

NINE AGAINST TROY
ON EPIC ΦΑΛΑΓΓΕΣ, ΠΡΟΜΑΧΟΙ, AND AN OLD
STRUCTURE IN THE STORY OF THE *ILIAD*

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1. *Introduction*

The Greeks of the classical period saw in Homer a teacher of many things. Military affairs naturally had their place among the lessons to be learned. Accordingly, the Greeks were not apt to notice much difference between the armies of their own days and the contingents they had heard were once led against Troy by Agamemnon. Since Hellenistic times Homeric scholarship even tried to reconstruct those contingents on the lines of classical or contemporary military organization. Some results can be found in the *scholia*, where for instance the epic οὐλαμοί and φάλαγγες are equated to 40 and 120 men respectively and thus seen as regular units of a sophisticated army¹).

To some extent this classical approach still characterizes an important branch of Homeric scholarship today. In the works of J. Latacz and W.K. Pritchett (to mention two outstanding names in this field) the differences between warfare as described in the *Illiad* and as we know it from the classical period, are constantly played down. The reconstructions they offer of the Greek army before Troy and of the Homeric battlefield look surprisingly like the hoplite armies and their battles in 5th century Greece²). I cannot

1) Cf. Thuc. I 9-11 on the Trojan War. Homer as a teacher of military things: Aristoph. *Frogs* 1035ff. *Scholia*: F. Lammert, *RE* XIX (1938) 1624-1646 s.v. *Phalanx*, espec. 1626.

2) J. Latacz, *Kampfparänese, Kampfdarstellung und Kampfwirklichkeit in der Ilias, bei Kallinos und Tyrtaios*, Wiesbaden 1977; W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War IV* (Berkeley 1985), espec. 15-21. In the same strain: H. van Wees, *Leaders of Men? Military Organization in the Iliad*, *CQ* 36 (1986), 285-303; idem, *Kings in Combat: Battles and Heroes in the Iliad*, *CQ* 38 (1988), 1-24.

go into much detail here to explain why in my opinion such reconstructions are not convincing³). Two of the more fundamental objections should however be stated briefly.

Firstly, it is the discovery of the oral-formulaic background of Homer that impedes the simple equation of the epic picture of things with any historical society. The *Iliad* we have is the result of layer upon layer of oral poetry, transmitted and recreated by generations of singers. Even if there was an Homer—as I believe there was — who composed ‘our’ *Iliad* out of the mass of heroic poetry known to him, his composition can never have been so free from the traditional load of verses and phrases, of given descriptions and episodes, that while evoking an heroic world he could at the same time have offered an accurate description of his own. This *a priori* scepticism is not, however, destructive. If we see for instance Homeric warfare not as a reflection of actual war in Ionia ca 700 B.C., or in Dark Age Greece, or even in the Mycenaean period, but as an amalgam of images, derived from different times and places over the whole period of ca 1200 (and perhaps even earlier) to ca 700/650 B.C., I believe we can analyse war and the warrior in Homer in a really fruitful way⁴).

In that amalgam of images, the more recent ones derived from warfare practices within Homer’s own historical horizon very probably figured much more prominently than other and older ones. Nevertheless, the mere existence in the epic of non-contemporary elements compromises efforts to equate, be it roughly, Homeric warfare with that in the Greek world of the late 8th and early 7th centuries. One could think here of such features as the possession of ‘body-shields’ by some warriors, or the use of chariots on the battlefield, or the heroic prowess of some warriors who alone are said

3) I refer here to my dissertation *Oorsprong en Betekenis van de hoplietenphalanx in het Archaische Griekenland* (Amsterdam 1988) espec. 3-8 and *passim*; a revised English edition will appear in 1992. For detailed criticism of Latacz see also R. Leimbach, *Gnomon* 52 (1980), 418-425.

4) The literature on oral poetry and its implications for Homeric studies is too vast for even a short survey of the more important titles; I refer to J. Latacz, *Homer, Tradition und Neuerung* (WdF 463; Darmstadt 1979). In many respects I agree with J. Morris. *The Use and Abuse of Homer*, *Class. Ant.* 5 (1986), 81-138, but I do not share his conclusion that institutional elements from before the 8th century could not have been preserved in the epics.

to destroy or put to flight whole σίχες or φάλαγγες of the enemy. Or, as we shall see, of some special numerical frameworks that required only given numbers of warriors to be mentioned in particular scenes. Yet such is the poetic genius of Homer that inconsistencies in his descriptions of the armies and their battles do not force themselves upon his hearers' or readers' attention. Still, a mixture of images there remains.

Secondly, those elements of the Iliadic picture of the battlefield that seem most to depend on contemporary practice do not lend themselves easily to equation with Greek land warfare in the classical period. Instead, they point to a type of warfare characterized by a certain dichotomy between heavily armed and more or less aristocratic πρόμαχοι in the front, and less well armed or light armed troops in the ranks behind. Such a twofold composition of the army in battle order is not a feature of the hoplite phalanx of the 5th and 4th centuries. It is, however, in accord with the scraps of battlefield descriptions in the fragments of the 7th century elegiac poets Callinus and Tyrtaeus⁵). Moreover, that twofold composition of the people under arms seems to fit the archaeological evidence that suggests a very restricted possession of weapons and even more so of body armour among the population of Late Geometric and Early Archaic Greece⁶).

5) For examples of this twofold composition of the army in the Iliad see *infra* n. 13; further, my *Oorsprong en Betekenis* (*supra* n. 3) 77-92 (also for the elegiac poets; especially in Callinus fr. 1W and in Tyrtaeus fr. 11W the differentiation between heavily armed *promachoi* in the front and light-armed *laos* in the rear is unambiguous).

