouse (1933) 18–125.

offensive against Argos (Thuc. 5,57,1).² The expedition ended rather unexpectedly in a truce between Agis and the commanders of the outmanoeuvred Argives (59–60). The Spartans and their allies were indignant at their king's behaviour, but had to accept the truce. Shortly after this, Athenian reinforcements arrived in Argos and persuaded the Argives and their Peloponnesian allies to renew the war. The coalition troops headed for Orchomenos in Arcadia, to which the contingent from Elis, which had been in favour of a combined attack on Lepreon, had withdrawn when it could not win over the others (61–62). Cut off by Mantinea from Spartan help from the south, Orchomenos surrendered. When news of this reached Sparta, King Agis narrowly escaped a fine and the demolition of his house by the outraged assembly and was placed under the supervision of ten of his compatriots who were to act as his 'advisers' in war (63). Meanwhile the enemy forces moved south in the direction of Tegea, Mantinea's neighbour and rival on the central Arcadian plateau. Sparta's fortunes seemed to be at a low ebb. When urgent requests for help reached the Spartans from Tegea they decided to respond: everything they had seemed to be at stake and they were convinced that only a decisive victory over the Argives could restore their former dominance in the Peloponnese.

Thucydides describes Sparta's mobilisation in the following terms (64, 2–3):

Then a rescue army was raised consisting of the Lacedaemonians themselves and of the Helots in full mobilisation, quickly and in such a manner as had not happened before. They advanced as far as Orestheion in Mainalia and sent word to their allies in Arcadia to march to Tegea in order to combine their forces there. They themselves all arrived at Orestheion, but there they sent back the sixth part of their own troops, consisting of the oldest and the youngest soldiers, to protect their homes, and with the rest of the army they reached Tegea, where shortly after they were joined by their Arcadian allies.

Two pieces of information in this passage are crucial to our understanding of Sparta's military organisation on this occasion: firstly a sixth of the army is said to have been made up of the oldest

² All further references in brackets are, if not otherwise stated, to Thucydides book V.

and the youngest troops and secondly 'the Lacedaemonians themselves' are said to have been fully mobilised.

To start with, why would 'the sixth part' of the army have consisted of the oldest and the youngest soldiers and how could such a fact have been known to an outsider? It has already been pointed out by some scholars that 'the sixth part' must have meant one-sixth of all the year classes involved.³ In Sparta, as in Athens, a man was liable for active service up until the age of sixty (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 5,4,13; 6,4,17). His liability normally began at twenty in both Sparta and Athens and probably in other Greek states. Twenty was the *hèbè* or flowering of youth, the threshold of adulthood. In Sparta it was from that age on (literally *aph' hèbès*) that the year classes called up for military service were counted.⁴ The very oldest year classes were not usually called up, and in practice the age of fifty-five may have been the limit under most circumstances.⁵ In times of emergency, however, the oldest year classes too could be called up, as could men under twenty who were still in military training. In fifth-century Athens the 18- and 19-year-olds underwent some form of preparation for their adult life of full citizenship and military service: they were called *peripoloi* and could be used for light duties, as were the better-known *ephèboi* of late fourth-century Athens.⁶ On at least one occasion during the fifth century Athens deemed it necessary to use its 18- and 19-year-olds and those aged between 50 and 59 in a campaign (Thuc. 1,105,4; cf. 4,67,2-5 for *peripoloi* in action). This explains why the total number of year classes in Athens was 42 (i.e. every age between 18 and 59 inclusive) whereas in practice call-ups normally started at the age of 20 and seldom went beyond the age of 50. Athenian

³ Cf. Andrewes (1970) 93: "the over-forties and, probably, those of 18-19"; Figueira (1986) 188: the year groups 55-59 and 18-19; likewise Lazenby (1985) 44 and 126; Toynbee (1969) 371: the year classes 20-22 and 56-59 (but that would be 7/40, not 7/42!)

⁴ Cf. Billheimer (1946); Lazenby (1985) 12; Marrou (1946) 218; Tazelaar (1967) 141-2.

⁵ As in the Leuctra campaign of 371 (Xen. *Hell.* 6,4,17) and in fact also at Mantinea in 418 after the oldest men had been sent home. In Athens men seem normally to have ceased to be called up at the age of 50, or in exceptional cases 55; see discussion in Gomme (1969) 34-9 *ad* Thuc. 2,13,6-7.

⁶ See Pélékidis (1962) 5-79, on the fifth-century *peripoloi* in Athens as foreshadowing the institution of the *ephèbeia*, the state-provided military training for 18- and 19-year-olds described by Aristotle *Athèn. Pol.* 42,2-5.

mobilisations (especially so-called *strateiai en tois epônimois*; see Aristotle *Athên. Pol.* 53) were carried out according to this system of 42 year classes, which were named after 42 heroes.

In Sparta things were not essentially different. Here too the 18- and 19-year-olds underwent military training but did not normally join the army in the field, instead continuing to participate in the collective training of Spartan youth. As an outward sign of this their hair was kept cut short: only at the age of twenty, on formally entering the army, could they adopt the long hairstyle for which Spartan warriors were famous.⁷ Like their Athenian counterparts, Spartan 18- and 19-year-olds could be used to reinforce the army in times of emergency. Perhaps the Spartans were even quicker to commit their youngest troops to battle than the Athenians were. In any case, Thucydides did not comment on their presence in the army in 418 as though it had been something exceptional. Men of this age had been involved in the Spartan actions on and around Sphakteria in 425 (to which I shall come back in section 5 below). As has been said, on paper both the Spartan and the Athenian army contained 42 year classes, as was probably a matter of common knowledge. When on arriving at Orestheion King Agis decided that the situation no longer required the presence of the youngest and oldest troops, he sent them back to Sparta. Later, after news reached Sparta that a great battle was imminent and that its allies from the isthmus and central Greece had not yet joined the army, the home authorities again ordered these troops northward, this time under the command of King Pleistoanax. They arrived at Tegea just after the battle had been won and immediately returned home (75,1). That 'sixth part' of the Spartan army that comprised the youngest and oldest troops must have been made up of the year classes 18, 19 and 55–59, in all seven year classes out of a total of 42.

Next, who were 'all the Lacedaemonians themselves' who advanced as far as Orestheion, where the decision was made to send the 'sixth part' home? The army that crossed the border consisted of these 'Lacedaemonians' and 'the Helots'. The latter were almost certainly the Spartans' personal attendants and baggage-carriers, not

⁷ See David (1992) 13.

fighting troops.⁸ The term *Lakedaimonioi* can refer either to both the Spartans and the Perioikoi, i.e. to all the free inhabitants of the 'State of the Lakedaimonioi', or to the Spartans alone, i.e. to full citizens of that state.⁹ The meaning of the term is thus hardly precise. It appears that the Perioikoi generally provided troops for all major expeditions. In the case of a general mobilisation they probably sent as many men as did the Spartans themselves. This is said to have been the case during the Plataea campaign (Hdt. 9,10,1; 11,3; 28,2), although the numbers stated, 5000 Spartans and as many Perioikoi, need not be accepted at face value. One would expect Perioikic troops to have participated in the expedition to Arcadia in 418 as well, being covered by the term *Lakedaimonioi*. This, however, creates some difficulty. The sixth part of the army that was sent back from Orestheion can

⁸ Cartledge (1979) 253. Andrewes (1970) 79, suggests that it means the force of former Helots (Brasidaeioi and Neodamodeis—for these see further below). I find that rather doubtful, however, since as far as I know these troops are never called simply 'Helots'. The phrase *kai hoi Heilôtes hoi peri autous* (Thuc. 4,8,9), used of the Spartans on Sphacteria, in any case suggests personal attendants, not (liberated) Helot soldiers. According to Van Wees (1995) 176 n. 28, we should see in the Helots of 418 lightly armed Helot troops who had been mobilised *pandêmei* together with the Spartans themselves. This had happened before during the Plataea campaign, in which, as Herodotus repeatedly tells us, seven lightly armed Helots fought around each Spartan hoplite (Hdt. 9,10,1; 28,2; 29,1). To my mind, this is impossible. The sheer numbers (35,000 lightly armed Helots!) make this supposition totally unrealistic on tactical as well as logistical grounds. The fact that Herodotus so emphatically wants us to believe that this many Helots fought as lightly armed troops should not persuade us to accept his figures—nobody accepts his inflated figures for the Persian army either. The suggestion in Hunt (1997) 129 ff., that at Plataea only the front rank of the phalanx consisted of Spartans, with the Helots occupying the seven ranks behind them (ratio 1:7), has little to recommend it. There is no mention of any lightly armed troops at Mantinea in 418, Helot or otherwise. This does not prove that there were none there, but if there were any their military role must have been insignificant. There is no evidence, moreover, apart from Herodotus on Plataea, that the Spartans ever used Helots as lightly armed troops. Although I fail to see what purpose could have been served by a mobilisation of *all* the Helots, many times more numerous than the Spartans themselves, I agree that a full-scale mobilisation of the latter would naturally have entailed a mass call-up of their Helot servants, while the rest of the Helots stayed behind, scattered through their villages and their masters' land holdings in Laconia and Messenia. Even so the Spartans thought it necessary to send the youngest and oldest of their troops back home as soon as possible to guard Sparta itself, presumably against possible unrest amongst these same Helots. (For Herodotus on the numbers of Spartans, Perioikoi and Helots at Plataea see also Singor [1993] 49–51.)

⁹ For the term *Lakedaimonioi* see, among others, Bölte (1929) 1280–3; Hampl (1937) 2–3; 17–19; 23; Toynbee (1969) 159.

only have been the sixth part of the Spartans (*to hekton meros sphôn autôn*: 64,3), in which case the words 'they themselves' must also refer to the Spartans. This raises questions as to the identity of 'the Lacedaemonians themselves' who were all mobilised at the outset.

During Agis' first campaign against Argos his army had also consisted, along with its allied contingents, of 'the Lacedaemonians (...) themselves and the Helots in full mobilisation' (57,1). Nowhere else in Thucydides does this phrase recur. In the case of this first expedition there can be little doubt that the term *Lakedaimonioi* refers to both Spartans and Perioikoi, since the army is described as the strongest and finest to have been assembled in Greece for a long time (60, 2–3) and there seems to have been no reason why the Perioikoi should not have raised their normal levy on this occasion.¹⁰ This might suggest that the term 'the Lacedaemonians themselves' should be understood to refer to both Spartans and Perioikoi in the description of King Agis' second expedition as well. By the time of the second mobilisation, however, the situation had changed. After King Agis had recrossed the Lacedaemonian border on his way back from the walls of Argos his Perioikic troops must have trickled away in small contingents back to their respective home towns, while the Spartans would have marched *en bloc* to Sparta itself.¹¹ When the call for help came in from Tegea the Spartan authorities judged the situation to be so serious that they sent their troops out again 'quickly and in such a manner as had not happened before' (64, 2). The Spartan army reached Tegea even sooner than the allies from southern Arcadia (64,3), while those from further away, such as the Corinthians and the Boeotians, arrived at the scene only a few days later, by which time the battle had already been fought (75,2). Agis' second 'total mobilisation', therefore, may not have been 'total' at all. The Spartans and the Helots, billeted in or around Sparta itself, could be called to arms in a matter of hours, but the various Perioikic troops must have

¹⁰ According to Lazenby (1985) 14–5 and 125, there were *no* Perioikoi in the army of 418 BC because the Spartans would not have taken them along on campaigns against other Peloponnesian states. I can see no evidence that any such rule was followed in the classical period.

¹¹ See, for instance, Agesilaos' army in 370 BC: "When he had arrived in Laconia he brought the Spartans back home and released them there, while he sent the Perioikoi back to their towns." (Xen. *Hell.* 6,5,21.)

needed more time, especially those who, like the Perioikoi from the south of Laconia, had to cover relatively long distances. I would suggest that King Agis, eager to restore his damaged reputation (cf. 63; 65,2), probably did not wait for all the Perioikic troops to join his army before he crossed the border on his way to Orestheion. The words 'all the Lacedaemonians themselves and the Helots' should therefore not be regarded as having included *all* the free men liable for mobilisation in Laconia, Perioikoi as well as Spartans. Instead the phrase may have referred primarily to the fully mobilised Spartans, together with however many Perioikoi had managed hastily to rejoin the army.¹² I suspect, in fact, that Thucydides probably had only the Spartans in mind when he wrote these words. It is therefore my suggestion that all of the Spartan hoplites participated in this campaign together with only some of the Perioikoi, in other words those who had managed to get there in time. The reason for this must clearly have been that the Spartans were hurrying to respond to the emergency.

