Introduction

Armies need food. Any society that mobilizes troops must plan both to feed its own men and to seek to deny supplies to the enemy. In a preindustrial society, in which the vast majority of the population was engaged in agriculture, and armies were thus composed largely of rural folk, comprehension of the relationship of agriculture to warfare is fundamental to an understanding of the culture. All histories of Greece, it seems to me, must consider these salient facts: most Hellenes were farmers, war was endemic, and the energies of the citizens were largely consumed with either working, protecting, or attacking cropland. Nearly every major Greek author, philosopher, and statesman, despite his education and often elite status, either had a farm or served in battle: Hesiod, Archilochus, Tyrtaeus, Aeschylus, Aristides, Sophocles, Pericles, Socrates, Thucydides, Xenophon, Demosthenes, and others too numerous to mention at some time drove an ox or wore a breastplate. Most citizens of the ancient Greek polis, with whom we think to have an affinity through studying a red-figure vase, reading Euripides, or gazing at the Parthenon, spent much of their lives on tiny farms, rising at dawn, retiring at dusk, their sense of time and space confined to the changing of the seasons and the parameters of the small enclaves
where they were born, lived, died, and were buried. War was physical drudgery interspersed with moments of sheer mayhem and terror, as victory required the use of edged weapons thrust by hand and with difficulty into the flesh of the enemy. The victors were probably as covered with blood as the corpses of the enemy—gore that they were accustomed to from the near constant butchery of their own pigs, sheep, goats, and cattle.

Farming was not pretty nor easy, but mostly a boring, filthy, and physically exhausting contest to eat one more day. A Greek who joined an expedition of invasion painstakingly packed his own food, which he had grown himself, took along equipment that was nearly half his body weight, and walked for hours in summertime heat, often uphill and on rocky paths—only to camp out in strange lands, where he was asked to forage for auxiliary provisions and water, to cut down trees and vines, all in anticipation of running into the spears of his adversaries and then somehow getting back to his land in one piece until the next muster. A minor puncture wound often meant a slow, solitary, and painful death, a broken leg or arm a lifetime of disability where all future encounters with the plow, ox, or spade spelled constant pain. Military navigation and information were problematic ideas in a world without compasses, good maps, binoculars, or even eyeglasses. For the farmer on the march, food tended to rot quickly, stream or pond water could make one sick, and cuts and abrasions might lead to lethal infections.

It is all too easy for us today to forget these material conditions of the past and thus the critical role of warfare and agriculture in antiquity. Few citizens of the United States have served in an army; almost none—thank God—have killed someone in battle or destroyed the property of an enemy. Our efforts at protection are limited to bars on our windows, electronic alarms, blinking lights, and automatic locks; we are not dependent on armor and weapons over the hearth and the muscular condition of our right arms. Nighttime without streetlights, police cruisers, or a powerful flashlight is full of foreboding and terror—as the panic
that follows the occasional urban blackout attests. Only about 1 percent of our population now lives on farms; most of us have no idea how to grow food, build our own house, hitch up a horse, or butcher a pig. An outbreak of food poisoning at the local fast-food franchise causes national scandal. We rarely walk more than a few hundred yards a day. The majority of Americans live in temperature-controlled rooms and approach hysteria when the electricity that powers our ranges, air conditioners, televisions, and washers ceases for a few hours. The lack of running water or phones for more than a day is the stuff of lawsuits against our municipal utilities. Our knowledge of dirty work, physical violence, and the savagery of the natural landscape itself is mostly limited to what we see on television or read in newspapers, magazines, and books; those with muscular physiques owe their impressive anatomy to weight machines, high-tech sneakers, and entertaining videos. And they win such contours without the tears, wounds, scratches, and blisters that routinely accompany the physical effort to plant, prune, harvest, and plow. Instead, we work out in sanitary and often inviting gyms, where cool air, piped-in music, scented towels, and hot showers are prerequisites. The color of our complexion and the smoothness of our skin are integral to this look of fitness, not calluses and disfiguring scars, which for thousands of years were the natural wages of a hard stomach and ample biceps.