6) See e.g. A.M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (Edinburgh 1971), 192; V.R.d'A. Desborough, *The Greek Dark Ages* (London 1972), 306-312; J.N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* (London 1977), 36 (Tiryns), 38, 85-86 (Corinth), 162 (Nichoria in Messenia), 180-181 (Achaia), 30-33, 51, 54 (Athens). Cf. also P. Courbin, *La guerre en Grèce à haute époque d'après les documents archéologiques*, in: J.-P. Vernant (ed.), *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris-The Hague 1968), 69-91, espec. 87 with n. 145; similarly: A. Schnauffer, *Frühgriechischer Totenglaube* (Hildesheim 1970), 179. The same situation can be observed in Iron Age Italy (cf. Ch. Saulnier, *L'armée et la guerre dans le monde étrusco-romain (VIIIe-IVe s.)* (Paris 1980), 6-7 with n. 4 (15% and 16% of the graves in Tarquinii and Veii resp. were provided with weapons) and in Central Europe (cf. H. Lorenz, *Totenbrauchtum und Tracht. Untersuchungen zur regionalen Gliederung in der frühen Latènezeit* (Mainz 1979), 114-143, 340-341 (an average of 17,4% of graves with weapons on a total of 7354 graves).

What we have in the *Iliad* then, is a highly artistic evocation of war, made up of different elements. We can see the *πρόμαχοι* bearing the brunt of the battle. We can almost hear the screams of the light-armed with their javelins, arrows and stones massing behind them. But we also meet the *πρόμαχοι* fighting separately in small groups as 'hoplites' *avant-la-lettre*. Or we can see the individual *πρόμαχος* braving a majority of opponents, combating in a more or less regulated duel with a champion of the other side, or roaming the plain of the Scamander in search of his enemies. And all this is shot through with images of other worlds: chariots, antiquated weapons, supernatural deeds of gods and men.

Technical terms regarding the organization of the armies are conspicuously rare. Most words have a certain semantic elasticity about them which enables the poet to use them indiscriminately for small groups of warriors as well as for the whole mass of the combatants. This is especially true of such terms as *λαοί*, *κοῦροι*, *ἔταιροι*, *στίχες*, and *φάλαγγες*. Others, like *οὐλαμός*, *ῥμιλος*, and *ἔθνος*, evoke the actual thick of the battle: the dense throng of people fighting or awaiting the fight, without any inherent sense of organization. Again others denote simply 'mass': *πληθὺς*, or 'mass outspread': *στρατός*⁷). A possible reference to some organization made up of bigger and smaller units can be read in the *φῦλα* and *φρήτραι* of Nestor's famous advice to Agamemnon. But the actual meaning is very unclear, while the terms can be regarded as belonging to the sphere of the early polis and, practically *ἄπαξ λεγόμενα* as they are, foreign to the world of the *Iliad*⁸). *Λόχος*, which is in classical Greece the nearly ubiquitous term for a division of the army, is absent here—where the word is used it has its original meaning of 'ambush'⁹). Attempts to describe the Greek army in the Trojan

7) For these terms see: H. Trümpy, *Kriegerische Fachausdrücke im griechischen Epos*, Freiburg 1950; E.C. Welskopf, *Die Bezeichnungen laos, demos, homilos, plethys, ethnos in den homerischen Epen*, in: *Untersuchungen ausgewählter altgriechischer sozialer Typenbegriffe III* (Berlin 1981), 163-192; H. van Effenterre, *Laos, laoi et lawagetas*, *Kadmos* 16 (1977), 36-55.

8) For a recent interpretation: W. Donlan, *The social groups of Dark Age Greece*, *CPh* 80 (1985), 293-308.

9) Possibly in *Od.* 14, 469 and 20, 49 *lochos* might already signify a troop of warriors rather than an ambush, but here also the meaning ambush does fit the contexts.

War as consisting of several 'divisions' or 'formations' (each composed of a number of 'ranks') have an anachronistic air about them and hardly find any support in the epic itself¹⁰). Especially the supposedly technical term for such 'divisions', *πύργοι*, has in these attempts been misapplied, for nowhere in the *Iliad* does *πύργος* have such a meaning. Instead, it denotes apart from 'tower' (as in the formulaic *σάκος ἥύτε πύργον*) simply: a group of men standing together or standing in a line or row. As such it does not differ essentially from *στίξ* or *φάλαγξ*, the more regular terms for rows¹¹).

For reconstructions of any historical army organization the *Iliad* should be used with great caution. This epic is not an historical document, but fiction, regardless of whether or not one believes that some kernel of truth in the form of an expedition of Greeks against an Asiatic Troy lies behind its story. It is fiction in the sense that it consists, as said above, of a mixture of images reflecting different historical backgrounds, poetic fantasies and exaggerations¹²). On the battlefield both individual heroism and fighting *en masse* are shown. One of the strongest components in the Homeric picture of warfare is formed by the heavily armed *πρόμαχοι* fighting in front of a larger group or 'mass' (*πληθὺς* or *λαοί*) of the light armed or even fighting on behalf of them¹³). Cer-

10) This does not mean that the *phalanges* cannot at times be represented as lines or ranks marching one behind the other to the battlefield, or even in a rare case (perhaps in XII 125ff; but see *infra* p. 31-2, 43-4) as fighting in such a formation-in-depth. But it is certainly anachronistic to picture them as regular ranks in a regular army organization, as Latacz does (*supra* n. 2); Pritchett (*op. cit. supra* n. 2) is vague on this matter.

11) For *pyrgos* as the term for such divisions: Latacz, *op. cit. (supra* n. 2) 54 (already Lammert, *op. cit. supra* n. 1). In the *Iliad* I see no evidence for this meaning. Instead, *pyrgedon* means 'as a wall', i.e. 'on a line', said of Greek warriors in a defensive position (XIII 152; XV 618) and of hunters in front of a lion (XII 43); for *pyrgos* as a row or line see also IV 334 and 347.

12) I find it highly improbable that an historical Troy or Ilios in Anatolia was conquered by an alliance of Greek states in an overseas expedition at some time in the (Late-) Mycenaean age. But I do not want to enter upon this question here. In general I agree with E. Meyer, *Gab es ein Troia?*, GB 4 (1975), 155-169. But even if there had been such an expedition, our *Iliad* could still not be trusted as preserving some documentation on it (in this I side with Morris' scepticism regarding the claims of oral poetry—*supra* n. 4).