Further evidence tends to confirm this interpretation: for example, Sparta's willingness to commit to the expedition even those who would normally have been left behind, the oldest and youngest soldiers whom we have already discussed (64,3; 75,1). We are reminded of Thucydides' assertion that the army set out from Sparta 'quickly and in such a manner as had not happened before'.¹³ A mobilisation in which every Spartan citizen aged from 18 to 59 was called to arms and marched north, whereas only some of the Perioikoi seem to have been present, was indeed a remarkable one. This interpretation is borne out, as I hope to show, by Thucydides' description of the army on the battlefield. A mobilisation that included the oldest and the youngest men was abnormal, but not unheard of; it

¹² The fact that the Perioikoi were sometimes slow to mobilise and might leave Laconia a day or more after the Spartans themselves has been noticed by others; see e.g. Bauer (1893) 307; Busolt (1905) 394; Kromayer (1903) 190–1 (according to K. the Perioikoi did not participate in the Mantinea campaign of 418 at all); Lazenby (1985) 16 and 125 (see also above n. 10). Examples are Hdt. 9,10–11 (479); Thuc. 4,8,1 (425); Xen. *Hell.* 3,5,7 (395); 5,1,33 (387).

¹³ Not so, according to Andrewes (1970) 91, commenting upon *oxeia kai hoia oupō proteron*: "the last words only explain *oxeia*: they do not mean that in some other respect too the expedition was unparalleled." I do not agree. Grammatically both interpretations could be accepted, but it seems to me an improbable way of describing the speed of Agis' mobilisation, if that is all that Thucydides wanted to say.

was the absence of the greater part of the Perioikoi that made this nominally full-scale mobilisation truly peculiar.¹⁴

In this connection we should briefly return to the group comprising the youngest and oldest troops. Were the Perioikoi too liable for military service from the age of 18 until they were 60, and if so, should those Perioikoi who were in the relevant age groups be reckoned among the soldiers who did not participate in the battle? There is of course no reason why the Laconian Perioikoi should not have had the same basic rules of mobilisation as the Spartans had. (This must have been the case in 371 BC; cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6,4,17, in which it is stated that men aged up to sixty were called up into the *morai* that included Perioikoi.) We may assume that those Perioikoi who had succeeded in joining Agis' army were drawn, as were the Spartans themselves, from all the 42 year classes available for call-up. As we have seen, however, Thucydides refers to the 18- and 19-year-olds and the men aged 55 to 59 who were sent home from Orestheion as the sixth part *sphôn autôn*, i.e. of the Spartans themselves, rather than of the larger category containing both Spartans and Perioikoi. He appears specifically to be stating that it was only the Spartan troops in these age groups that were sent home, not any Perioikic ones. This could confirm the supposition that only some of the Perioikoi had joined the army, since in this case King Agis may well not have wanted to reduce their numbers any further by sending their oldest and youngest troops home.

A few days later the youngest and oldest Spartan troops were back, under the command of King Pleistoanax (75,1). This is an interesting episode. It is hard to imagine that the ephors back in Sparta would have acquiesced in the continued absence of many Perioikoi two or more days after the departure of the main army under King Agis and sent their own youngest and oldest troops back out to the front under their remaining king with no other troops to reinforce them. In my

¹⁴ One should also bear in mind that Sparta had other military obligations at this time: the coast had to be guarded against raids from Cythera and Pylos and 300 troops had been sent, under Agesippidas, to the aid of Epidaurus (Thuc. 5,56,1). We are not told who these troops (*phrouroi*) were; certainly Spartan citizens must be ruled out, as must allied citizen troops, so they can only have been mercenaries, Neodamodeis or Perioikoi. These last would certainly have been called upon to keep an eye on Messenian and Athenian movements in the coastal areas. This would have reduced further the number of Perioikic troops available for the Mantinea campaign.

view, this second Lacedaemonian force cannot have consisted only of these youngest and oldest Spartans: many of the Perioikic troops who had not been in time to join the main army a few days earlier must by now have shown up. My reason for thinking this is that this second force set out under the command of King Pleistoanax. It would have been very peculiar to put a king in charge of a force consisting only of the remaining Spartan citizens, since this contingent must have been very small and was to rejoin an army that already had a king as its commander. We are not told who led this small force home from Orestheion to Sparta, but it cannot have been King Pleistoanax, or, presumably, any of the polemarchs. Expeditionary forces made up of both Spartan and Perioikic troops, on the other hand, seem always to have been led by a king, a regent or one of the polemarchs.

As a rule classical Sparta's army was never jointly commanded by both kings when outside its borders; normally one of the kings stayed at home while the other took the field (see Hdt. 5,75). The fact that these reinforcements marched under Pleistoanax is therefore difficult to explain in any case. If his force consisted of the remaining Perioikoi as well as the oldest and youngest Spartans, however, it may have been of considerable strength, which may explain why a royal commander was thought appropriate. The question of who would have taken supreme command had Pleistoanax ever joined forces with Agis cannot be answered, but I would guess that Pleistoanax was probably supposed to hand over his troops and go back to Sparta at once. As it happened he never reached Agis, but went home from Tegea after hearing the news of the victory. We must remember that Agis had sent his oldest and youngest troops home from Orestheion as soon as he heard that his Arcadian allies were heading for Tegea, the allies from further north not yet having arrived. A little later on Pleistoanax must surely have learned that the Arcadian allies had joined Agis' army, but left anyway with whatever troops were at his disposal because he thought that battle was imminent. If the assistance of the reserve Spartan troops alone could have been thought necessary in any major confrontation with the enemy before the arrival of the allies from Corinth and Boeotia, it is strange that Agis should have sent them back from Orestheion in the first place. If, however, the contingent under Pleistoanax consisted not only of these troops but also of a considerable number of Perioikoi who had not been in time to join Agis' hastily assembled expedition, everything becomes clear. If I am

right only some of the Perioikic troops called up at the outset of the conflict can have been present at the battle itself, since Pleistoanax' detachment did not arrive in time to join in.

Thucydides' description of these events never mentions the Perioikoi as such. His account of Agis' departure with the main army centres on the Spartans themselves, leaving his readers more or less in the dark as to the role of the Perioikoi in the mobilisation of 'all the Lacedaemonians' (64,2). He tells us that Pleistoanax arrived in Arcadia accompanied by the youngest and oldest Spartan soldiers, but passes over in silence any Perioikic troops that may also have been in this second force. Thucydides' attitude is not difficult to understand. When people referred to the state of the *Lakedaimonioi* they always had in mind the Spartans, the masters of that state, and the Athenian historian was no exception. Since he calls the second full-scale mobilisation of 418 BC unprecedented (*oxeia kai hoia oupô proteron*: 64,2) he must have known that there was something very unusual about it. We cannot know precisely what it was that suggested these words to him, but it is my belief, as I have argued above, that it had to do with Agis' rushed departure and the incomplete detachment of Perioikic troops that consequently accompanied him. The phrase might also have been inspired by the second expeditionary force that brought up the Spartan reserves and the rest of the Perioikoi under Pleistoanax. This great mobilisation was unprecedented also in that it occurred in two phases, so that at one point two Spartan kings were leading armies in the field at the same time.

3. *Deployment and overall numbers of the armies at Mantinea*

In Tegea King Agis joined up with his allies from southern Arcadia. Word had also been sent to the allies further north, but Agis did not wait for their arrival. Clearly eager for battle, he invaded the territory of Mantinea (64,3–4). Battle would have been joined immediately had not the king, who wanted to attack the enemy while they had the clear advantage of being drawn up on the slope of a hill, been held back by 'one of the elders' in his army (65,2). This may be a reference to one of his ten new 'advisers' (63,4). The whole army withdrew at the last minute. The next day the Spartans re-entered Mantinean territory to find that their enemies had descended onto the plain and were ready for them in battle formation (66,1). The Spartans had to fall out of

marching order and draw up battle lines in a hurry. Thucydides makes clear his admiration of their *sang-froid* on this occasion and explains that their efficiency in manoeuvres of this sort is a result of the chain of command leading from the king to the individual soldier (66,3–4):

For when a king is in command everything is regulated by him. He personally gives his orders to the polemarchoi; they in turn instruct the lochagoi, who pass on the orders to the pentèkontères; they again give the word to the enômotarchoi, each of whom finally instructs the men in his enômotia. Likewise, if they want to pass an order, it goes by the same route and quickly reaches its destination. For nearly the whole army of the Lacedaimonians, except for a small part, consists of officers commanding officers, so that the responsibility for what is done falls to many men.

Thucydides' admiration leads him into a certain amount of obvious exaggeration, since the officers cannot possibly have outnumbered the common soldiers. By comparison with the amateurish militias of other Greek states, however, the Spartan army clearly had a sophisticated command structure. The *polemarchoi* who figure in this description as the highest-ranking officers beneath the commander-in-chief are probably identical with the *en telei xystrateuomenoi* mentioned in the description of Agis' first campaign of that year (60,1). They do not seem to have been in regular command of troops, as were the other officers mentioned in this passage. Instead, the Spartan polemarchs served as the army's general staff; it fell to them to command divisions of Perioikoi or mixed formations of Spartans and Perioikoi whenever the need arose. As we shall see, the Perioikic troops that participated in the battle of Mantinea were led by at least two polemarchs. The remaining polemarchs (there were six polemarchs during the fourth century, but we do not know how many there were in 418 BC) may have commanded the contingents consisting respectively of former Helots and of Skiritai (see below) or may have remained in the vicinity of the king. It was they who had to see to it, presumably before the army drew up into battle formation, that the king's orders reached the regimental commanders, the *lochagoi*. The Spartan army was divided into a number of *lochoi* of equal size and identical organisation. Thucydides later explains that each *lochos* was further divided into four *pentèkostyes* and each *pentèkostys* into four *enômotiai* (68,3). Unlike the polemarchs, the other officers were all the regular commanders of their own units. All these officers

undoubtedly took up their position in the front rank on the battlefield, as was normal for the commanders and officers of all Greek armies. The Spartan kings, however, probably did not fight in the front rank, but were protected by one or two rows of the elite corps of Hippeis, or perhaps by some specially selected Spartans.¹⁵ Since, according to Thucydides, the first rank of each of the sixteen *enômotiai* consisted of four men (68,3), each *lochos* had 64 men in its front line. Of these one was the *lochagos*, four were *pentèkontères* and sixteen were *enômotarchoi*. This makes 21 officers, or one out of three men. We do not know whether they were marked out as such by, for instance, especially decorative or high-crested helmets such as officers elsewhere seem to have worn; perhaps the famous Spartan austerity and egalitarianism argue against this.¹⁶

Thucydides goes on to describe the battle order in which Agis' army was so quickly and efficiently drawn up (67,1):

On the left wing the Skiritai took up their position, who alone of the Lakedaemonioi always hold that place in the line. Next came the Brasideioi who had returned from Thrace and with them Neodamodeis. Then the Lakedaemonians themselves positioned their lochoi on a line. They were flanked by the Arcadians from Heraia and those from Mainalia. On the right wing came the men from Tegea, while a few of the Lakedaemonians held the very end. Their cavalry was stationed on both wings.

This is a most important passage, albeit full of problems with regard to the 'Lakedaemonians themselves'. The Skiritai inhabited the northernmost region of Laconia, which bordered on Arcadia. We learn a little later that they were 600 strong (68,3). Thucydides seems to be suggesting that they always numbered 600 and that they always fought on the left wing. Clearly the Skiritai enjoyed some particular

¹⁵ Xenophon does not say that the Hippeis were at Leuctra in 371 BC, referring to the men around the king only as *to peri ton basilea* and *hoi peri ton Kleombroton* (Hell. 6,4,12–13). Elsewhere a Spartan king on the battlefield is said to have had some sort of bodyguard consisting of 'the noblest' of the Spartans (*andrôn te agathôn kai schedon epiphanestatôn*) fighting in front of him (*machomenoi pro autou*): Hell. 7,4,23–24; cf. Isocr. Ep. 2,6: *endoxotatoi tôn politôn*. According to Plut. Lyc. 22,4 a victor in one of the great games had the honour of fighting in front of the king. Possibly all these special places of honour date from a period when the Hippeis as an army corps had disappeared, perhaps at some time in the early fourth century.