How difficult it is, then, to remember that the Greeks not only did things that we would not, but also things that we could not do. How important it is as well to keep in mind that dramatic performances, democracy itself, vase painting, Ionic columns, and bronze statues were the veneer of a culture that at its heart was in an endless war to feed and protect itself from the savageries of humans and nature. In short, we especially of the deskbound academic class who write our histories must remember that the Athenians, the Thebans, and the Argives lived lives centered around farming and fighting, lives so foreign from our own as now to be almost unimaginable.
We historians have a responsibility to go farther still: when we are told "they fought" or "they devastated the land," we must think first not of tactics or strategy, or even of economic loss or gain, but rather—as the ancient authors who wrote such histories surely took for granted—of the physical environment in which such work took place, the dirt and the danger that faced such men, the impediments of time and space to cutting, burning, and trampling, and the mentality of the farmers and the fighters, who had no doubts why such growing or destroying was so important to their survival. If we can envision that ordeal, then we can understand why an exhausted, dirty, and often terrified man thought it necessary to hack at a gnarly, towering olive tree; and we will come to imagine in the heat, with a crude ax, and among the enemy, just how difficult it was for him to cut such a tree down. And from that most basic appreciation of humankind and nature, we will forever gain a reverence for the past, a reminder to be very careful when we seek some grand theory of economic upheaval, some ingenious notion of national tragedy, or some neat model of decline in a world that is not our own. (See updated commentary, page 201 [General Considerations].)

Ravaging of cropland was central to warfare of most societies of the past. "Miserable Asiatic," wrote the Egyptian pharaoh Kamose of his conquests over the Hyksos, "I shall drink the wine of your vineyard... I shall destroy your dwelling place and cut down your trees."1 Eight hundred years later the Assyrian king Sargon likewise boasted of the destruction his troops had wrought:

My fierce warriors rushed, and like Adad, they made the noise of iron axes to resound and great quantities of his fruit, which could not be measured, came tumbling down... His great trees, the

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adornment of his palace, I cut down like millet, and I destroyed
the city of glory, and his province I brought to shame. The trunks
of all those trees which I had cut down I gathered together,
heaped them in a pile and burned them with fire. Their abundant
crops, which in garden and marsh were immeasurable, I tore up
by the root and did not leave an ear by which to remember the
destruction.  

The strategy of ravaging cropland in wartime did not originate with
the Greeks; it is as old as civilization, whose very armies arose as a divi-
dend of systematic and permanent farming. Today, nearly 3,500 years
after the victory of Kamose, the methods of destruction have improved
with the use of high explosives and herbicides, but agricultural devasta-
tion remains an integral part of fighting. As long as people need to eat,
and wars extend beyond the battlefield itself, generals and military plan-
ers will worry over how to protect and attack cropland. For example,
in the past half-century we have witnessed the continual devastation of
the rice fields of Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia by bomb, spray, and
fire by successive foreign and native armies. Yet, in the long history of
conflict, at no time did the ravaging of enemy farmland so dominate
warfare—culturally, spiritually, and psychologically—as during infantry
battle of the classical Greek city-state. (See updated commentary, page
202 [Protocols of Hoplite Warfare].)

For nearly 300 years war in Greece was inaugurated and often de-

dined by a struggle to destroy, or protect, grain, vines, and olive trees.  

2. The text is part of a letter to Assur, “Father of the Gods,” dated ca. 714 B.C.
See D. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia (New York, 1926), 2:
87-88, no. 161. For other early examples of devastation, see Judges 15:4-5 and

where in the ephric oath of the fourth century B.C. the borders of the father-
land are equated with “wheat, barley, vines, olive trees, and fig trees.” Cf. also a
distorted version in Plut. Alc. 15.7.
Even though most conflict originated over borderlands on rugged ground, armies of invasion usually entered the level ground of their enemy and either threatened, or began, to ravage their enemy's crop-land. To save their farms, the agrarian defenders felt they were obliged either to capitulate and thereby submit to terms or to engage in pitched battle to drive the invader away. Why this strategy of crop devastation was able to determine the very nature of early Greek warfare has been the subject of considerable discussion. The answer seems to lie in a combination of topographical, economic, social, and cultural factors unique to the particular practice of farming and land tenure found in classical Greece.