13) Examples: XV 295-305 (the Greek *plethys* withdraw to the ships, the *aristoi* fight on); XVI 692-696 (nine named Trojans killed, 'the others' flee); XI 300-309 (nine named Greek leaders killed, distinguished from an anonymous *plethys*); V

tainly, it is on these 'fighters-in-the-front' that the poet's attention is concentrated. To this category all the great heroes belong. The βασιλῆες, ἡγήτορες, and ἡγεμόνες, all the 'leaders-of-men' naturally fight in the front rank, being πρόμαχοι by profession, as are all the ἐσθλοί, ἄριστοι or 'best men' that the poet constantly discerns from the mass of κακοί¹⁴). Of course this picture can be disturbed, for instance when the ἄριστοι fight in heroic duels or move freely about from one group of πρόμαχοι to another; or when the leaders' chariots and their drivers are shown in attendance on the spot where one should have expected the lower ranks of κακοί massing behind their betters¹⁵). Yet the basic split between the πρόμαχοι and the lesser armed is there.

Whenever the poet describes or suggests some tactical order of the πρόμαχοι/ἄριστοι it is the line or row of fighters standing next to each other that is envisaged. Of course this is only natural when the πρόμαχοι form a first rank in front of other combatants. But also in those cases when the πρόμαχοι fight alone often a line seems to be the implied order of battle¹⁶). In fact, this is what one could expect, for the line is the basic and practically universal arrangement of warriors whenever the fighting is one of open confrontation

573-575 (fighting Greek *protoi* with an inactive *laos* in the rear), the same situation in IX 707-709, XI 495-501. The 'man from the *demos*' is 'useless in war' (II 198-201), although he fights in the army (II 207); conversely, the aristocrats belong in the frontline (XII 310-328). So a great hero can be styled 'a protecting wall' for the lesser armed behind him: *herkos* (I 284, III 229, VI 5, VII 211), or *herma* (XVI 549), or *pyrgos* (*Od.* 11, 555—*cf.* Callinus fr. 1W). See also my *Oorsprong en Betekenis* (*supra* n. 3), 79-82 (light-armed in the rear).

14) In a famous article G.M. Calhoun, *Classes and Masses in Homer*, CPh 29 (1934), 192-208; 301-316, denied the social differentiation between aristocrats and commoners in the Homeric poems. A.G. Geddes, *Who's who in Homeric Society?*, CQ 34 (1984), 17-36, follows his example. I cannot agree. The evidence is overwhelmingly against such a view. In the military sphere the *promachos* clad-in-bronze can never have been meant by Homer or his audience to be socially on a par with 'the man from the *demos*' (*supra* n. 13).

15) See V 498ff; XI 47-52; 338-342; XII 80ff; XIII 384-386; XV 454-457; XVII 608-619; 697-699; etc.

16) *Promachoi* in a line in front of the *plethys*: IV 532-534; V 573-575; 623-626; XI 300-309; XIII 481-490; 712-722; 833-834; XVI 692-696; see also *supra* n. 13. *Promachoi* alone in one line: V 498ff (in front of their chariots, *cf.* 519-566); XI 47-52 (the same situation); XV 566-567; 615-622; 708-712; XVII 266-268. Uncertain: XIII 125ff.

and not of ambush or encirclement¹⁷). It did not take a sudden innovation around 700 B.C. for the so-called 'hoplite tactics' to appear in Greece. Instead these tactics should be seen as just a more specialized form of the line formation that itself must have been there in any case since the appearance of heavy weapons for hand-to-hand fighting, *i.e.* since the Mycenaean age at the latest¹⁸). What characterized hoplite warfare in the archaic and classical periods was the general use of armour and weapons developed for close infighting and, in the case of the famous shields, for massing closely together. Further, the practical exclusion from the battlefield of any light armed troops, and (consequently?) a certain aristocratic code of behaviour and restriction, however bloody the actual battles might be. In most of this the later hoplites could have looked back to the epic *πρόμαχοι* as their prototypes.

No wonder therefore that 'lines' do appear in the *Iliad*, not only implicitly understood in descriptions of fighting, but also explicitly mentioned. The terms applied are *στίχες* and *φάλαγγες*. Their use is very often formulaic. Of the two *στίξ/στίχες* has a wider application. It can denote not only the battle order, but also the row of dancers and the rows of people sitting in assembly¹⁹). Moreover, *στίξ* (from *στείχω*, 'go in a row') can mean a row of persons stepping one behind the other ('file') as well as, after a quarter turn like the chorus in a dance, one next to the other ('rank'). The term thus overlaps with both *ζυγόν* and *στίχος*, the 'rank' and 'file' of the classical hoplite army, and should in all cases be understood as a single row.

Φάλαγξ/φάλαγγες has a more restricted meaning and can only denote the row or rank of warriors standing or marching side by side on the battlefield. Both *φάλαγγες* and *στίχες* can be used for either small groups of fighters or for large masses or even the entire

17) Examples from all over the world: H.H. Turney-High, *Primitive War* (Columbia S.C. 1971 (2)), 21-60; K.F. Otterbein, *The Evolution of War. A Cross-cultural Study* (1970), 39-44.

18) See also Pritchett, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 2) for the view that hoplite or similar close-order tactics do not depend exclusively on the possession of special armour and weapons.

19) *Stiches* in the army assembly: III 326; VII 61; 65; in a dance: XVIII 602.

armies of Greeks and Trojans²⁰). But *φάλαγγες* has an as yet unnoticed connotation that enables us to picture the broad outlines of its semantic development (see *infra* p. 26ff). At first the term most probably was connected with the better armed only, *i.e.* with groups of spearmen. When these acted as *πρόμαχοι* the term could spread to the mass of the common fighters lined up behind them. Then it came to mean simply 'rank'. The first *φάλαγγες* therefore must have been relatively small groups or rows of warriors. Also in the *Iliad* the *πρόμαχοι* are supposed to number only a handful of fighters (see *infra* p. 36 ff.). Both the nature of the *φάλαγγες* and the small, even fixed numbers of heroes that in many scenes do the actual fighting, point to an older structure of the story about the Trojan War. That structure hinged on the number nine.