¹⁶ For this official equality, at least in such matters as food and clothes, see Hodkinson (1983) 243.

status. As Arcadians who formed part of the state of the *Lakedaimonioi* they must formally have been regarded as Perioikoi (in 370 BC they became independent of Sparta: Xen. *Hell.* 7,4,21). It is unsurprising that they should have been present at Mantinea given how close their home was to the army's route from Sparta to Tegea. They were organised as an ethnic group, unlike the Perioikoi proper, who, like the Spartans themselves, were assembled into *lochoi* without regard to their communities of origin. The Skiritai seem to have acted as a vanguard when the army was on the march. Perhaps they fought more in the manner of lightly armed troops than of hoplites, although Thucydides does not say so. It is possible that their appearance differed from that of the other Lacedaemonian hoplites (conceivably they did not have the *lambda* of *Lakedaimôn* on their shields) and that this is one more reason why Thucydides sets them so clearly apart from the Lacedaemonian *lochoi* next to them (68,3).¹⁷

The *Brasidaeioi* were the remnants of Brasidas' corps of 700 Helots, sent to Thrace as hoplites in 424 BC (Thuc. 4,80,5). On their return they were freed and settled, with other liberated Helots or *Neodamodeis*, in an area of Lepreon close to its border with Elis (Thuc. 5,34,1). The 'Men of Brasidas' always stood out amongst the other Neodamodeis as a special corps. Lepreon's entire garrison of former Helot troops numbered some 1000 men (Thuc. 5,49,1).¹⁸ Since Agis' army at Mantinea consisted of *lochoi* containing roughly 500 men apiece (as Thucydides discloses further on: 68,3), it is natural to conclude that the *Brasidaeioi* and *Neodamodeis* together made up two of its *lochoi*. These troops had also participated in Agis' first expedition of 418 BC, which had ended in a truce (57,1). After the return of the army to Sparta there had been much discontent and we may assume that it was thought that war would break out again soon. Unlike the Perioikoi, who were not professional soldiers and therefore returned to their homes, these former Helots became a standing force

¹⁷ For the Skiritai cf. Anderson (1970) 249–251; Andrewes (1970) 103–104.

¹⁸ This follows from the sum of two thousand *mnai*, two *mnai* for every hoplite, that was imposed on Sparta as a fine for breaking the Olympic truce by bringing these hoplites to Lepreon (Thuc. 5,49,1); this had already been established by Kromayer (1903) 190 ff.; *idem* (1926) 213; *idem* (1928) 34 n. 3—pace Cozzoli (1979) 80 n. 1, who implausibly dates the garrison of a thousand hoplites in Lepreon to 424 BC. In this case it could not have consisted of the men of Brasidas, who returned to Sparta only in 421 BC.

that was presumably not sent back to Lepreon immediately after Agis had concluded his truce. This would explain their presence in his army on this occasion, after war had broken out anew.

Next to the former Helots came the *lochoi* containing 'the Lacedaemonians themselves'. The number and identity of the latter are the crux of the whole question of how Sparta's army was organised in the classical age. I shall return to them in more detail below (section 4). Next to these *lochoi*, though Thucydides does not mention them until later (72,4), was the elite corps made up of three hundred Spartan knights or Hippeis who fought close to the king. This should be counted as a separate corps to the right of the *lochoi*, since the king would have taken his position on the right flank of his troops.¹⁹ Still further to the right were stationed two contingents of Arcadian allies, one from Heraion and the other from Mainalia. We are not told how large these contingents were, nor anything about how they were organised (nor indeed are we told how any other detachment was organised, with the exception of the opposing Argive force). These two allies, whose combined territory made up most of western Arcadia, are likely on this occasion to have sent their normal levy of two thirds of their hoplites. It therefore seems plausible to suppose that each contingent contained about 1000 men, or perhaps a few more than that. The Tegeates, on the other hand, must have been more numerous, having mobilised *pandèmei* because the battle was so

¹⁹ It has been suggested, e.g. by Lazenby (1985) 130, 133, that King Agis and the 300 Hippeis were stationed "in the middle" of the Lacedaemonian army, in other words at the centre of six *morai*. The Lacedaemonian army at Mantinea was not, however, divided into *morai* but into five *lochoi*, as I hope to make clear. Thucydides' phrase "the rest of the army and foremost its centre where King Agis was with the 300 so-called Hippeis..." (72,4) clearly means the whole of the army (*stratopedon*) under Agis' command, not just his Lacedaemonian troops. In that army's battle line Agis and his elite corps were indeed 'in the middle', with more than 4000 troops to their left and 5000 to their right (see below). This would have been the natural position for a Spartan king to take. When on the march Agis would have travelled with his 300 Hippeis at the head of the column of five Spartan *lochoi*, possibly preceded only by the Skiritai and perhaps by the *lochoi* of Brasideioi and Neodamodeis. When the orders to take up battle formation were given the Skiritai moved as far to the left as was feasible, followed by the regiments of former Helots, while Agis and his Hippeis halted; from their rear came the Spartan regiments, one after another, to take their places to the left of the king and his 'knights'; at the same time the contingents of Arcadian allies, including the Tegeates and 'a few of the Lacedaemonians', came up beside Agis and his Hippeis to position themselves to the right of the king.

close to their own territory (cf. Thuc. 5,57,2; 67,2 on the troops from *Phleious panstratii*). In 479 1500 Tegeate hoplites had fought at Plataea (Hdt. 9,28). The Tegeates in Agis' army at Mantinea would have numbered 2000 at least, or perhaps 2500. They were flanked to the right by *Lakedaimoniôn oligoi*, or 'a few of the Lacedaemonians', cryptic words that have given rise to much speculation and controversy. We shall deal with these in section 4; in connection with the *lochoi* made up of 'the Lacedaemonians themselves'.²⁰

While King Agis was rapidly deploying his troops the army of the enemy alliance stood waiting. The right wing of that army, opposite the Skiritai and the former Helots, consisted of the Mantineans who were defending their own territory. Since Mantinea must have called up every man it had, these must have numbered between 2000 and 2500 hoplites (roughly the same number as their rivals from Tegea had mustered). They were joined towards the centre by their Arcadian allies, probably from northern Mainalia and presumably not many more than 500 strong, since the rest of the Mainalioi had remained loyal to Sparta.²¹ Next came an elite corps of 1000 Argives, followed by the other Argive hoplites. The latter are described later (72,4) as having been older and organised into five *lochoi* (*tois presbyterois kai pentelochois ônomasmenois*). The 1000 *logades*, then, must have been those younger troops who, as Thucydides informs us, were trained as a standing force at public expense (67,2). The size of the main Argive army is not stated, but we cannot go far wrong if we assume that each of these Argive *lochoi*, when fully mobilised, was of roughly the same size as the corps of *logades*. This would mean that on paper the regular Argive army numbered 5000 men. Since this campaign was taking place at some distance from their home, it is improbable that the Argives were at full strength; 600 or 700 men per *lochos* (two thirds of their potential strength) seems to me to be a reasonable guess. All in all some 4000 to 4500 Argive troops would then have

²⁰ Diodorus (probably following Ephorus) assesses the strength of all Sparta's allies put together at 3000 hoplites (Diod. 12,18,4), but that figure is certainly too low; the Tegeates alone would have provided 2000 to 2500 men, roughly as many as the Mantineans, whose strength is probably overestimated by Diodorus (12,78,4) at 3000 hoplites.

²¹ For these Arcadian allies of Mantinea, who cannot have been very numerous, see Andrewes (1970) 104. The estimates of the populations of the various parts of Arcadia in Beloch (1886) 123–129, are still valuable.

fought at Mantinea, a number that is not implausible considering Argos' reputation as one of the most populous states in Greece.²² Further to the left came Argos' allies from Kleonai and Orneai. Again, their numbers are not given, but there cannot have been many of them; perhaps they totalled between 500 and 1000 altogether. The left wing, finally, consisted of the Athenian expeditionary force of 1000 hoplites and 300 cavalry that had arrived in Argos under the *stratègoi* Laches and Nikostratos only a short time before (61,1). The Athenian cavalry was stationed next to the hoplites on the extreme left wing opposite the 'few of the Lakedaimonioi' already mentioned. No other cavalry is said to have formed part of the allied army. During the battle the Athenian cavalry was useful in covering the Athenians' retreat before the Lacedaemonians and Tegeates, on the right wing, who were threatening to encircle them (73,1). Typically, we hear nothing of any action by the Peloponnesian cavalry stationed on both wings of Agis' army. Lightly armed troops are not mentioned at all.²³

The army that faced Agis at Mantinea, then, numbered between 8500 and 10000 hoplites. Thucydides goes on to inform us that the Spartan army seemed bigger (68,1; later he says that it actually was the bigger one: 71,2). This should mean that Agis' forces at least equalled those of the enemy and probably slightly surpassed them in numbers. We must now turn to his Lacedaemonian troops.

4. *'The Lacedaemonians themselves ...and a few of the Lacedaemonians'*

As we have seen, the Lacedaemonian *lochoi* were stationed next to those of the Brasideioi and the Neodamodeis. Thucydides tells us

²² For Argos' reputation cf. Isocr. *Panegy.* 64; Lysias 34,7; also Beloch (1886) 116–117. For the battle of Nemea in 494 BC Argos had mobilised about 7000 hoplites (*Hell.* 4,2,17); these almost certainly included contingents from Kleonai and Orneai (as at Mantinea in 418 BC: Thuc. 5,67,2; 74,3), which cannot have been anything other than very small (Xenophon does not mention them), since the call-up of the Argives themselves must have taken practically their entire hoplite force (for purposes of comparison, the Athenians had sent 6000 hoplites).

²³ In Thucydides' view the battle was fought and won by hoplites. He was undoubtedly selective and biased in his description (e. g. as regards the Perioikoi, as we have seen above), but I am not convinced by Van Wees' argument that lightly armed troops played an important role at Mantinea as in other classical battles: Van Wees (1995) 162–165; see also above n. 8.

(68,3) that the Lacedaemonian army consisted of 'seven lochoi, apart from the 600 Skiritai'. He goes on to explain the command structure of the *lochos* and to calculate the number of soldiers in each of these units (*ibid.*). From what he says it would appear that each of the *lochoi* in Agis' army at Mantinea consisted of some 500 men (see further below). The 'seven lochoi', together with the 'few Lacedaemonians' at the far end of the right wing, have inspired modern scholars to various reconstructions. Several related questions have caused problems here. If there were indeed seven of these *lochoi* and these included the former Helot troops, how many of the *lochoi* were Spartan and/or Perioikic? Did Spartans and Perioikoi fight side by side in the same regiments as they did in the army of *morai* of which Xenophon wrote, or were they still in separate regiments as they were at Plataea in 479 BC? If the *lochoi* of 418 were all-Spartan there cannot have been many Perioikoi at Mantinea, but if they contained both Spartans and Perioikoi the total numbers involved (fewer than seven *lochoi* of about 500 men each) seem absurdly low. If, however, we assume that Thucydides somehow made the mistake of terming *lochoi* what were in fact mixed Spartan-Perioikic *morai* like those of the fourth century (each of which comprised two *lochoi*) we can duplicate his numbers, with the result that at least some problems may disappear, or so the reasoning goes. Since Xenophon's *Hellènika* and the *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia* attributed to him are relatively informative about the *mora*, many scholars have been tempted to superimpose the *mora* organisation upon Thucydides' description of the army during the Mantinea campaign. We are asked to believe that Thucydides called *morai lochoi* because he wanted to avoid using so technical a term as *mora*, or that he simply forgot or did not know that every *lochos* of Spartans was combined with one of Perioikoi to form a *mora*.²⁴ The latter inevitably implies that he was not merely vague

²⁴ In the *Hellènika* a *mora* seems to be made up of two *lochoi* (at least, the army consisted of six *morai*—*Hell.* 6,1,11; 4,17—while later it is also implied that it was made up of 12 *lochoi*: *Hell.* 7,4,20; 5,10). The *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia*, however, says that four *lochoi* make one *mora* (11,4; cf. 13,4). This inconsistency is often resolved by assuming a simple corruption of the text of the *Lak. Pol.* in which *duo* ('two') was read by some copyist as *d'* ('four')—see, among others, Lazenby (1985) 7. I do not wish to enter into this controversy here because I believe that the *mora* system was introduced after 418 BC. The way in which the Spartan army was organised at Mantinea in that year can be explained very well without any help from Xenophon's

but actively mistaken about the 'real' organisation of the Lacedaemonian army. Some have interpreted his 'seven lochoi' as including one made up of former Helots and six made up of Lacedaemonians, the latter six being 'in reality' the six *morai* described by Xenophon. In the 'few Lacedaemonians' on the right wing scholars have variously seen two *morai* at the end of a line of seven 'lochoi'—in which case Thucydides is again guilty of misrepresentation—or two relatively insignificant groups at the far end of the right wing, detached from the main corps at the centre of the army.²⁵

To my mind all such interpretations are seriously flawed for two reasons. First, it is inadmissible to assume that Thucydides is mistaken when he goes out of his way to explain the organisation and the numbers of the Spartan army of his own time. We should accept his description, unless it can be *proven* wrong. Second, it is methodically unsound to read the later evidence obtained from Xenophon back into the work of Thucydides. Thucydides never even mentions *morai*; these are first mentioned by Xenophon in relation to the year 403 BC (*Hell.* 2,4,31). Herodotus was aware of the *lochos* as the basic unit of the Spartan army (Hdt. 9,53,2) and suggested that the Spartans and the Perioikoi fought separately (9,28,2; 29,1–2). It is my conviction that we can explain Thucydides' passages on the Spartan

morai. Many modern historians have, however, interpreted Thucydides' account of the army in 418 BC in terms of the *mora* system. Thucydides' seven *lochoi* should thus be understood as one regiment of former Helots and six *morai* according to Anderson (1970) 235; Andrewes (1970) 117 (with some caution); Bauer (1893) 314; Beloch (1886) 140; *idem* (1906) 63; Cartledge (1979) 254–257; *idem* (1987) 429–430; Cavaignac (1912) 268; Chrimes (1949) 384; Figueira (1986) 179, 187–188; Forrest (1968) 131–137; Jones (1967) 62; Lazenby (1985) 641–42, 128; De Ste. Croix (1972) 331; Woodhouse (1933) 139–140; Toynbee (1912) 269–271; *idem* (1969) 398.