Farming was practiced, as it is today, in small, isolated plains and valleys, which extend no great distance before merging into rough terrain and mountains. The livelihood of most of the small, independent Greek city-states depended almost entirely on the harvests their yeomen farmers could produce from these holdings. Because with few exceptions (e.g., Athens, Syracuse, and Corinth), most states before the mid-fifth century B.C. had little opportunity or need for extensive commerce, and no great investments in manufacturing or industry, these food-producing plains were of vital importance. They became the natural focus of conflict among rival communities of landowning citizen-hoplites, who as voters and lawmakers determined the circumstances, the very time and the space, in which they would fight. (See updated commentary, page 205 [Centrality of Small Landowners].)

4. The three best treatments of the role of crop devastation in Greek warfare are Grundy 1948, 83–90; Gomme 1: 10–15; and Anderson 1970, 1–12. To these should be added Garlan 1974, 1–86, which contains a massive amount of evidence tracing the development of this strategy through the fourth century B.C. Garlan’s too often underappreciated book forms the basis for all discussion of defense and cultural change in fourth-century Greece and has rarely been acknowledged as the storehouse of information it is.
The best way both to attack and to defend this level ground was with heavy infantry, soldiers armed with spear and shield, and well protected from head to foot with bronze armor. In the close formation of the phalanx, the success or failure of such a small army depended on forcing the opposing phalanx off the plain of battle, so that the respective troops could either devastate or continue to farm the land in question. But why, we might ask, did this closed, uniform manner of battle with agriculture at its center remain static and endure unchanged for so long in Greece?

Well-organized, if not mercenary, light-armed troops might have stopped hoplites at mountain passes on their initial descent into the plains. But such corps required greater training, specialized armament—usually mastery of the bow, javelin, or sling—and often permanent leadership and had to be deployed and supplied for long periods of time on the border. To the hoplite in the classical period, who farmed his small plot of ground and left only for the brief campaigning season, such a specialized force smelled of professionalism, involved burdening costs, and eventually might mean the end of his most important and exclusive obligation as defender of his city. And could light-armed men such as these fight face-to-face, and so shatter an army of invasion in an afternoon? In short, Greek warfare could be decisive, instantaneous, both frequent and yet relatively nonlethal within a conservative farming community only to the degree that it remained the sole domain of heavily armored, agrarian militias.

Second, the independent use of cavalry, which might have expanded the theater of war, since either mounted shock troops could break up marching columns or lighter-armed horsemen could force vulnerable and isolated hoplites off the plains, never became widespread in the classical age. The lack of stirrups and good saddles made head-on charges against spearmen difficult, while poor breeding and the lack of plentiful pasturage limited the use of horses in general in many areas of Greece. The neglect of an efficient cavalry arm was later to plague the Greeks of the city-state whenever they ventured abroad, far from the physical and
ideological safety net of hoplite protocol. The horse, in short, was seen by the antiaristocratic yeoman as an uneconomical resource in the culture of intensive agriculture, and thus its usual military impotence against heavy infantry simply reflected the general diminution of the cavalryman in the cultural psyche of the polis itself.

Finally, effective siegework, which might have turned the center of battle away from the fields to assaults on the city itself, was still in its infancy in Greece until well into the fourth century B.C. In most cases property and people were quite safe behind mud-brick or stone walls, which were stout enough to withstand crude battering-rams and ineffective hand-propelled missiles. Furthermore, the heroic code of the citizen-soldier often made the idea of shunning decisive battle repugnant, and the policy of diverting capital and labor to fortify cities and passes with massive stone walls seemed ominous to the agrarian exclusivity of the tightfisted landowning council. Wall building and fortification in the countryside of Greece—and the arts to batter down such ramparts—are, rather, phenomena of the fourth century B.C., coinciding with the gradual diminution of the citizen as farmer-hoplite, as money, not nerve and muscle, came to determine the course of a war.

This, then, in the briefest terms, is the most common explanation for the peculiarly influential role of devastation in Greek warfare: in a world of intensive farming, where free citizens were defined by their possession of small plots of trees, vines, and cereals, those who voted as equals, held roughly the same amounts of land, and were armed and mustered identically naturally fought on, for, and about their farmland. Thus the enemies of such a system were professional troops, long campaigning, sophisticated technology, and specialized corps—anything that required capital and hence taxation to be drawn away from agriculture. Early hoplites were aware of the advantages of both cavalry and light-armed troops, but such forces became vital to Greek armies only in the late fifth and fourth centuries, when warfare became Mediterranean in scope and expeditionary in practice.
The primacy of land both as an object of attack and as grounds for infantry defense holds true for a good many Greek states in the classical period and serves well as a model against which exceptions can be illustrated. Some backward societies in mountainous areas in Crete and Aetolia, where the agrarian polis was less developed, for example, made exclusive use of light-armed troops in attacking the enemy in border passes. Effective cavalry overshadowed infantry in Thessaly and anywhere else where wide plains made their use attractive and where agriculture was practiced under different cultural and legal protocols, which emphasized aristocracy and monarchy rather than broad-based oligarchy and timocracy. We hear, too, of occasional ingenious sieges at Plataia and later at Mantineia, as the Peloponnesian War and subsequent fighting illustrated the sometime artificial and static nature of war framed solely by decisive infantry battle.