2. *The nature of the epic φάλαγγες.*

In classical Greece *φάλαγξ* (in the singular) came to be used as an equivalent of *τάξις*, *i.e.* the battle order made up of several ranks (*ζυγά*). Such a meaning does not occur in the *Iliad*. Only once we meet the singular: in VI 5-8 Ajax kills an opponent thereby 'breaking' a Trojan *φάλαγξ*. Everywhere else the epic knows only of *φάλαγγες*. The usual interpretation sees in these *φάλαγγες* the rows or ranks of an army arrayed for battle²¹). Sometimes this is suggested by the epic itself, but more often it is simply presumed by its interpreters. This interpretation is certainly correct in that it points to *φάλαγγες* of warriors as single lines and not to one *φάλαγξ* consisting, as in the classical period, of several lines or ranks. As such the epic *φάλαγγες* overlap with the *στίχες* which, as we have just seen, are also thought of as single lines or files. Besides, in many places the *φάλαγγες* and the *στίχες* are interchangeable, being used with the same verbs or adjectives and in the same more or less stereotyped descriptions²²).

20) *Stiches* pointing generally to 'the lines' of the whole army: III 196; IV 231; 250; XI 91; 264 (Greeks); IV 221; V 461; V 590; XI 343 (Trojans), etc.

Stiches pointing to special contingents or rows: IV 90; 201; 330; XVI 173; 211, etc.

Phalanges pointing to 'the lines' generally: III 77; IV 281; 332; 427; V 59, etc.

Phalanges pointing to possibly one line: *infra* p. 31-2.

21) See Lammert and Latacz (*supra* n. 1 and 2).

22) Compare V 66 with XI 503; XIII 680, XV 615 with VI 6, VII 141, XII 90, XIII 718, XV 408-409. For shared adjectives: IV 90-201, 281, V 93, 591-592, VII 61, XIII 90, 126-127, 145, 680.

Although the poet can use the term *φάλαγγες* to conjure up the image of a number of rows or ranks of warriors, it would be rash to conclude from this, that the *φάλαγγες* invariably constitute the ranks of some larger organizational unit. Take the scene in IV 427-430. The *Δαναῶν φάλαγγες* advance, it is said, each under the command of its own *ἡγεμῶν*. In my opinion it is impossible to think of ranks here, because these are never lead by special commanders. In the classical Spartan army, for instance, only the files have their file-leaders. Moreover, it is a rule of both archaic and classical battles that the commanding officers are in the front rank²³). The *Δαναῶν φάλαγγες* of IV 427-430 can therefore best be understood as lines of fighters marching one behind the other to the battlefield in order to engage the enemy separately. Such tactics may come as a surprise in the light of classical hoplite warfare. But 8th or 7th century Greece might simply have been different, in its practices of war as well as in many other respects. Considering the fact that the numbers involved in land fighting and especially those of the more or less heavily armed in Homer's time must have been far smaller than in later hoplite battles, these tactics could very well have been a realistic possibility²⁴). Besides, the picture of the Greeks advancing in *φάλαγγες* that are supposed to fight on their own, is in accordance with other descriptions in the Iliad of troops going into battle.

In XVI 171-197 the Myrmidons storm the enemy divided into five *στίχες*, each of which has its own commander, Patroclus acting as their commander-in-chief. Similarly, in XII the Trojan attack is said to occur in five divisions (*πένταχα*, l. 87), which are clearly separated from each other (*διαστάντες* l. 86) and have their own commanders (86-107). Again, in XI 56-65 the Trojans advance under five commanders with Hector as commander-in-chief, who

23) Cf. J.K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1970), 95, 98, 100.

24) Individual heroes coming to the help of their comrades: XI 314; 473; 594-595; XVII 124-129, etc. Groups of heroes doing the same, thus moving from one place on the battlefield to another: XI 461 (cf. 592-593); XIII 481 (cf. 488); 489; XVII 507, etc. Similarly the *laoi* (for instance XIII 489-492) or the Trojan *phalanges* following their leaders (V 590-592 = XI 343-344). Also individual heroes can leave the battlefield (e.g. XVII 483-534) or wonder where exactly they shall enter the fight (XIII 307-327). One could think here also of Tyrtæus fr. 19,6W where the Dorian *phylai* are supposed to fight separately.

is sometimes among 'the first' and sometimes among 'the last'. This again suggests five divisions marching one behind the other into battle, under their own leaders. Likewise the Trojan 'waves' roll to the front in XIII 795-801, each under its own commander. Such 'waves', 'lines' or divisions could be the *φάλαγγες* (as they are in IV 427-430) and this explains why these too can be called with such adjectives as 'first', 'last' or 'most', *i.e.* in their advance to the field of battle and not, or not necessarily, while being engaged in the battle itself.

If the *φάλαγγες* as single lines of warriors could also fight on their own, they must have been thought of, at least originally, as consisting of only small numbers of men. There are several scenes in the epic in which little groups of *πρόμαχοι* fight without the support of others behind them (*infra* p. 43-4). This confirms the possibility of small rows operating as separate units. It is however the semantic development of the word *φάλαγξ/φάλαγγες* that makes this possibility to my mind a near certainty.

The etymology of *φάλαγξ* seems to be clear. The word is derived from an Indo-European root **bhel-* ('to swell'), which is at the base of **bhelag*, 'round wood, trunk of a tree, beam' (*cf.* German *Balken*). The primary meaning of Greek *φάλαγξ* therefore is probably a round piece of wood, trunk or stick²⁵). The problem is how the meaning 'line of warriors' or 'battle-order' could have been derived from this. The solution usually offered is: by way of metaphor. The advancing line of warriors must in some way have resembled the rolling trunk of a tree (German: *Walze*)²⁶). Recently J.H. Pattison suggested another metaphor. The essential characteristic of the stick or trunk being its straightness, the comparison, in his view,

25) P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968) *s.v.*; H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1973 (2)) *s.v.* Because of the nasal ending -ng a non-indo-european origin of the term *phalanx* cannot be absolutely excluded (*cf.* R.S.P. Beekes, *The Development of the Proto-indo-european Laryngeals in Greek* (The Hague-Paris 1969), 192, but in view of the Celtic parallel *bulgal/bolga* (*infra*) an Indo-european root **bhel-* seems to me practically certain. See also J.H. Pattison, *Le sémantisme de ΦΑΛΑΓΞ*, in: *ἩΔΙΣΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΔΕΙΠΝΟΝ. Logopédies. Mélanges de philologie et de linguistique grecques offerts à Jean Taillardat* (Paris 1988), 205-212, esp. 205-206.