²⁵ See the literature listed in note 24. Not all of the scholars mentioned argue that exactly one Spartan and one Perioikic *lochos* were combined to constitute one *mora*. This idea was pushed particularly hard by Toynbee, *op. cit.* The two *lochoi* at the far end of the right wing have often been interpreted as the two *lochoi*, or, in correction of Thucydides, the two *morai*, at the end of the line of seven regiments, and therefore as having been roughly in the centre of Agis' battle line and not on its right wing; see e.g. Andrewes (1970) 119; Cozzoli (1979) 74–75; Lazenby (1985) 43, 130; Woodhouse (1933) 94–99. Others see in these two *lochoi* led by polemarchs units smaller than the seven *lochoi* and place them on the extreme right wing; e.g. Anderson (1970) 232; Chrimes (1949) 384; according to Toynbee (1969) 398 and Figueira (1986) 188–191, two complete *morai* were stationed at the far right-hand end of the battle line.

army of 418 BC quite well, with the help of some other evidence from Thucydides himself and some from Herodotus, without dragging in the way in which the army was organised during a later period.

After describing the battle formations of both armies, Thucydides proceeds in a famous passage to calculate the numbers in the Spartan army (68,3):

For there were seven *lochoi* fighting in the battle, apart from the 600 *Skiritai*, and in each *lochos* there were four *pentèkostyes*, and in the *pentèkostys* there were four *enômotiai*. The *enômotia* had four men fighting in the front rank. They were not stationed all at the same depth but as each *lochagos* saw fit; on the whole, however, they were drawn up in files of eight. Except for the *Skiritai*, then, the first rank of the whole (Lacedaemonian) army numbered 448 men.

Drawn up eight men deep, an *enômotia* of four files would have numbered 32 men, a *pentèkostys* 128 and a *lochos* 512 men at most; let us say roughly 500 men. Thucydides stresses the uniformity of these seven *lochoi* 'apart from the 600 *Skiritai*'. An eyewitness on the battlefield would have been struck by this immediately, since all along the advancing line the ominous *lambdai* of *Lakedaimôn* must have shone forth from the shields as soon as these were raised. The purple dress that was uniformly worn may also have set these troops apart from the others. Xenophon described the front rank of Agesilaos' troops as they advanced across the battlefield at Coronea (394 BC) as one solid mass of bronze and purple (*Ages.* 2,7). Together the seven Lacedaemonian regiments (among them the troops of the *Brasidaeioi* and *Neodamodeis*) numbered some 3500 soldiers. As I have said, it is the relatively small number of 'real' (i.e. Spartan or Perioikic) Lacedaemonian troops implied by this, given the fact that the Lacedaemonians had mobilised *pandèmei*, that has inspired scholars to suggest that Thucydides must have been mistaken. Their assumption is, however, unwarranted.

When he speaks of the seven *lochoi* drawn up next to the regiment of *Skiritai*, Thucydides has the former Helots and the Spartans themselves in mind. The *Brasidaeioi* and *Neodamodeis* together numbered some 1000 men, as he indicated earlier on (5,49,1). This can only mean that there were *two lochoi* of them, one consisting of *Brasidas'* veterans and the other of newly liberated *Neodamodeis*. The latter division, a recent extension to the army, would probably have aimed at the 'standard' *lochos* size of about 500 men. In his

description of the battle Thucydides distinguishes between the Brasideioi and the Neodamodeis as between two separate bodies of troops (71,3; 72,3). This leaves us with *five lochoi* to contain *the Lacedaemonians themselves*. In all they must therefore have numbered some 2500. To that number should be added the 300 Hippeis mentioned later in the description of the fighting (72,4). These are clearly not included amongst the 448 men who were in the front rank of all the seven *lochoi* combined, since in that calculation Thucydides was totting up the numbers in the Spartan army on the basis of the standard organisation of the *lochos*, the army's basic unit. That Sparta also had an elite corps of 300 'knights' was probably a matter of fairly common knowledge; in any case Herodotus already knew about them (Hdt. 1,67; 8,124). A total of 2800 men does seem impossibly small if it is supposed to have been the result of a full mobilisation of both Spartan and Perioikic troops, but it is not at all implausible if it relates only to the number of Spartans eligible for call-up. We should assume that in his description of the way in which the *lochos* was organised and in his calculation of the number of soldiers involved Thucydides was trying to assess the purely Spartan part of the army without taking into account any Perioikoi who might have mingled with it, just as he did not bother to mention them in describing the army's mobilisation. His famous phrase about the Spartan state's secretiveness in such matters (68,2) seems at least on the face of it to confirm this. In my view we have to view the five *lochoi* flanking the two regiments of former Helots as having indeed consisted of purely Spartan troops.

Not all of the Perioikoi who were liable for hoplite service were present on this occasion, as has already been suggested (section 1). Those who were did not form part of the line of seven *lochoi*, but were elsewhere on the battlefield, for we should identify the 'few of the Lacedaemonians' at the far end of the right wing with those Perioikoi who had managed to join Agis' forces on his hasty march northward. Various arguments support this identification. When the armies were advancing on each other the natural movement to the right to which, according to Thucydides (71,1), hoplite armies always tended at such moments caused the right wing of Agis' army to extend far out beyond the enemy's left flank, while his left wing was in danger of being outflanked by the opposition's right. To counter this, the Spartan king ordered the Skiritai and the Brasideioi to move to the

left. At the same time he commanded two *lochoi* on the right wing, under the polemarchs Hipponoidas and Aristokles, to move in and fill the gap that had opened up between the Brasidaeioi and the other *lochos* of Neodamodeis after the former had moved, together with the Skiritai, so far to the left that they were left confronting the Mantinean troops on the opposition's right wing (71,2-3). The polemarchs considered the king's order tactical madness and flatly refused to obey (for which they were later punished with exile; 72,1), so that Agis' army entered the battle with a dangerously wide gap in its left wing. The question for us is, of course, which two *lochoi* were these? The answer should be that they were the ones containing those Perioikoi who had managed to join up with Agis. These *lochoi* (each, as has been said, under a Spartan polemarch) would have been of more or less the same size as the regular Spartan and former Helot *lochoi* whose organisation Thucydides describes in detail—'more or less' because it is not strictly necessary, or indeed credible, to assume that exactly the right number of Perioikoi had arrived to make up two *lochoi* of 500 men apiece on the battlefield. Let us assume, however, that there were about 1000 of them.²⁶

That they are called 'a few' (*oligoi*) should not deter us given the way in which the same term is used elsewhere, likewise in a Lacedaemonian military context. In his description of the Greek position at Thermopylae in 480 BC Diodorus informs us that Leonidas stayed on to await the enemy 'with the citizens' (i.e. 300 Spartans) and, 'there being few Lacedaemonians' (*oligôn d'ontôn tôn Lakēdaimoniôn*), with the Thespians as well (Diod. 11,9,2). Now according to the same text (11,4,5) there were in fact 1000 of these 'few

²⁶ In fact, we know next to nothing about the way in which the Perioikic troops were grouped into various units. I presume that their *enômotiai*, *pentèkostyes* and *lochoi* were organised either in Sparta when the Perioikoi arrived there from their various townships or en route from Sparta to the border. Perhaps complete *pentèkostyes* were mobilised in some of the bigger Perioikic towns, such as Geronthrai, but that too is a guess. While the purely Spartan *enômotiai* were 'organic' institutions made up of three *syssitia* apiece (on this see further below), those of the Perioikoi must have been more or less 'artificial', that is made up ad hoc out of the men who had responded to the call to arms (just like the *enômotiai* in the mercenary army of the Ten Thousand).

Lacedaemonians', who should be interpreted as Perioikoi.²⁷ Clearly *oligoi* could mean something other than just 'a handful'. The term could, in fact, be used relatively: when a number fell distinctly short of what could have been expected, that number, regardless of its absolute size, could be described using the term *oligoi*, 'a few'. Thus Thucydides called the 1000 or so Perioikoi at Mantinea 'a few' because a full complement of Perioikoi would have numbered at least 2800, equalling the Spartans' numbers. Under normal circumstances all the available Perioikoi would have been at Mantinea, but as a result of Agis' hurried departure only about 1000 of them were actually there. They are therefore called 'a few'.

There are other reasons why we should identify the two *lochoi* under the polemarchs Aristokles and Hipponoidas with the *Lakedaimoniôn oligoi* at the far end of the right wing. It would have made no sense for Agis to try to fill up the gap in the left wing of his army by ordering two of his Spartan *lochoi* (the two furthest to the right in the line of seven *lochoi* mentioned in 68,3) to leave their place in the line and move to the left, since that in turn would have left a gap in the middle of the army. Troops from far out on the right wing were the only possible choice, as Thucydides himself makes clear when he says that Agis thought that even after this manoeuvre had been carried out his right wing would still project beyond the enemy lines (71,3). Since the 'few Lacedaemonians' were on the extreme right of his forces, the two *lochoi* under the polemarchs can only have consisted of these troops.

Finally, the fact that these *lochoi* were commanded by Spartan polemarchs points to Perioikic troops. In speaking of the command structure of the Spartan army Thucydides, as we have seen, mentions the polemarchs immediately after the king (66,3). His description of the army's battle formation (68,3), however, passes over the polemarchs in silence, while the *lochagoi* are said to have decided the essential question of how deep the files should be. A *lochagos*, we can infer, supervised his 64 files and had the authority to move men from one file to another so as to ensure an overall depth of, in this case,

²⁷ I follow the interpretation of Hammond (1996) 8. It does not matter whether or not Diodorus was correct in his description here; the point is that '1000' Lacedaemonians could be referred to as *oligoi*.

'generally eight men'. In other words, for all practical purposes the *lochoi* operated under the command of their *lochagoi* and the polemarchs did not get involved. These high-ranking officers constituted the king's entourage, conveying his orders to the lower-ranking officers (before, we have to assume, the army drew up into battle formation) and fighting, when battle was eventually joined, either around the king or (as would normally have been the case) at the head of the regiments of Perioikic troops. We cannot be sure of how these Perioikic *lochoi* were organised. There can, however, be little doubt that the hierarchy within these units—*enômotiai*, *pentèkostyes*, *lochoi*—was similar to that of the Spartan ones. About their officers we know almost nothing. The Perioikoi, however, were not professional soldiers as the Spartans were and theirs was not a standing army. In fact, the Perioikic units, which consisted of men from various communities, were almost certainly put together ad hoc (cf. above, n. 26). I suspect, therefore, that the officers of the Perioikic *enômotiai* and *pentèkostyes* were also appointed only for the duration of a campaign. Whether they would have been Spartans or Perioikoi we cannot tell, but I think it probable that these lower officers who had to accept orders from the commanders of the Perioikic *lochoi* were Perioikoi themselves rather than members of the Spartan upper class. The commanders of these *lochoi*, however, were undoubtedly Spartan, since *lochoi* were the army's basic divisions and could well operate independently. Likewise, in the fourth century the larger units of mercenaries in Sparta's service would be led by Spartan *xenagoi*. The commanders of the Perioikic *lochoi*, however, were no *lochagoi*. These posts fell naturally to the polemarchs, who led these troops of Lacedaemonian citizens as, in a sense, the representatives of the Lacedaemonian kings. At Mantinea in 418 BC, then, King Agis divided his Perioikoi into two *lochoi* that he placed under the command of two of his polemarchs. We have now completed our reconstruction of the Spartan army's battle formation on this occasion and can summarise the results as follows.

From left to right, the army consisted of: the Skiritai, 600 strong; two *lochoi* of former Helots, one of Brasideioi and one of Neodamodeis, each containing about 500 men; five *lochoi* of Spartans, at full strength and thus containing some 2500 men altogether; the Spartan elite corps of 300 Hippeis; the Arcadian allies from Heraia and Mainalia, probably some 2000 men in all; the army

of Tegea at its full strength of about 2500 men; finally, two Perioikic *lochoi* of about 500 men each. The total strength of the army was about 9500 to 9900 hoplites. They were facing an enemy coalition of between 8500 and 10000 men, probably about 9000, since the Spartan army is said to have seemed or really been the bigger one.