Athens, of course, as Miletus before, weighed carefully the advantages of not risking its growing urban citizenry to meet the challenge of enemy invaders on Attic soil, and so chose not to fight in pitched hoplite battle to protect its agriculture. And from the fourth century B.C. on, the widespread use of mercenaries, peltasts, artillery, slaves and freed slaves, and new emphasis on fortification changed military practice altogether: the old idea of war as solely decisive battle, and decisive battle solely as a single collision of hoplite farmers on level ground became often irrelevant. But if ravaging farmland alone no longer determined the nature of warfare in Greece, and if it was no longer integral to the rituals of hoplite fighting, it still continued to play a key role throughout Hellenistic and Roman imperial times. Such later states were not agrarian, but like most preindustrial cultures of the ancient Mediterranean they were still agricultural. And so attacks on cropland would always remain a popular tactic against any society that relied chiefly on farming for its livelihood—whether or not its food was produced by serfs, renters, and slaves, whether or not plots were middling and of like size, or enormous and owned by those in town, whether or
not this tactic was a challenge to battle or an attempt to ruin the countryside.

Consequently, to the classical Greeks such destruction of grain and the cutting down of olive trees and vines were synonymous with warfare itself, and thus a part of everyday life, something to be lamented, analyzed, boasted or joked about. “There is need not to be haughty,” the poet Stesichorus was supposed to have told the Lokrians, “so that your cicadas don’t sing from the ground” (Arist. Rb. 2.21.8, 3.11.6). When told that Alexander of Pheraeia offered beef at a cheap price to his newly found Athenian allies, Epameinondas replied: “And we will supply to them free wood to cook their meat, for we will cut down everything in their land if they make trouble” (Plut. Mor. 193.E17). “To turn the countryside into a sheep walk” was a common promise of war (e.g., Isoc. 14.31; Diod. 15.63.2)—if rarely a real consequence of fighting.

Indeed, devastation was so common that it became institutionalized by society. Land rental agreements often contained special clauses specifying conditions to be followed by lessor and lessee in the case of enemy ravaging, instances in which farmers expected both to be attacked and to survive with some portion of their livelihood intact (e.g., SEG 21 [1966] 644.13–14; SEG 24 [1969] 151.18; SIG3 966.12–14; IG II².411.34–37; IG V.2.6; IG XII.9.191). Military commanders routinely received fulsome praise from their city for protecting crops at harvesttime from attack (e.g., IG II².682.35–36; IG II².1299). The destruction of cropland was often written into peace treaties between sovereign states as the point where hostilities were renewed, and allied cities were obligated to fulfill their promises (e.g., Thuc. 5.23.1–2, 5.47.3–4).

5. Cf. the late Roman or early Byzantine dream-interpretation book of the prophet Daniel, which told its readers: “To dream fruit trees torn out or cut down signifies wars and the death of men and beasts” (Byzantinische Zeitschrift 26 [1926]: 290–314, 1.123). I wish to thank Steven Oberhelman for discussing this and other passages in the corpus of later dream-interpretation manuals.
We might think that such universal Hellenic awareness of ravaging would lead to its formal restriction in warfare among like agrarian communities who had crafted mutually understood protocols of infantry battle. Calls for reciprocal restraint and suggestions for some type of ban on devastation between Greek states, it is true, were often heard. But in typically Greek fashion they were apparently ignored, and so remained mostly a part of philosophical discussion.6 “Do you not know”, asked Socrates matter-of-factly, “that men cut the grain that others have planted, and chop down their trees, and in all ways harass the weaker if they refuse to submit, until they are forced to choose slavery rather than war with the stronger?” (Xen. Mem. 2.1.13). Plato in his Republic urged that Greeks not ravage each other’s lands, nor burn down houses, but be instead content to carry away only the annual harvest (Resp. 470A–471B). In a particularly anguished passage Polybius much later complained:

I never share the feeling of those who go so far in their anger against men of their own race that they not only take away their enemies’ yearly crops but also destroy their agricultural

6. There is a similar paradox in the Hebrew Old Testament between theory and practice. At one point, fruit trees are apparently to be spared: “When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them. . . . Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down” (Deut. 20:19–20). But at Kings 2:3.19 we hear: “And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree.” Rowlands (1972, 452–453) claims that crops are sometimes protected from war in modern primitive societies: “A tacit understanding, for their mutual benefit, between hostile groups as to when and when not to indulge in warfare seems quite widespread in small-scale societies. . . . Such an understanding sets indirectly a limit on the scale of destruction possible from warfare. For example, an implicit safeguard on growing crops may explain why little care may often be taken to protect fields but, on the other hand, the concern that may be taken over the protection of granaries.”
installations, thereby leaving no opportunity for reparation. Instead, those who do that seem to me to be extremely shortsighted: the more they assume to be instilling fear into their enemy by ruining their land and taking away all their hopes of earning a living—not just for the present, but even for the future—just that much more do they brutalize others and so create a hatred of themselves that is never removed. (23.15)

These protests confirm our suspicions that in actual practice ravaging became more and more indiscriminate and unrestricted and after the fifth century B.C. was well outside the sphere of formal challenges to hoplite battle. How could armies who could not even restrain themselves from supposedly sacrosanct temples and grounds keep away from more mundane farmland? We know of few instances in any age where ravagers deliberately avoid attacking agriculture out of respect for their enemy’s property. The few, rare exceptions perhaps prove the rule. For example, during the Second Messenian War the Spartans who invaded Messenia neither cut down trees nor demolished buildings. Instead, if we can believe traditional accounts, they only stole cattle and carried the harvest away. But they did so not out of empathy for the enemy, but because they considered Messenia at the time still a part of their own territory (Paus. 4.7.1–2).

And when Greeks looked outside their country, they were often startled at the restraint—so foreign to their own practice—shown by other

7. Cf. a random sampling of wartime violations of temples and sacred ground: Dem. 13.32, 23.212; Diod. 14.17.11, 14.76, 31.46; Hdt. 6.75.3, 8.32, 9.120; Polyb. 18.2, 21.11, 32.27, and esp. 5.11.3–4; Thuc. 1.139.2, 3.81.5, 4.97.2–4.

8. Even if the authenticity of this anecdote is questionable, it is all the more revealing as a reflection of theoretical Greek attitudes toward ravaging; it is also consistent with later authors’ idealization of a more human warfare in the distant past, when protocol still limited damage beyond the battlefield. Cf. Polyaen. Strat. 3.10.5 and Xen. Ages. 1.20, where again crops are left alone only because of the invader’s self-interest.
societies during war. India was a particularly fascinating example. Arrian remarked of the farmers there: “They work the land, and they pay the taxes to the kings and to the cities such as are autonomous; and if there is civil war among the Indians, it is not lawful to touch these workers, nor even to devastate the land itself” (Ind. 8.11.9). Diodorus adds:

Among other peoples enemy forces through devastation cause land to become unfarmed. In India, however, farmers are considered sacred and inviolable: those who farm near war zones are unaware of any danger. While opposing sides kill each other in battle, they allow those at work on the farms to remain unhurt, acknowledging them as the common benefactors of everyone. Neither do the Indians burn the lands of their enemies nor chop down their fruit trees. (2.36.6–7)

Perhaps the restraint shown by other cultures fascinated these later Greek writers because it reminded them of the earlier protocols of city-state warfare, when ravaging had served to begin pitched battle and was not an end in itself nor very serious in its consequences. We should keep in mind also that it was not merely the land that was purportedly left untouched in India, but the caste of farmers themselves—in contrast, the lethality of unrestricted Greek warfare in the countryside sometimes involved the killing and dislocation of the agrarian populace in addition to merely burning and cutting down crops. (See updated commentary, page 206 [Ravaging and the Historiography of the Greek State].)