26) F. Lammert, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 1); F. Wotke, *RE* XIX (1938) 1646-1647 *s.v.* *Phalanx*: 'Phalanx bezeichnet den gefällten und für den Handel hergerichteten Baumstamm' (1646).

should have been of a straight line of soldiers with a straight piece of wood²⁷). These attempts at an explanation are in my opinion hardly convincing. In particular they fail to explain the most striking feature of the *φάλαγγες* in epic vocabulary, the fact that they with one exception are mentioned only in the plural.

Certainly the demands of metre play their role here. This is especially true of the other term, *στίξ*, that simply does not lend itself so easily to the dactylic hexameter in the singular (which occurs only twice: XVI 173; XX 362) as it does in the plural. Combinations like *στίχας ἀνδρῶν* are practically formulaic because in the singular (*στίχα ἄ.*) they would create an hiatus. This explains many *στίχες/-ας* in the epic. The same holds true for the *φάλαγγες*—but not quite. Even more so than the *στίχες* the *φάλαγγες* have a formulaic quality; 31 times on a total of 34 occurrences the word is placed at the end of the verse. In most cases we find the sequence noun + verb + *φάλαγγες/-ας* (e.g. *Τρώων δλέκοντα φάλαγγας*: VIII 279; XIX 152; *Τρώων εἶποντο φάλαγγες*: V 591; XI 344). The formulaic character of this sequence determined the place of the *φάλαγγες/-ας* at the end of the hexameter²⁸). There in 12 cases the nominative form is used. The singular *φάλαγξ* would indeed be metrically impossible. However, in 18 cases the accusative plural occurs, where the singular *φάλαγγα*, would have been perfectly feasible. A formula of the type *Τρώων δλέκοντα φάλαγγα* would even have been semantically more plausible, considering the fact that it is one man who is described as destroying the enemy 'lines'. Nevertheless it is the plural that is invariably used here and that requires an explanation.

Already in the *scholia* we find the suggestion that the term *φάλαγγες* came to denote 'battle order' because 'the Ancients used to fight with sticks'²⁹). This suggestion deserves more attention than it has got so far. If we read 'spears' instead of 'sticks' (and in my view

27) Pattison, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 25) 207-212.

28) Only in VI 83 and XIII 806 *phalanges* is not the last word of the verse (as is also the case with the rare singular form in VI 6). Hesiod and the elegiac poets also have the term in accordance with epic usage at the end of the verse: Hes. *Theog.* 676; 935; Mimnermus fr. 14,3W; Tyrtaeus fr. 12,21W.

29) See *Schol. ad Iliad.* IV 254; Eustathius *ad loc.*; *Etym. Magn. s.v. phalanges*. Cf. Lammert, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 1) 1625, and Pattison, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 25) 207.

we are entitled to do so, the oldest spears being wooden sticks with points hardened by fire) the sense becomes perfectly clear. The *φάλαγξ*, originally a trunk or stick, became like *δόρυ* a spear, and the *φάλαγγες* became the term for a group or row of spears, spear-fighters or 'spearmen'. A parallel would be Latin *acies* meaning 'points' and hence 'battle array'³⁰). Now the almost ubiquitous plural finds its explanation: the line consists of necessity of a plurality of spears or spearmen.

The fact must be stressed though, that in the *Iliad*, and for that matter in the whole of Greek literature, the meaning 'spear' for *φάλαγξ* does not occur. In the epic the *φάλαγγες* are troops or rows of spearmen, or even simply 'rows'³¹). In my opinion we may nevertheless postulate an original meaning 'spear'. As a parallel, I would venture the suggestion that we find that meaning also in the Celtic *bolga* or *bulga*, derived from the same *bhelag* as the Greek *φάλαγξ*, and made famous in Irish saga by the *gae bulga* or magic spear of CúChulainn³²). Expert opinion is divided on the original

30) This explanation of the term *phalanges* was suggested to me a few years ago by Professor C.J. Ruijgh of Amsterdam University. Perhaps a parallel can be found in *αἶχμή*, 'sharpness', 'point', from which are derived 'lance' as well as 'front' (the latter in *μεταίχμιον*, the open space between the fronts), cf. Trümper, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 7) 177-178. Pattison, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 25) 209, suggests for *ke-ki-de* in the Linear B tablets the later Greek *κερκίδες* as the name for the military units of ten men in the Coast Guard Tablets from Pylos: 'κερκίς est une 'baguette, un bâton' (...). Parce que les hommes étaient disposés en ligne droite pour la bataille, on a pris ce terme pour désigner une de leurs unités, comme on l'a fait avec *φάλαγξ*'. In my opinion a more plausible explanation would be, if indeed the equation *ke-ki-de/κερκίδες* is correct, to derive the term from the sticks/spears of the soldiers (so many 'lances'), just like I have suggested for *φάλαγξ*.

31) From *φάλαγξ* meaning row or line the rare *φαλαγγηδόν* (XV 360) for a 'line' of chariots has been derived. Whether the *φάλαγγες* of Lydian *ἵππομάχοι* in Mimnermus fr. 14,3W are really lines of cavalry or simply heavily armed *promachoi* using their horses only for transport, is difficult to tell. Outside epic vocabulary *φάλαγξ* as stick or tree-trunk does occur, e.g. Hdt. III 97,3; for further testimonia: Lammert, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 10) and Wotke, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 26). For *phalanges* as a weapon see also Pliny, *NH* VII 200: 'Proelium Afri contra Aegyptos primi fecere fustibus, quas vocant phalangas'.