5. *The five lochoi of classical Sparta*

From our reconstruction two main features stand out. First, the Spartans and the Perioikoi fought in separate units and indeed at Mantinea even some distance away from each other; second, the Spartans themselves were organised into five *lochoi*. Both of these observations are at odds with Xenophon's later account of an army based on *morai*, but are corroborated by other evidence concerning the Spartan army of the fifth century BC, starting with Herodotus' remarks about the army of 479 BC. Spartans and Perioikoi may have fought shoulder to shoulder in the same regiments in Xenophon's day, but they clearly did not do so in 479 BC, since Herodotus tells us that at the battle of Plataea they fought in separate divisions (9,10,1; 28,2; 29,1–2).²⁸ At this time these divisions were also called *lochoi*, as we learn from the same source (9,53,2). Herodotus says that the Spartans were fully mobilised for the campaign of 479 BC and that they numbered 5000 men, the same number as their Perioikoi mustered (9,10,1; 28,2). It would be unwise, I think, to take this figure of 5000 Spartans at face value. Herodotus had visited Sparta himself and while he was there must surely have asked how many Spartans had participated in the great battle against the Persians. Since Spartans did not like this sort of question, the answer was, I imagine, simply 'All'. From this Herodotus concluded that the Spartan *lochoi* must have been mobilised to the last man and that each *lochos* was therefore a thousand strong, since that number was an ideal summum. The real value of Herodotus' 5000 to us lies in its implication that the Spartan

²⁸ Cawkwell (1983) 387, has suggested that at Plataea the Perioikoi might have been to the rear of the ranks, behind the Spartans but in the same regiments. This is pure conjecture based on the fact that no losses amongst the Perioikoi are mentioned. To my mind the very fact that the Spartans and the Perioikoi departed separately from Laconia implies the existence of separate *lochoi*. Hunt (above n. 8) suggests equally implausibly that the Helots made up the Spartans' rear ranks.

army was made up of five *lochoi* in 479, a structure that was still in place in 418.

Evidence from yet another source confirms that there were indeed five. Hesychios (s.v. *lochos*) tells us, "Aristophanes says that the Spartan army consisted of four *lochoi*, but there were actually five of them, as Aristotle says." The *scholion* in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 452–4 explains, "There are not four *lochoi* in the Spartan army but five and they are called Edolos, Sinis, Arimas, Ploas and Messoages. Thucydides, however, says that there are seven *lochoi*, except for the Skiritai." The scholiast of Thucydides 4,8,9 gives roughly the same names, declaring that the five Spartan *lochoi* in Sparta were called Aidolios, Sinis, Sarinas, Ploas and Mesoates. Aristophanes' scholiast clearly knew his Thucydides, but had read him inattentively, since he included the former Helot regiments among the total of Spartan *lochoi*. Hesychios' remark about the 'four *lochoi*' supposedly mentioned by Aristophanes is equally inaccurate, but at least he knew from Aristotle that their real number was five. Aristotle (fr. 541 Rose) was probably the two scholiasts' source as well. His statement that the Spartan army consisted of five *lochoi* was probably made in his lost *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia* and must have referred to the fifth century, since during the fourth century the Spartan army was organised in *morai*. He also knew that the five *lochoi*, as regiments of what was more or less a standing army, had their own proper names.²⁹ Since we cannot know for sure which period he was referring to, however, it could in theory be assumed that it was the time of Plataea. In that case his evidence would not necessarily corroborate our reconstruction of the army in 418 BC. I do not find this suggestion plausible, since Thucydides reveals that not long before the battle of Mantinea the Lacedaemonian army was organised into five permanent *lochoi* of Spartans and an equal number of Perioikoi. He does so in his

²⁹ Kennell (1995) 167, suggests a comparison with the nicknames of Roman imperial legions, such as *rapax* (Sinis?) and *victrix* (Sarinas?), while Ploas "had a connection with the marines", Messoages may have referred "to the central unit of a Spartan battle formation" and Aidolios is "more reticent" as a name. In my opinion all these explanations are rather doubtful. In any case, whatever the meanings of the other names, the name Messoages or Mesoates can still more easily be explained as connected to Mesoa, one of Sparta's 'villages' (see further below).

description of the fighting on and around Sphakteria in 425 BC, which deserves a closer look.

When the Spartans decided to occupy the island of Sphakteria "they landed hoplites on the island who had been chosen by lot from all the *lochoi*. Various parties were sent to it replacing one another, and the last one to go there, which was caught in the end, consisted of 420 men with their Helots, led by Epitadas the son of Molobros" (4,8,9). These 420 hoplites included Spartans as well as Perioikoi, since the army that had been mobilised for this campaign around Pylos contained both (4,8,1). Later on we are told that 128 of them were killed in the fighting and that of the 292 men who eventually surrendered only 120 were Spartans (4,38,5). This passage, then, tells us the following things. First, *all* the *lochoi* had been assembled and the occupying force had been selected from amongst them by lot. Second, this force, made up of both Spartans and Perioikoi, numbered 420 men. Third, each such Lacedaemonian garrison stayed on the island only for a limited time and was then replaced by an equal force selected in the same manner. After several such handovers the last garrison was trapped and destroyed.

The procedure by which troops were selected for Sphakteria was different from that used to create standing forces of *logades*. These, like many standing *corps d'elite* such as the Hippeis, tended to be three hundred men strong. A Spartan force of 300 was destroyed by the Messenians during the Great Revolt (Hdt. 9,64,2); we do not know the identity of this corps, but I suspect its members to have been selected *ad hoc*. There were also 300 of the legendary Spartan *logades* who fought an equal number of Argive champions for possession of Thyreatis (Hdt. 1,82). Probably they too had been selected *ad hoc*. A procedure of this sort also brought together the famous 300 of Thermopylae: Leonidas is said to have picked his men from amongst those Spartans who already had a son (Hdt. 7,205,1-2). It is tempting to assume that his selection was thereby restricted to the year classes 30 to 59, since in archaic Sparta 30 was probably the age by which a man was supposed to have married and, ideally, begotten a son. The selection procedure of 480, then, may not have been a random one encompassing all Spartan fathers of sons, but one aimed at assembling a force that was more or less representative of the whole body of adult

citizens aged 30 to 59 (inclusive). Ten men could have been picked by lot from each of these 30 year classes.³⁰ Admittedly this is speculation, since we have no evidence as to how the selection was actually made. I believe, however, that the idea of selecting a representative sample did play some part in the creation of forces of this sort, as opposed to standing elite corps such as the Hippeis, whose members were, as we shall see, selected from the younger year classes only.

The same idea of a representative force must have lain behind the selection of the Sphakteria garrison. The peculiar number 420 can in my opinion be explained only in terms of the total number of year classes, which was 42. As we have seen, it was not at all unheard of for the very youngest and oldest year classes to be called up in times of emergency and actually to participate in campaigns, as happened in 418 BC. It may also have happened during the full mobilisation at the time of Plataea in 479 BC. The number 420 'taken by lot from all the *lochoi*' in 425 BC clearly points, not only to the total of 42 year classes, but also to a total of ten *lochoi*. These must have been the five Spartan *lochoi* that we have already met and their Perioikic counterparts. During a full mobilisation such as that of 479 Spartans and Perioikoi were mobilised in equal numbers, so that the latter also fielded five *lochoi*. This should therefore have been the case during the Pylos campaign of 425. The landing force for Sphakteria would then have been selected by picking from each of the ten *lochoi* one man from each of the 42 year classes. In theory a full *enômotia* could have been selected from each *lochos* by lot, since, as we shall see below, the Spartan *enômotia* consisted in principle of one man from each of the 42 year classes. As a Spartan *enômotia* seldom numbered exactly 42 men, however, we may assume that the other procedure was chosen. When he picked his men for Thermopylae Leonidas does not seem to have bothered too much about possible objections (e. g. that men chosen in such a way would not necessarily be very well acquainted with each other) and because of this the authorities of 425 probably decided upon a similar procedure, this time extending the number of year classes called up from 30 to the full 42. In any case,

³⁰ See also Lazenby (1985) 54. (I am not convinced by his explanation that a taboo against fighting during the Karneia applied in particular to Spartans under the age of thirty.)

the number 420, combined with the information that these men were selected from *all* of the Spartan and Perioikic *lochoi* combined, seems to confirm my reconstruction of the Spartan army in 418 BC: the Spartans and the Perioikoi fought in separate *lochoi*, of which five were Spartan and five, since it had been a full mobilisation, Perioikic.³¹

This reconstruction can be applied to at least the whole of the period from 479 to 418, if not to the Late Archaic Age as well. In any case, Xenophon's account of a different organisation based on mixed Spartan and Perioikic *morai* should not prevent us from accepting the five Spartan and five Perioikic *lochoi* as the main building blocks of the army throughout the greater part of the fifth century and possibly the sixth before it. The army we know from the *Hellènika* and the *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia* must be seen within the context of the Spartan society and the Greek politics of that age. Finally, an organisation based on five *lochoi* can be said to have been both typically Spartan and reflective of a widespread tendency, especially in the Peloponnese, to divide armies and/or groups of citizens into five sections.

In Sparta there were, of course, the five ephors and also lesser colleges of five. Each year five *Agathoergoi* were selected from amongst the men who were retiring from the Hippeis (Hdt. 1,67,5). According to later sources the organisation of the Karneia was in the

³¹ There is a variety of opinions on the composition of the Sphakteria garrison. Toynbee's idea (1969, 377) that the force was made up of 12 *enômotiai* of 35 men apiece (i.e. one *enômotia* from every *lochos* or two from each of the six *morai*) has found broad acceptance; see e.g. Cartledge (1979) 256; *idem* (1987) 41–42; Lazenby (1985) 45 (who, however, conjectures that the non-Spartiate part of the garrison consisted of *Hypomeiones*). If my reconstruction is correct the force of 420 Lacedaemonian hoplites on the island consisted of 210 Spartans and 210 Perioikoi. Of these some 90 Spartans were killed in action, as against 38 Perioikoi. These numbers reflect the extent to which the Spartans themselves must have believed in the image of Spartan endurance and steadfastness: unlike the Perioikoi, they must have found it well-nigh unthinkable to surrender or to evade the Athenians, and so they died in larger numbers. At last, when their commander had been killed and his successor was thought to be dead, the Spartans gave in to the idea of ending the hopeless battle. The mocking comments made afterwards in Athens to the effect that all the truly brave had been killed and that only cowards had survived were all the more bitter for the surviving Spartans because they had acted entirely according to their reputation. In any case, the ratio of Spartans to Perioikoi among the survivors (120 : 172) can in my view never be used as an indication of the original proportions of Spartans and Perioikoi in the army, as has been done by various scholars.

hands of three groups of five *neoi*, one group from each of the three Dorian *phylai* (Hesych. s. v. *Kameatai*). The ephebe fights at *Platanistas* were, at least in Roman times, overseen by five *Bidiaioi* (Paus. 3,11,2). Dorieus left to found a colony together with four *synktistai* (Hdt. 5,46,1). Five Spartan arbiters assigned Salamis to Athens (Plut. *Solon* 10,4). Five Spartan judges interrogated the men of Plataea after their capitulation (Thuc. 3,52,3). Last but not least, five villages—probably—constituted the ‘city’ of Sparta: Pitana, Limnai, Mesoa, Kynosoura and Amyklai.³² These villages were almost certainly called *ōbai* in Sparta. Their names do not really match the names of the five *lochoi* as given by Aristotle (fr. 541 Rose; see above). In my view that is no serious objection to pursuing a connection: the name Mesoa, at least, can be recognised in the regimental name Mesoates or Messoages. Herodotus spoke of ‘the *lochos* from Pitana’ (Hdt. 9,53,2), although Thucydides strongly denied that any Spartan *lochos* had ever gone by that name (1,20,3).³³ This conflict can be resolved quite easily if we accept that, even though *Pitanatès* was indeed not its official or even its vernacular name, one of the *lochoi* had strong ties with Pitana: its *lochagos*, Amompharetos, was from Pitana and so may all its officers have been. It would be remarkable indeed had the division of Spartan citizens into five regiments had nothing to do with their division into five villages. The fact that there were five of the latter almost certainly explains the various committees of five mentioned above. Since the

³² Kennell (1995) 162–9, denies Amyklai the status of one of Sparta’s ‘villages’ and assigns to it semi-autonomous status, leaving Sparta proper with only four villages. I can see no evidence that Amyklai was in any such position during the classical period, whatever her status may have been in Roman times. The importance of the Hyakinthia and the yearly procession from Sparta to Amyklai seem to indicate a very close connection between the two, to say the least. Perhaps Athens and Eleusis offer some point of comparison, for the inhabitants of the latter, whatever their local traditions and religious privileges, were certainly Athenian citizens and formed part of the Athenian hoplite army.