It might seem a simple matter to analyze this strategy of crop destruction in classical Greece, given the many references in the ancient literary and epigraphic sources. Unfortunately, the very opposite is often true. Because the Greeks took devastation for granted as a commonplace activity, they naturally felt no need for much elaboration or even explanation. That is, they rarely tell us what kind of troops are engaged, which precise crops are targeted, or exactly how they are destroyed. We miss especially an analysis of the degree of damage done
and subsequent reference to the long-term effects of earlier attacks. What information we can obtain often must be gleaned through inference and assumption, with attention paid to practical considerations. In much the same way, modern historians, when referring to strategic bombing, sometimes merely state that the "enemy was bombed" and give no further detail or explanation. They rightly assume that as witnesses of the last fifty years of warfare, we understand automatically that multiple-engine aircraft, flying in formation over enemy territory, drop explosive charges that are designed to destroy industrial centers or kill people. Yet readers 2,500 years hence may find the phrase "bombed" as nondescript and hazy a term as we do "ravage," and so may wonder how this frequent twentieth-century tactic was carried out, and just how effective were the results it produced. Indeed, even today scholars cannot agree on the exact purpose, damage, and effectiveness of much of the strategic bombing undertaken against Germany during World War II.

No comprehensive study of ravaging in classical antiquity has yet appeared. Consequently many wrong assumptions have been made. For example, plundering, where troops seek booty, is sometimes considered the same activity as crop destruction. We are often told, too, that olive trees were uprooted, not cut down, and thus forty to sixty years passed before their replacement plantings reached full production. Nor is this confusion always limited to such esoteric points. Often a basic question of Greek history is involved. For example, we hear that all the land of Attica was destroyed in the Peloponnesian War and never regained its productivity, with farmers fleeing their wrecked holdings and flocking into the city. This assumption of a radical change in Athenian land tenure and agricultural practice has too rarely been seriously questioned. A simple phrase in an ancient source that "the land was ravaged" leaves too much room to the imagination. Indeed, it is nearly the case that the more an ancient author records particular cropland as being ravaged, the more we might ask why such continual devastation is necessary in the first place. In general, this book suggests that the damage
that did occur to farmland during war was more often a result of dislocation—the evacuation of farmers, the driving off of slaves and livestock, the deaths in battle of farmer-hoplites themselves—than of the physical destruction of trees, vines, and cereals.

My purpose is to examine how the Greeks in the classical period destroyed agriculture in wartime. Through an examination of the manner of crop destruction (part 1), and the methods of defense (i.e., fortification, evacuation, and retaliation [part 2]), I hope to determine the effectiveness of the tactic. These findings will be compared to the best-known and most important example of repeated, well-organized ravaging campaigns: the invasions and occupations of Attica by the Spartans in the Peloponnesian War (part 3).

Finally, I should note that plundering, pillaging, piracy, and the profits of war are not dealt with here. They have long been the subject of ample study and were, I suggest, often quite separate activities, distinct from both the strategy and the practice of agricultural devastation. (See updated commentary, page 209 [Plunder and Devastation].) The fifth and fourth centuries B.C. (ca. 500–300 B.C.) are the focus of this study. Some evidence, however, is drawn from both earlier and later times, as absolute chronological limits have not been possible for all chapters, given the paucity of information.

I hope to leave the reader with five valid generalizations about ancient farming and its role during wartime: (1) permanent agricultural devastation of crops in Greek history was difficult, and so not usually in itself the cause of economic crises; (2) the ritualistic nature of crop ravaging and its relationship to decisive hoplite battle should be seen as part of the protocols of early classical Greek infantry practice—a remarkable and revolutionary system where warfare originally was made to reflect the interest of the citizens rather than vice versa; (3) despite differing strategies and practices of ravaging throughout Greek history, it remains a general truism that trees and vines are hard to destroy systematically, and cereals rarely are burned or trampled into oblivion—and such generalizations
apply to other military theaters and histories of the Mediterranean as well; (4) rural impoverishment and depopulation during periods of war were more often insidious processes—the results of infrastructure and labor power losses, taxation, and general periods of banditry and unrest—than the immediate consequence of invading armies that destroyed trees, vines, and cereals; (5) because most of the population of Greece was rural and engaged in agriculture, and because the Greeks saw warfare as the decisive experience of the citizenry, any analysis of farming and fighting of the city-state is nothing less than a valuable reflection of the culture at large.