32) For the Irish sagas I consulted the German translations in R. Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königssage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert*, Halle 1921; for CúChulainn and his *gae bolga*: pp. 231-233; 404; 412-413; 472. The weapon is clearly legendary and has magical properties. This is not surprising, considering the magical affinities of the warrior in Celtic legend (see for example F. Le Roux, *Aspects de la fonction guerrière chez les Celtes*, Ogam 17 (1965), 175-188, and for the magic lance: *De la lance dangereuse, de la femme infidèle et du chien infernal*, Ogam 10

meaning of names like those of the *Fir Bolg* or *Belgae*. Could it not be that we find the same spear in the names of these Celtic warrior tribes, both mythical and historical, as well as in personal names like *Bolgios* or *Bolg*³³? The phenomenon of tribes being called after

(1958), 381-412, espec. 385-393; also: J. Marx, *Le cortège du château des merveilles dans le roman de Peredur*, Études Celtiques 9 (1961), 92-105, espec. 100-104; for the magic aspects of the lance in Greece and among Italic and German peoples cf. F. Schwenn, *Der Krieg in der griechischen Religion*, ARW 20 (1920/21), 299-322, espec. 299-304; A. Alföldi, *Hasta-summa imperii*, AJA 63 (1959), 1-27.). The *gae bolga* seems to have been thought of as a weapon with several barbs or points, cf. R. Egger, *A propos de deux armes des Celtes orientaux*, Ogam 8 (1956), 11-17, and C. Guyonvarc'h, *Addendum* to Egger, *op. cit.*, 18-19, who also thinks of the *lankiai*, the enormous lances of the Celts described by Diod. V 30,4—cf. G. Perl, *Die Beschreibung der keltischen Lanzen bei Diodor* 5, 30, 4, Klio 65 (1983), 133-136. The etymology of *bulga/bolga* is usually connected with IE **bhel-* ('to swell'), from which Gallo-Latin *bulga* and Irish *bolga*: 'sack'. The weapon ('javelot-sac'—Guyonvarc'h, *op. cit.*) is then seen as a spear provided with a conflated sack (to make it drive in the water?), cf. J. Pokorny, *The Pre-Celtic inhabitants of Ireland*, Celtica 5 (1960), 229-240, espec. 230-232, attributing the harpoon-like weapon to the indigenous population of Ireland from whom the Irish invaders would have adopted it. I do not find this plausible. In fighting with other spearmen the use of the conflated sack is far from obvious. Besides, names which have most probably a connection with this weapon are not confined to Ireland (*infra* n. 33). A different opinion has been put forward by E.P. Hamp (*Varia*, Eriu 24 (1972), 160-182) who rejects the derivation from **bhel-* and sees in the weapon's name a combination of *bul-* from *bel-* = 'bear', 'suffer' (cf. **balu-* = pest) and *-ga* ('javelin', Irish *gae* or *gai*), hence: 'pest-bringing javelin'. Here one could perhaps object to the doubling of the element *ga(e)*. But primarily I find this explanation improbable because it also does not take into account the names that can best be explained by a common derivation from an IE word for spear/stick/tree, from the same root as Greek φάλαγξ.

33) These names are commonly derived from **bhel-* ('to swell') in the sense of 'sack-people' for the *Fir Bolg* (cf. J. de Vries, *Kelten und Germanen* (1960), 24-25: 'Sack-Leute') or 'haughty, proud people' for the *Belgae* (cf. De Vries, *op. cit.* 53: 'die Zornigen, die Hochmütigen'). F. Le Roux, however, connected the *Fir Bolg* with the lance of CúChulainn: 'spearmen' (*La mythologie irlandaise du Livre des Conquêtes*, Ogam 20 (1968), 381-404, espec. 392 n. 52), as J. de Vries also did with the name of the *Belgae* in *Heldenlied und Heldensage* (1961), 112. The Celtic *Gaisatoi* of Polybius II 22,7 should be seen as spearmen too (from *gae*, *gai* or *gaesum*) and may for all we know have been *Belgae* (De Vries, *Kelten und Germanen*, 57-58). I find the most convincing explanation of their name indeed to be that of 'spearmen' (for other examples of such a name, *infra* n. 34). This must surely also apply to the *Fir Bolg* of whom it was told in the *Book of the Conquests of Ireland* that they 'first gave points to weapons', i.e. armed themselves with spears—see: A. & B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage* (London 1961), 108-109. As for personal names, the man who made the *gae bolga* for CúChulainn was called *Bolg MacBuain* (Thurneysen, *op. cit. supra* n. 32, 412); further we hear about *Bolgios*, a Celtic chieftain who plundered Illyria in 281 B.C. (cf. J. Filip, *Die keltische Zivilisation und ihr Erbe* (Prague 1961), 63).

some characteristic weapon is attested more often and in most cases the weapon is a spear³⁴). There is even a possibility that the name of the Dorians has something to do with δόρυ³⁵). In any case we may assume that in the centuries before Homer in Greece also bands of warriors could be called after their weapon—in the same way as δορυφόροι was to become the normal term for hired bands or bodyguards in archaic and classical Greece.

When and where precisely the φάλαγξ, 'spear', became these φάλαγγες, troops or lines of spearmen, we cannot tell. But whereas the original wooden spear with its fire-hardened point could be everyman's weapon, in later times spears with bronze or iron points certainly were a more exclusive possession³⁶). In the Early Iron Age we can imagine the spear, and in particular when provided with a heavy point so as to be used as a thrusting spear or lance, to be the attribute of the ἄριστοι or πρόμαχοι. Small groups of spearmen could hold at bay much bigger numbers of light armed or unarmed opponents—the military prerequisite for the subjugation of the latter as serfs to such spearmen as the Cretan Hybrias and his likes in the archaic period³⁷). In Dark Age Greece, for war or plunder the ἄριστοι would band together and operate in small groups of spearmen which could fight on their own, but also, if need be, with a following of their lesser armed tribesmen or compatriots. It is these φάλαγγες which in the imagery of the *Iliad* came

34) Examples include: the Franks (from *franc(e)a* = lance: J. de Vries, *Sur certains glissements fonctionnels de divinités dans la religion germanique*, in: *Hommages à Georges Dumézil* (Brussels 1960), 83-95, espec. 90; the Irish Laigin in Leinster (from *láigne* = lance: M. Dillon, *The Archaism of Irish Tradition*, *Proceed. British Acad.* 33 (1947), 245-264, espec. 262; perhaps the Sabini (from *safineis*: A. Alföldi, *Die Struktur des voretruskischen Römerstaates* (Heidelberg 1974), 169; E.T. Salmon, *Samnium and the Samnites* (1967) 30, 107 n. 5), and perhaps also the Quirites (from *quis/curis* = lance: C.W. Westrup, *Sur les gentes et les curiae de la royauté primitive de Rome*, *RIDA* 3e ser. 1 (1954), 455-473, espec. 471-472; A. Alföldi, *AJA* 1959, 18-19 (*supra* n. 32) and *Struktur*...97, 169).