³³ See on this issue Kelly (1981) with whose reconstruction (Herodotus’ *lochos Pitanaatès* was actually the corps of 300 Hippeis!) I cannot agree. In my view the importance of the whole subject (was *Pitanatès* the historical name of a *lochos* or not?) has been somewhat overestimated. It should be noted that even if Thucydides is right this does not imply that the *lochos* as such was unknown in fifth-century Sparta. On the contrary, one could argue that had Thucydides known that the Spartan army had no *lochoi* he would have said so. As it was, he only wanted to correct the suggestion that one such *lochos* was called *Pitanatès*.

army's regiments had necessarily to be of equal size (16 *enômotiai* each) and since the populations of the villages clearly cannot have remained exactly the same from year to year, it is probable that regular adjustments were made by which men from one village were assigned to the *lochos* connected with another. In principle, however, each *lochos* must in my view have been connected with a particular village or *ôba* and this connection would probably have been maintained consistently when it came to choosing the *lochos*' commander and possibly even all its officers. As the villages or *ôbai* varied in size, one *lochos* might have been manned entirely from 'its' village while another, connected to a smaller village, drew the bulk of its soldiers from that village but made up its numbers with 'supernumerary' troops from one or more other villages. Perhaps Mesoia was so big that during the fifth century it was always able to produce a fully manned *lochos*, the Mesoates or Messoages of the *scholia*. The other *lochos* names remain unexplained, however (see n. 29).

Finally, the five main divisions of the Spartan army of the fifth century had, so to speak, an archaic flavour. Fivefold structures of this sort were already prominent in the *Iliad*.³⁴ In the fifth century Corinth had five *stratègoi* (Thuc. 1,29,2; 46,2), a figure that, in combination with the fact that there were 5000 Corinthian hoplites at Plataea in 479 (Hdt. 9,28), makes a fivefold division of the Corinthian army highly probable. Argos too had five *stratègoi* in 418 BC (Thuc. 5,59,5), while we have already seen that the normal Argive levy was divided into five *lochoi* (Thuc. 5,72,4). The five *lochoi* of classical Sparta, then, were no anomaly either amongst Spartan institutions or in the wider context of Peloponnesian or archaic army divisions.

³⁴ See my dissertation (in Dutch): Singor (1988) 21–22. Examples are *Iliad* 2, 494–495 (the Boeotians under five commanders); 4,293–296 (the Pylians under five commanders); 11,56–65 (the Trojans advance under the supreme command of Hector with five sub-commanders); 15,329–342 (same situation); 12,86–107 (the Trojans advance in five divisions: *pentacha*); 16,171–197 (the Myrmidons are arranged in five *stiches*).

6. Year classes and *enômotiai*

We must now return to the battlefield of Mantinea and to Thucydides' text, since we need to explore the Spartan *enômotia*, consisting of one man from each year class, a little further. It is this remarkable institution that, in close connection with the elite corps of the Hippeis, reveals, as it were, the demographic fabric of both the army and the society of classical Sparta.

When King Agis made his hurried march from Sparta to southern Arcadia in the summer of 418 BC he brought with him, as we have seen, every Spartan of military age, i. e. the results of a full call-up of all 42 year classes. From across the border in Orestheion he sent back one sixth of this force: the youngest and the oldest soldiers, belonging to the year classes 18–19 and 55–59. The remaining year classes were not all involved in the battle, however, for we hear from Thucydides that the Lacedaemonian camp was guarded by 'older (Lacedaemonian) soldiers' (72,3). Fewer than 35 year classes, then, were represented on the battlefield of Mantinea. As an *enômotia* numbered 32 men at most, we may assume that the older soldiers left behind in the camp were those in the age group 52–54, leaving 32 year classes (20–51) to make up the actual battle formation. The importance of the correlation between the size of the *enômotia* and the number of year classes called up has been recognised by several scholars.³⁵ At Leuctra in 371 BC the Spartans had mobilised the 35 year classes from 20 to 54 inclusive (Xen. *Hell.* 6,4,17) and on the battlefield the *enômotiai* were drawn up 12 men deep (*ibid.* 6,4,12). These figures are clearly related. If 35 year classes were mobilised the *enômotia* could have been arranged either in three files of 12 men (if the enomotarch counted as the 36th man) or in two files of 12 and one of 11 (if the enomotarch was himself one of the 35 men from the 35 year classes). In any case, both at Mantinea in 418 and at Leuctra in 371 the size of the *enômotia* depended upon the number of year classes called up for battle duty. This naturally requires some explanation, since 'demographically speaking' such an arrangement would seem to have been well-nigh impossible.

³⁵ See e.g. Chrimes (1949) 388–390; Toynbee (1969) 368–371; Hodkinson (1983) 255; Lazenby (1985) 7, 12; Cartledge (1987) 41.

In classical Sparta, of course, mortality must have been such that a significant percentage of each cohort of 20-year-olds would have been dead after twenty or thirty years. It would be impossible, on the face of it, to construct a permanent organisation comprising *all* adult males aged 20 to 59 by recruiting to each *enômotia* exactly one man from every year class. If all Spartans of military age had to serve in the army and the army consisted of 80 *enômotiai* (16 in each of the five *lochoi*), every year class from 20 to 59 (inclusive) would have had to contain 80 men if all the places were to be filled according to this scheme. This is an absurd proposition: the number of 20-year-olds is bound considerably to have surpassed the number of 40-, let alone 60-year-olds. Although the actual age distribution of Spartan males in the fifth century BC will never be known; the younger year classes must always have outnumbered the older ones, probably heavily. The *enômotia* was nonetheless organised in such a way that its size corresponded to the number of year classes called up. In theory the Spartans could have made up as many *enômotiai* as they had soldiers aged 20, but the inevitable consequence would have been that so many gaps would have opened up where men in the older year classes were missing that the number of men in each of these *enômotiai* could never have matched the number of year classes mobilised. Alternatively, the number of *enômotiai* could have been decided according to the number of Spartans in the year class 50, or even 59, but in that case a large number of younger men would have been left out. In my view, there is only one solution: we must assume that in practice the *enômotiai* did not invariably consist of one man from every year class, but that now and then two men from one year would be assigned to the same unit to replace men missing from the older year classes. The end result would still have been that the *enômotia* would have contained as many men as the number of year classes called up. This could have been done by assigning one 20-year-old to each *enômotia* and then keeping the rest of that age class in reserve to fill up vacancies. Obviously there would have had to be some correlation between the size of this 'reserve' and the average number of extra men needed to fill in the gaps. Further, for such a system to exist it would have had to work smoothly and without too much administrative ado. I believe that this was indeed the case. Every 20-year-old Spartan (the age at which one formally entered the army) was assigned to an *enômotia* except for a minority that was left aside to

function as a sort of reservoir. From this a small number would be taken every year to fill in the gaps that were bound to appear. The reservoir or surplus that kept this system going was provided by the elite corps of the Hippeis.

The Spartan army of 418 BC contained 80 *enômotiai*, but it also contained other troops. Outside the *lochoi* (and therefore outside the *enômotiai*) there was a special force: the 300 knights or Hippeis. In them we are entitled to see the 'surplus' referred to above. Not every young man of 20 was assigned to an *enômotia*; every year some would be selected for the Hippeis. We now have our theoretical framework. By filling in the numbers we can see how the system worked.

First, let us look at the Hippeis, the elite corps of 300 young men. We have already learned that every year five men would be selected from amongst the retiring Hippeis for special duties. These were the *Agathoergoi* of whom Herodotus speaks (1,67,5). He does not tell us the age at which the Hippeis retired, but there is every reason to suppose that it was thirty, since that was the age at which a young man became a fully adult citizen. The fourth-century *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia* attributed to Xenophon tells us that the Hippeis were selected from amongst the *hêbôntes* (4,1–3), i.e. from the age group immediately above that containing the *meirakia* (3,1), and that they had to leave the corps at the age at which a man became eligible for public duties in Sparta (4,7). This, as I have said, almost certainly meant at the age of thirty. The Hippeis, then, all belonged to the year classes 20–29. According to the *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia*, the ephors appointed three *Hippagretai* each year and these men then picked a hundred men each for the Hippeis (4,3). It is hard to believe, however, that all 300 men were replaced each year. It is more likely that the three Hippagretai selected the new 20-year-olds—the *hêbê*—and that the 30 men thus selected served in this special army corps for ten years. A strength of 300 was probably a theoretical maximum, since in reality the effects of mortality must have reduced the Hippeis to an average of perhaps 270 men. Each year on average some 25 men would reach the age of thirty and have to leave the corps. It was they

who provided the extra manpower needed to fill the gaps in the ranks of older men.³⁶

Let us now consider the *enômotiai*. I shall take the figure of 80 *enômotiai* (five *lochoi* of 16 *enômotiai* each, as in the army at Mantinea) as a starting point. Every year at least 80 20-year-old Spartans were needed to fill their ranks. I believe that it would be most realistic to assume a pool of candidates that was slightly larger than this, say 85, since had it been 80 there would very quickly have been vacancies even amongst the youngest year groups. (I shall return to this question below, in section 8). In general, then, each of the *enômotiai* took on one new recruit every year, while a small number of these units (perhaps 5 out of 80) would take on two. At the same time, every year each *enômotia* would lose one or two men who had reached the age of sixty or died. Their places would be taken by the new 20-year-olds or by former Hippeis (about 25 of whom retired each year, as we saw above). Every year, then, the 80 *enômotiai* would take on between them about $85+25=110$ men. To put this another way, each *enômotia* would get one young recruit regularly every year and would also compensate for natural wastage by taking on an extra man (usually one of the former Hippeis) every two or three years. All this can best be illustrated by taking one of the model life tables from Coale & Demeny to represent the hypothetical age structure of classical Sparta.³⁷ According to this model the various age groups would have comprised the following percentages of the total adult male population (i.e. men aged 18 +):

³⁶ For the Hippeis see also Nafissi (1991) 153–161. It was probably the task of the Hippagretai to make up the three new lists of a ‘hundred’ Hippeis apiece by adding the names of 30 20-year-olds, possibly by putting up *pinakes* showing their names and at the same time erasing or taking down the *pinax* or *pinakes* showing the names of those who had completed their tenth year in the corps.

³⁷ Coale, Demeny, Vaughan (1983) 108 (Model West Males, mortality level 4). I follow the advice of the authors in using Model West for an unknown population (p. 25), as does Hansen (1985) 9–13, for Athens. Figueira (1986) 168 n. 10, uses Model South. In this the distribution of the age groups is spread more evenly, with a higher proportion of older people; in Model West the younger age groups are more heavily represented. Even using Model South, however, the overall picture would not be radically different. I have also followed Hansen in choosing the life table with growth rate 5.00. Perhaps for fifth-century Sparta a growth rate 0.00 would be more realistic, but that would change the numbers only very slightly. We have to keep it in mind that a model life table serves as an illustration of what might have been; the actual numbers will never be known.

18-19 year olds	: 6.7 %
20-29 „	: 29.7 %
30-39 „	: 25.0 %
40-49 „	: 18.0 %
50-59 „	: 11.9 %
60-+ „	: 8.7 %

Leaving aside the men aged 18-19, since they are unlikely to have been assigned to the *enômotiai* or to the Hippeis before the age of 20, we can use these figures to assess the numbers in the various age groups. The percentage of 20-year-olds, according to this model, would have been 3.3. Let us assume that 30 men of this age were recruited to the Hippeis and 85 to the *enômotiai*. This tells us that $3.3\% = 115$ men. One per cent would therefore be 34.85 and consequently there would have been 3485 adult Spartan males aged 18 or above. In the following table, column (a) shows the numbers that would have been needed to fill every place in a theoretical army at its full strength of 80 *enômotiai* and 300 Hippeis; (b) shows those Spartans who only served in the *enômotiai*, assuming exactly 80 20-year-olds to have been recruited every year; (c) shows the same troops, but assumes there to have been 85 of these recruits (a more plausible number, I believe), and (d) shows the Hippeis and former Hippeis:

a. in theory	b. 80 recruits to enôm.	c. 85 recruits to enôm.	d. (ex-)Hippeis
20-29: 1100	20-29: 720	20-29: 753	20-29: 270
30-39: 800	30-39: 606	30-39: 642	30-39: 227
40-49: 800	40-49: 436	40-49: 462	40-49: 164
50-59: 800	50-59: 288	50-59: 306	50-59: 108

If on average 80 20-year-olds had entered the *enômotiai* each year (column b) the year classes 20-29 would have contained 720 men, rather fewer than the 800 required; there would have been 2153 men in the year classes 20-49 ($720 + 606 + 436$ in column b, $227 + 164$ ex-Hippeis in column d), yet further short of the total needed (2400). The system of recruiting one man per year class to each *enômotia* would thus have resulted in wide gaps in the ranks. If, however, we assume the *enômotiai* to have had an annual intake of 85 20-year-olds there would have been 1857 routinely recruited men in the year classes 20-49 (column c) and 391 former Hippeis (column d), giving a total of 2248, much closer to the 2400 required. I believe the difference in this

case to be well within the margin of error, considering that the Spartans' actual age distribution may very well have deviated a little from the theoretical numbers given above. We have, moreover, reason to believe that there were already some gaps in the ranks of the *enômotiai* at Mantinea in 418 BC, since Thucydides remarks that they were *generally* drawn up in files of eight (68,3). Since the phalanx formations of the classical age were normally eight men deep³⁸ we can conclude that most of the files on this battlefield must have contained eight men, but that some (one or sometimes two per *enômotia*) contained only seven, reducing the total number of Spartan hoplites in the field by about a hundred.

As we have seen, King Agis must have led 32 year classes (those aged 20–51, i.e. 75.7 % of all adult Spartan males) into battle. If we assume that there were 85 new recruits a year (column c) this would have meant 1933 routinely recruited men plus 418 former Hippeis (column d), a total of 2351 men. To these should be added about 270 Hippeis, giving us 2621 Spartan hoplites in all. The number theoretically required would have been $2560 + 300 = 2860$. The shortfall may even have been a little greater than this, since an unknown number of sick or injured men must have stayed behind in Sparta or at the camp. However, since in Sparta only healthy young men could become citizen-soldiers, and since moreover the social pressure to join the army in the field when the order to mobilise had been given must have been enormous, the percentage of the draft that stayed behind during Spartan expeditions may have been considerably lower than elsewhere. Perhaps a hundred or so absentees would not be far off the mark. On the other hand there were, as we have seen, already some visible gaps in the ranks at Mantinea. Furthermore, Agis' army included at least 105 officers (80 *enômotarchoi*, 20 *pentèkontères*, 5 *lochagoi*), many of whom may very well have been older than 51. It is to be expected that officers would tend to belong to the upper age groups in a gerontocratic society such as classical Sparta. When the orders were given for those over 54 to go home and later for those over 51 to stay behind in the camp, officers belonging to these groups must have been excepted. By staying with their units they filled places that would otherwise have been left vacant. Gaps among the older

³⁸ See Pritchett (1971) 134 ff.

year classes and officers staying on 'over age' together probably go a long way to explain the difference between the numbers that would theoretically have been required (2860) and those that would actually have been there according to our model life table (2621), all the more so because the latter number is itself theoretical and could in reality have been slightly higher, since the actual life table of Spartan males in 418 BC is of course unknown.

We can now see that the '300' Hippeis aged 20–29 were indeed some sort of guarantee underwriting the *enômotia* system. Had there been no other source of manpower than the *enômotiai*, supposing the latter indeed to have been organised on the principle of one man from each year class, 80 *enômotiai* of 30 men each (aged 20–49) would have required $80 \times 30 = 2400$ men. In fact the model life table used above produces only 1857 men in these year classes (column c). Clearly the *enômotiai* needed extra men to fill their ranks, even if we consider the intake group to have consisted of 85 rather than 80 men. According to this model 543 extra men would have been needed ($2400 - 1857$). This extra manpower was largely provided by the former Hippeis (see column d). The 'reservoir' of manpower consisting of the ex-Hippeis aged 30–49 would have amounted to 391 men in all, enough to fill the majority of the 543 vacancies. The difference of 152 can be explained away partly by assuming that ageing officers stayed on and partly by accepting that there would have been some gaps in the ranks, as Thucydides suggests. For these reasons I believe that we cannot arbitrarily raise the estimate of 85 yearly recruits to the *enômotiai*. Had there been, let us say, 100 a year, practically every empty place would have been filled, leaving no gaps in the rear ranks on the battlefield. If, on the other hand, there had been many fewer than the 85 assumed here, the whole organisation of 80 *enômotiai* would have been in danger.

The overall picture of the correlation between the year classes and the *enômotiai* will be clear by now. One important implication of this is that the existence of the '300' Hippeis as a separate force was both a precondition for and a consequence of the recruitment of the *enômotiai* on the principle of one man from each year class. This fact in no way denies the possible social or political reasons for the existence of this elite force. The Hippeis were an aristocratic and conservative element of Spartan society. Whatever their character, however, 'demographically' they were rooted in the 'surplus' of men

in the younger year groups that was a necessary part of the system according to which the *enômotiai* recruited their men. This system was a peculiar one; in fact, as far as I can see it was unique in the Greek world. Although elsewhere too a system of 42 year classes was in use, nowhere else did any military unit, large or small, recruit by selecting equal numbers of men from each of these year classes. Why Sparta possessed this unique organisation is not difficult to see. It was rooted in the system of *syssitia* that lay at the heart of Spartan society.

7. *Syssitia*, *enômotiai* and *triekades*.

Spartan men lived most of their lives in the company of their fellow-men in the common messes or *syssitia*. Members of these ranged from young adults to over-sixties. When at war the members of a *syssition* shared a tent. There were too few of them (about fifteen at most) to form an entire tactical unit,³⁹ but the combination of three *syssitia* created what was effectively the smallest unit on the battlefield, the *enômotia*. This name refers to the oath that seems to have been deemed necessary to weld together groups of men who were not 'naturally' (i. e. by the bonds of kinship or the 'brotherhood' of the common mess) bound to each other.⁴⁰ It is my belief that each of the three *syssitia* thus joined must have come from a different one of Sparta's three Dorian *phylai*, since cooperation between these *phylai* must have been considered quite 'unnatural' enough to require an oath. In any case, it was Sparta's *syssitia* system that gave rise to an army organisation so curiously linked to demographic structure. The *syssitia* were deliberately organised on the principle of grouping men of different ages together (cf. *Lak. Pol.* 5,5). Combining three *syssitia* to form one *enômotia* created a warrior band of some forty or more

³⁹ We have two indications of the size of the *syssition*: 'about fifteen' according to Plutarch (*Lyk.* 12,3), and 'ten' according to the scholiast in Plato, *Laws* 633A. The latter number seems to me to have been deduced from references in the *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia* to the king, his staff of six polemarchs and three *Homoioi* on campaign, and therefore to carry little weight for us. I prefer Plutarch's 'about fifteen'. I hope to treat the subject of the organisation of the Spartan *syssitia* elsewhere.

⁴⁰ Cf. Siewert (1972) 58–9 (the *enômotia* as "eine gegenseitig eidlich verpflichtete Gemeinschaft"). It is not known whether this oath was administered once and for all when these units were created or renewed each year when the 20-year-olds entered the ranks.

men aged from 20 to over 60. Most of the year classes 20–59 would have been represented by one man each, although there would have been some gaps among the older men, while some of the younger year classes would have been represented by two men instead of one. In general, however, the correlation between the size of the *enômotia* and the number of year classes called up must have been clear enough. The *phylai* had been going since at least the seventh century BC. The *syssition*, membership of one of which had of its very nature to be linked to membership of a given *phylè*, was an institution that probably originated in the Archaic Age as well, even if during that earlier period it was not necessarily organised in exactly the same way as it was during the classical period. The organisation of the classical Spartan army thus probably owes its genesis to developments that took place during the Archaic Age, or more precisely in the sixth century, when after the final subjugation of the Messenians all Spartan citizens acquired the means to equip themselves as hoplites and to participate as ‘Equals’ in common messes.

We can now imagine, in broad outline, how the Spartan army of the classical period was built up. When a young Spartan reached the age of twenty he joined a *syssition*. All Spartan citizens were members of one of these institutions, with their overtly military connotations; anyone who failed to join one or lost his membership also lost his full citizen status. As has already been said, the *syssitia* all but disappeared into the structure of the army itself, being too small to be useful as an independent unit (Thucydides does not mention them in his enumeration of Spartan army units); the *enômotia*, created by combining three *syssitia*, was the smallest tactical unit and the army’s basic building block. On joining a *syssition* it was usual for a young Spartan simultaneously to become a member of the appropriate *enômotia* as well. Some young men, however, were honoured with another duty: each year thirty men selected from amongst the new 20-year-olds did not take their places in the *enômotiai* into which the *syssitia* of which they were members merged when on campaign. These were the knights or Hippeis, the elite force that was recruited by the three Hippagretai. Presumably each one of the latter picked ten men and presumably again these ten would belong to the same *phylè* as their leader, so that the three Dorian *phylai* were equally represented in this crack corps. The remaining 20-year-olds who had not been selected as Hippeis immediately entered the *enômotiai* to

which their *syssitia* were linked. I suspect, in fact, that they would already have been assigned to their future *syssitia* before that age and would therefore also already have known which *enômotiai* they were destined for. In any case, they must already have been inducted into the army in some way at the age of 18 or 19 because otherwise full mobilisation of the complete *enômotia* containing one man from each of the 42 age classes from 18 to 59, as occurred at Sphakteria in 425 and again initially in the Mantinea campaign of 418, would have been impossible. The crucial selection made every year from among the 20-year-olds, then, was that of these thirty 'Knights'. Whereas all the other young Spartans found a place in the *enômotiai*, these thirty alone remained outside them. Together with the men similarly chosen over the past nine years they formed the select band of the Hippeis, traditionally supposed to number 'three hundred'.

The fourth-century *Lakedaimoniôn Politeia* ascribed to Xenophon tells us that every year when the three Hippagretai had selected a group of Hippeis apiece they publicly listed the names of those who had been chosen as well as the names of the others who had not. This seemingly strange procedure in fact amounted, I would suggest, to the yearly drawing up of a *katalogos* (the verb *katalegei* is used in *Lak. Pol.* 4,3) of all Spartan recruits of the age of twenty. This roll would appear, then, to have been divided into two parts, one listing the Hippeis and the other the rest, i. e. those who went straight into the *enômotiai* (cf. above, n. 36). I believe that it was this procedure that Herodotus had in mind when he wrote that "Lykourgos instituted for the purpose of war the *enômotiai*, the *trièkades* and the *syssitia*" (Hdt. 1,65,5). His succinct phrase sums up the essential structure of the Spartan army of Herodotus' day (the mid-fifth century): after youth came adulthood, at the age of twenty, with citizenship and participation in the army connected to one another as closely as possible: *all* young Spartans became members of *syssitia*, *most* of them were also thereby assigned to an *enômotia*, but an elite minority became the yearly *trièkas* or 'thirty'. A succession of ten *trièkades*, then, constituted the *corps d'elite* of the Hippeis. On leaving this force at the age of thirty these men, after a delay of ten years, at last took their places in the *enômotiai*. It was mainly this yearly reinforcement of the *enômotiai* (80 in the fifth century) with about 25 former 'knights' that enabled these units to maintain their strength and thus

the general correlation between their size and the number of year classes called up that we have already discussed.

8. *Army numbers and population decline*

According to the model life table that we are using, in 418 BC there should have been 3485 Spartan men aged 18 and upward (see above, section 6) and 2938 in the age classes 20–59 (section 6, columns c + d). The latter classes should in theory have provided 3500 men (column a), so there was a considerable gap between the numbers required and those actually realised. Since the year classes 52–59 did not participate in the battle of Mantinea, however, the shortfall in numbers was not as great as it might have been, although, as we have seen, the army was already showing some signs of the demographic strains that were only to increase in the following decades. This means that in 418 the existence of the Hippeis still went a long way to support the *enômotia* system by which one man represented every year class, but that it did not completely solve the manpower problem. This remains true even if we assume that a few more men than there were units were recruited into the *enômotiai* (85 instead of 80). I believe that 85 would have been approximately the right figure in 418 because any fewer would inevitably have resulted in much wider gaps in the Spartan ranks than Thucydides' description suggests. A number higher than 85, say 90, would still have given rise to some gaps among the oldest year classes, but not among the age-groups 20–51, which participated in the battle already suffering, according to Thucydides, from some vacancies in their midst.⁴¹

The number of 20-year-olds recruited to the *enômotiai* raises the question of the origins of the whole system. This organisation of 80 *enômotiai* cannot possibly have been devised at a time when a

⁴¹ With 90 recruits to the *enômotiai* the distribution over the age groups 20–29, 30–39, 40–49 and 50–59 would be 811, 682, 491, 325; all of these together with the Hippeis and former Hippeis (775; see above section 6, column d) would have totalled 3084, or, if we include only the year classes 20–51 that fought at Mantinea, 2854. This number is certainly too high, since according to Thucydides the *lochoi* numbered 512 men at most (in reality less, say 490, because not all the files achieved the normal depth of eight men). In other words, on paper the five regiments combined had a strength of 2560, plus 300 (again on paper) Hippeis.

shortage of manpower would have hindered its complete realisation. Whenever it was created, there must have been enough Spartans to fill all or nearly all the places in the *enômotiai* upon mobilisation of all the 42 year classes. This would have required 3660 men (80 x 42 plus 300), which implies that there would have had to be 132 20-year-olds (including thirty Hippeis) and 4000 men aged 18 and upwards. In practice, however, men who were over 55 were very rarely called up, so that we are perhaps entitled to postulate a smaller total number and consequently slightly fewer 20-year-olds, say 120. This would give us 3327 men aged 18–59 and 3636 adult men.⁴² I find this a little more plausible, but even so Sparta must have suffered a slight population decline between the time at which this system was devised and the battle of Mantinea (from around 120 to around 115 20-year-olds, or from 3636 to 3485 adult males). If indeed when this system was first used literally every place could have been filled, then the decline by 418 BC must have been greater (from around 132 to around 115 20-year-olds, or from 4000 to 3486 adult men). In any case, if we accept that the 80-*enômotiai* system was created at a time when these units could be fully manned along the lines discussed here we must also accept that there was a decline in the Spartan population between that time and the Mantinea campaign of 418. How dramatic this decline was depends, of course, on the time scale. This brings us to the question of when the system was instituted.