35) Cf. P. Ramat, *Sul nome dei Dori*, *PP* 16 (1961), 62-65, who thinks of a tree (δόρυ) as a kind of totem of the Dorians. If true, the connection with δόρυ should more probably point to 'spearmen'.

36) Cf. *supra* n. 6.

37) *Song of Hybrias* (ap. Athen. 695F-696A) ll. 1-5: 'with this (*sc.* lance, sword and shield) I am the master of serfs'—see e.g. C.M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 1961), 400; F. Gschnitzer, *Griechische Sozialgeschichte* (Wiesbaden 1981), 59.

to mean lines or rows of fighters. Later still, through the medium of Tyrtaeus, they were to be the lines of the heavily armed in archaic Sparta and hence, in classical times and only then in the singular as *φάλαγξ*, the battle order of the hoplite armies³⁸).

If the original meaning of the plural *φάλαγγες* was 'spears' or 'spearmen', and especially those 'spearmen' standing or marching in a line, the question can be asked whether *φάλαγγες* in the *Iliad* invariably means 'lines' in the plural, or still has that original sense of 'spearmen' grouped into one (!) line. In most cases it is clear that by *φάλαγγες* a number of lines is meant. Possibly this implies already the notion of the singular *φάλαγξ* meaning one line³⁹). In a few scenes however, the plural *φάλαγγες* can be understood as meaning in each case only one line. If this is true, it would corroborate the semantic development of the term outlined above.

In book IV 251-254 Agamemnon on his tour of inspection of the Greek army visits the Cretans. They stand 'around' or 'on both sides of' (*ἀμφί*) Idomeneus, who is 'among the *πρόμαχοι*'. From behind Meriones urges on the *πύμαται* or 'hindmost' *φάλαγγες*. Instead of one line of *πρόμαχοι* followed by a number of other lines or *φάλαγγες* the situation envisaged is in my opinion that of one line of *πρόμαχοι* under Idomeneus, to be followed by a second line under Meriones. The *πρόμαχοι* are naturally the *πρῶται φάλαγγες*, and both lines will march to the battlefield under their own commanders (*cf.* IV 427-430), since the whole Cretan contingent is led by the two heroes Idomeneus and Meriones (*cf.* II 645).

In XIII 90 *ff* Poseidon urges on the *κρατερὰ φάλαγγες* of the Greeks to hold firm. Seven heroes are mentioned by name as the addressees of his admonitions (91-94). After the harangue of the god, these seven take their places 'on both sides of' (*ἀμφί*) the two

38) *Φάλαγγες* in Tyrtaeus fr. 12,21W. Even if it is not absolutely certain that this fragment is authentic (*cf.* G. Tarditi, *Paranesi e aretè nel corpus tirtaico*, RFIC 110 (1982), 257-276) the term must have become familiar in Spartan usage. We may assume that since the plural *φάλαγγες* came to signify several lines, the singular *φάλαγξ* got its meaning of one line (already in the *Iliad*: VI 6) and that at a next stage the whole battle order of several lines could be called *φάλαγξ*. It was probably through Spartan military parlance that the term came into general use by the fourth century B.C.

39) As in VI 6. Sometimes it is simply not clear whether the term *φάλαγγες* implies several lines or only one (*e.g.* XI 503).

Ajaxes, forming again *φάλαγγες καρτεραί*. The latter consist now of nine heroes, the best and most select (*ἄριστοι κρινθέντες*) of the Greeks (125-129), against whose strong line (*πυκιναὶ φάλαγγες*, l. 145) the attack of Hector and his Trojans will come to nothing. It is quite possible that in his further description of the Greeks awaiting the Trojans in ll. 130-135 the poet imagines a battle order dressed up of several ranks, although this is not certain. What matters though, is the term *φάλαγγες* suggesting in 126-127, and by implication also in 90 and possibly in 145, only one line of *πρόμαχοι*⁴⁰).

Again, in VIII 273-279 Teukros shoots eight Trojans with his bow. They are all mentioned by name in a short catalogue beginning with Orsilochos. His' and Melanippos' name as well as the use of a patronymic and an epithet as *ἀντίθεος*, all point to their being understood as *ἄριστοι*. Their death brings joy to Agamemnon who praises Teukros *Τρώων ὀλέκοντα φάλαγγας*. Should one see in this only a poetic exaggeration or a reference to many more but unnamed victims of Teukros? That could well be what Homer meant and his audiences understood in these verses. Yet even Homer's imagination was not free. The eight names here are bound up with a ninth, that of Gorgythion, a bastard son of king Priam and the main target for Teukros' arrows. He also will be killed (ll. 300-308), but in a little scene of his own and separated from his eight *ἑταῖροι*. We shall encounter such bands of nine warriors more often. They are an element of the epic tradition that goes back to its very beginning. Could it not be, that here as in XIII 126, the *φάλαγγες* at first meant only the group of nine *πρόμαχοι*⁴¹)?

There are a few more places in the epic where the *φάλαγγες* without unduly stressing this interpretation *could* just mean one line. In XIII 806 Hector is described as 'testing' while stepping forward 'on both sides' (*i.e.* to his right and then to his left) the *φάλαγγες*. One line which Hector attacks now at one point and then at another

40) For further details see my *Oorsprong en Betekenis van de Hoplietenphalanx* (*supra* n. 3), 18-19 and 87-88.

41) Of course, the use of *φάλαγγες* in VIII 279 is formulaic, so one should not press its meaning. Nevertheless, the fact that it is nine warriors who are mentioned in this context is surely significant (similarly: XIII 90; 125-126). For the phenomenon of one warrior as the first item of a catalogue and described with more detail, see G. Strasburger, *Die kleinen Kämpfer der Ilias* (Frankfurt 1954), 23.

seems to me a perfectly possible translation. Then there is the category of 'one hero victorious over the enemy *φάλαγγες*'. Patroclus in XVI 394 'cuts through' the 'first' or 'foremost' *φάλαγγες*. Apart from the question whether a second and third etc. line could all be called *πρῶται*, such scenes could easily have been derived from those parts in the epic tradition that sang the praises of the typical great warrior and his exploits against the small warrior bands which we may assume the original *φάλαγγες* to have been⁴²).