By the time of the battle of Plataea in 479 BC the army of five *lochoi* already existed (see above, section 5). I take it that these consisted of 16 *enômotiai* each, just as the *lochoi* at Mantinea in 418 did. The structure of the *lochos*, with its four *pentèkostyes* of four *enômotiai* apiece, is so neat—1:4:16—that in my view it must have dated back to the beginnings of the *lochos* system itself. I find it hard to believe that these regiments would have been created with a strength of, say, 17 or 18 *enômotiai* and consequently *pentèkostyes* of varying size. One could, of course, assume the existence before 418 of bigger *lochoi* containing, for instance, 20 or 24 *enômotiai* each, but

⁴² Again on the basis of the model life table used here. The 120 20-year-olds (90 for the *enômotiai* and 30 for the Hippeis) would have guaranteed the full manning of the *enômotiai* after the year classes 20–51 had been called up, as was the case on the battlefield of Mantinea (see n. 41 above). If all the 42 year classes were mobilised there would still have been gaps among the older men, however.

that would be pure speculation for which I can see no reason. We should therefore accept the premise that this structure of 80 *enômotiai*, 20 *pentèkostyes* and five *lochoi* was created at some time before the Persian Wars. The round numbers suggest that this structure was created deliberately. They imply that 240 *syssitia*, divided into three groups of 80 according to the three Dorian *phylai*, merged into 80 *enômotiai*. On average each *syssition* would have received a new member every two years (about 120 recruits a year between 240 *syssitia*). Why the Spartans chose to organise their army on this system we will never know, but the links with a traditional age-class society are obvious.⁴³ The pivotal age was the *hèbè*, the age of twenty. From then on a Spartan man was an adult, admitted into a *syssition* and by implication into an *enômotia* unless he were selected as part of the Hippeis' yearly *trièkas*. It may have been the custom of holding a great assembly every spring, the *Apella*, at which the young men were admitted into the ranks of the warriors, that gave rise to the whole system.⁴⁴ When this happened we do not know. Perhaps the first mention of the 300 Hippeis, which relates to the period around 560 BC (Hdt. 1,67), could be used as a *terminus ante quem*, although I would not ascribe too much authority to Herodotus' story of the *Agathoergos* Lichas in this respect. Perhaps a slightly later date for the introduction of the all-hoplite army in Sparta would be more plausible. Suffice it to say that the army we know from Thucydides' description already existed in 479 BC and had probably done so since the sixth century. If this is the case, the decline in the numbers of Spartan men aged 18 and over from a few more than 3600 (if there were 120 20-year-olds) to about 3500 can hardly be called dramatic.

If the decline in population took place between 479 and 418 it was indeed more remarkable, although even so there is no need to postulate the catastrophe with much loss of human life that many scholars have seen in the Great Earthquake of around 465 BC.⁴⁵ We simply do not know how serious the demographic effects of that

⁴³ I believe that, whatever the shortcomings one may find in the details of his massive reconstruction of age-class systems in Greece, Sallares (1991) 165–174, is fundamentally correct in characterising archaic Sparta as an age-class society.

⁴⁴ For these *Apella*/*Apellai* see Burkert (1975) 8–11.

⁴⁵ See, among others, Toynbee (1969) 385–7; Anderson (1970) 241; Cartledge (1986) 431; Figueira (1986) 179.

earthquake were. If the decline had already been in progress for a century or more an explanation for it should certainly be sought not in some dramatic event but in the long-term effects of Sparta's social institutions themselves. I cannot go into these any further here, however, since to do so would require another essay.⁴⁶ Being so slight, the population decline may even have gone unnoticed for a long time. By the time of the Peloponnesian War, however, I believe the Spartan authorities had become aware of it. They would not have taken long to react to it. Their reaction was to take the form of a regrouping of the shrunken *syssitia* and *enômotiai* into larger regiments in which Spartans were mixed with Perioikoi: the *morai*. Before this important reform, throughout the long period since the creation of the army of five *lochoi*, the need for major reorganisation had never arisen. The postulation by modern scholars of hypothetical army reforms supposed to have taken place between 479 and 418 is in my view unwarranted. The picture we have is, on the contrary, one of continuity from the sixth century almost to the end of the fifth.

9. Conclusions

We may now reconstruct the broad outlines of the way in which Sparta's army was organised in 418 and indeed throughout the greater part of the fifth century BC. On reaching the age of twenty a young Spartan entered the *syssition* that would be his home, so to speak, for the rest of his life. The members of a *syssition* represented every age

⁴⁶ See for the supposed population decline the literature mentioned above (n. 45), especially Figueira (1986). I do not believe that there is any historical value in later statements about the size of Sparta's citizen population (once numbering 10 000 according to Aristotle *Pol.* 1270 a37, or 9 000 according to Plutarch *Lyc.* 8,5-6; 16,1; *Agis* 8,2). Herodotus' figure of 5000 hoplites in the Plataea campaign is already an exaggerated estimate, although based on the fivefold division of the army. The boast put into the mouth of Demaratos (Hdt. 7,234,2) that "in Lacedaemonia there is the polis Sparta with 8 000 men" cannot be taken at face value either. In any case, the '5000' of 479 and the '8000' of 480 seem to be at variance with each other. I would prefer to see in Demaratos' boast a possible reflection of a rough estimate of Spartan and Perioikic hoplite numbers: the Spartans would not have had many fewer than 4000 men (aged 18 and upwards) and the Perioikoi would have mustered the same sort of number in a full-scale mobilisation. I would not like to press this any further, however, for in my view the '8000' is also primarily a rhetorical exaggeration. For Spartan economic institutions and the slow decline in the numbers of full citizens, cf. Singor (1993) 53-57.

group from twenty to over sixty. Three *syssitia* combined to make up the basic tactical unit of the army: the *enômotia*. Such an organisation could only be maintained if extra men were assigned to it to fill the empty places created by natural wastage. This extra manpower was mainly supplied by those who left the elite force of the Hippeis each year. In addition to the number of young men recruited into the *enômotiai* every year (90 or more when this system was created, about 85 by the time of Mantinea) 30 would be selected for the Hippeis. Of these 30, on average 25 would still be available at the age of thirty to fill up the gaps in the *enômotiai*. The Hippeis and the *enômotiai* together thus were, so to speak, the demographic basis for the organisation of classical Sparta's army.

The 80 *enômotiai* in the army of 418 BC were grouped into five *lochoi*, each *lochos* consisting of four *pentèkostyes* and 16 *enômotiai*. The *lochoi* were the major divisions of the army. They were commanded in the field by *lochagoi* who decided how many men deep the *lochos*' files should be, sometimes overruling the decisions of their sub-commanders. Since Sparta's was for all practical purposes a standing army, these officers, and especially the *lochagoi*, probably held more or less permanent commands, or at least held them for the duration of the year's military season. There were also a number of *polemarchoi* (six in the fourth century, an unknown number in the fifth) whose were essentially staff officers around the kings. When Perioikic troops were mobilised these too were grouped into *enômotiai*, *pentèkostyes* and *lochoi*. Each of these *lochoi* was then placed under the command of a Spartan polemarch. The polemarchs could also take on independent commands, leading army divisions of Perioikoi or mixed ones of Spartans and Perioikoi. In the latter case a king instead might act as commander. When all Spartans of military age had been mobilised the supreme command would naturally have fallen to one of the two kings.

In 418 BC the military and political situation in the Peloponnese appeared so dangerous for Sparta that King Agis assembled the army in great haste and marched north to help Tegea. All Spartans of military age were mobilised, while orders were sent to the Perioikoi. Of the latter, however, fewer than half managed to join the army in time for its departure, the rest arriving a few days later. After crossing the border into Arcadia Agis sent the Spartans in the year classes 18–19 and 55–59 home (they arrived on the scene again after the battle,

led by the other king, Pleistoanax, and accompanied by the remaining Perioikoi). In Arcadia Agis was joined by some of Sparta's allies and by the troops from Tegea. He then marched into Mantinean territory. With his polemarchs, his ten specially appointed advisers and probably others on his staff, he must have considered the tactical possibilities of the forthcoming battle. The main decisions to be taken concerned the place of each contingent in the line and the number of men to be deployed in each file. Files eight men deep were decided upon, surely because this was the normal formation and the easiest to execute. Some of the troops had to be assigned to guard the army's baggage train, a task that was normally performed by the older soldiers. In this case Agis and his staff ordered the year classes 52-54 to stay behind. This left 32 year classes to take the field, the necessary number if the *enômotiai* were to be arranged in lines of (at most) eight men. Those of the Perioikoi who had joined Agis' expedition were formed up into two *lochoi*, each under the command of one of the polemarchs. Polemarchs may also have commanded the two *lochoi* of former Helot soldiers. In the battle line the left wing was occupied by the special corps of 600 Skiritai. Next to them were the two *lochoi* of ex-Helots, then the five *lochoi* made up of the Spartans themselves and the crack corps of 300 Hippeis around the king. At the centre of the army were the allies from western Arcadia; to their right were the troops from Tegea and two *lochoi* of Perioikoi who had arrived just in time to join up with the army. The whole force was slightly larger than the opposing army (about 9900 against about 9000).

After a tactical blunder by the Spartan king a wide gap opened up in the left wing. This cost the lives of many of the guards in the camp, for the Mantineans and the elite corps of 1000 Argives forced their way through the gap to the wagons. Spartan morale was supreme, however, and the clash between the main Argive army and the Spartan *lochoi* ended in the routing of the Argives. This carried the day for Sparta and so, in one great battle, her power and prestige on the Peloponnese were restored.

The division of the army into five *lochoi* of Spartans and, after a full mobilisation, an equal number of *lochoi* of Perioikoi was reflected in the way in which the Sphakteria garrison was organised in 425 BC. The troops on that island numbered 420; they had been selected by lot from *all* the *lochoi*, which meant that there were ten full *enômotiai* of 42 men apiece. A Spartan army of 5000 men likewise took the field

organised in *lochoi* in 479. The number of men attributed to this force is certainly exaggerated; again, however, the fivefold division of the Spartan army at this time is reflected. Such a fivefold division is also attested to by Aristotle (fr. 541 Rose) and similar ones were to be found elsewhere in the Peloponnese. The *enômotia* was the building block of the Spartan army. The system of 80 *enômotiai* could be maintained only as long as the younger year classes included a demographic reserve from which the ranks of older men could be replenished. From this reserve the elite force of the Hippeis was recruited, consisting nominally of 300 men in the age groups 20–29. Every year thirty 20-year-olds (a *trièkas*) were selected as fresh recruits for this corps; all the other young Spartans of the same age went directly into the *enômotiai*. As to the time at which this system was created we know very little; it may already have existed by around the middle of the sixth century BC. Since it governed an all-hoplite army it cannot have gone back much further in time.

We may assume that at the time when this army was created it was possible to man all the *enômotiai* fully, or at least almost fully. There is no indication that the number of *enômotiai* was ever greater than the 80 of 418 BC. On the battlefield of Mantinea, however, the *enômotiai* showed some signs of being slightly undermanned. From this we may deduce a decline in the Spartan population during the period preceding 418 BC, although we cannot tell how steep that decline was. Very probably it was a long process that only became really serious in its final stage during the Peloponnesian War. In reaction to it, in the later years of the fifth century the army underwent a major reorganisation: the exclusively Spartan or Perioikic *lochoi* were replaced by mixed Spartan and Perioikic *morai*. This was the only reorganisation of the Spartan army during the classical period. Neither in the years between 479 and 418 nor even between the late sixth century and 418 did any such army reform take place.

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