In all these cases we must of course keep in mind the formulaic and stereotyped usage of the term *φάλαγγες* in the epic. Therefore we cannot be absolutely certain that the original meaning of 'one line' is 'really' there. In my view only the scenes in IV 251-254 and XIII 90-129 mentioned above give this meaning with a fair amount of probability. The three other cases merely show the possibility of that meaning being presupposed. But even if nowhere in the *Iliad* *φάλαγγες* can signify one line, we should have to postulate that sense in some older stratum of epic poetry. We can be fairly certain also that in such an older stratum the term *φάλαγγες* as a line or group of warriors implied a very small band as well. This assumption not only has some plausibility in itself, but is in my opinion confirmed by the bands of nine heroes, whose presence can still be detected in the *Iliad* and who have to some degree determined the oldest structure of the Trojan story.

3. *Heroes and numbers.*

Typical numbers with a symbolic character abound in myth and fairy-tale, in legend and epic. Archaic cultures generally made use of such numbers in their rituals and in their story-telling⁴³). A cer-

42) This is not to say, naturally, that Homer or his audience interpreted such scenes as pointing to small bands of warriors. Probably Teukros or Achilles (XIX 152) *Τρώων δλέκοντα φάλαγγας* was understood as destroying several lines of enemies. But the origin of such *formulae* may very well be sought in the imagery of small warrior bands, ideally or typically nine men strong. The real hero then was supposed to be a match for such a band or such a number (for parallels elsewhere: *infra* p. 45-6).

43) Cf. G. Germain, *Homère et la mystique des nombres*, Paris 1954; W.H. Roscher, *Die enneadischen und hebdomadischen Fristen und Wochen der ältesten Griechen*, Leipzig 1903; idem, *Die Sieben- und Neunzahl im Kultus und Mythos der Griechen*, Leip-

tain preference for some of these numbers above others may perhaps be detected in particular cultures or cultural zones, but one has to be very cautious here. Thus it seems that the number twelve is more at home in myth and ritual of the Near East, whilst nine has in that respect more European connections. Seven appears, like three, to be practically universal, but may nevertheless in Greece and elsewhere in Europe have been imported from the Near East and even in some cases have supplanted an older use of the number nine⁴⁴).

The Homeric epic knows its typical numbers too⁴⁵). What has hardly been noticed however, is that even the battlefield scenes are to a large extent structured after some numerical principles. To discover this, one has not only to take into account those numbers which are explicitly mentioned, but also the numbers that are simply implied and that can be found by counting the names of the warriors involved. Admittedly this is not always easy, it may not be clear in all cases where one battle scene ends and the next one begins. Also the use of chariots can be disturbing. The chariot in Greece was essentially a means of transport to and from the battlefield. Whereas the Mycenaean world probably saw whole 'squadrons' of chariots maintained by the royal palaces, in Dark Age Greece these had become an individual possession that was also used individually⁴⁶). Where in the *Iliad* they appear in the fighting itself, this is due almost certainly to poetic imagination. Pairs of warriors or groups of four are often said to be on chariots. Where this is not mentioned the possibility that the poet still had

zig 1904; idem, *Enneadische Studien*, Leipzig 1904; J.W.S. Blom, *De typische getallen bij Homeros en Herodotos. I. Triaden, hebdomaden en enneaden*, Nijmegen 1930; P.J. Reimer, *Zeven tegen Thebe* (Amsterdam 1953), 12-18; W. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft. Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaos und Platon* (Nürnberg 1962), 441-456 (or in the English edition *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge Mass. 1972).

44) See for example K. Weinhold, *Die mystische Neunzahl bei den Deutschen*, Abh. Kön. Akad. Wiss. Berlin 1897, 2 espec. 60-61. Further: Germain, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 43), 79-81; A. & B. Rees, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 33), 192-195.

45) Especially: Germain, *op. cit.*, Blom, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 43).

46) For the limited use of chariots on the battlefield in Mycenaean and Dark Age Greece see: M.A. Littauer & J.H. Crouwel, *Chariots in Late Bronze Age Greece*, *Antiquity* 57 (1983), 187-192. For the *Iliad* is still valuable E. Delebecque, *Le cheval dans l'Iliade*, Paris 1951. See also J.H. Crouwel, *Chariots and other means of land transport in Bronze Age Greece*, Amsterdam 1980.

the use of chariots in mind must often be reckoned with. Therefore the numbers below five are best left out of the account when one tries to find some structures in the battle narratives⁴⁷).

What is immediately clear, is that military numbers in the epic are very small indeed. The 'thousand' camp-fires of the Trojans (VIII 556-557) do not of course point to any 'historical' tradition about the forces of Troy or to any normal army's division into that number of units. In fact, a group of one or two hundred men seems in the *Iliad* to be the maximum number for any military unit that the poet can envisage (cf. VIII 233-234; IX 85). In the *Odyssey* we once hear of a possible number of three hundred fighters (13, 390) and the context suggests that it would practically be the biggest number one could think of⁴⁸). Elsewhere fifty appears as the number not only of king Priam's sons and of Phaeacians rowing a ship, but also of warriors laying an ambush (IV 392-395) or sleeping in groups of that size around camp-fires (VIII 558-559). It is a number that evokes wealth and mass but also suggests some real military organization. In the Near East fifty was the standard unit in the armies of both Israel and the Neo-Assyrian Empire⁴⁹). Some influence from there in the early seventh century should not be ruled out. The classical Spartan πεντηχοστύς of 128 (!) men (Thuc. V 68,3) should in any case go back to a time when it really consisted of fifty men⁵⁰). Be that as it may, units of fifty would hardly be older

47) The number two can also have another connotation: two leaders going in front of their comrades or their people into battle. It is a phenomenon attested not only in the *Iliad* (e.g. many contingents in the catalogue of book II are lead by two commanders), but also in archaic Sparta (the two kings as warleaders in the period prior to 506 B.C.) and among Germans and Celts—cf. my *Oorsprong en betekenis* (*supra* n. 3), 138-139 (with notes).

48) In similes '9 or 10 000 men' are mentioned as the number of voices that can be matched by the shout of a god (V 859-860; XIV 149).

49) Fifty as a number of wealth: *Od.* 7, 103; 22, 421 (slave girls); 24, 342 (vines); 12, 130; 14, 15 (herds). For a possible reference to a military unit cf. also V 786 (Stentor shouting like fifty men). Fifty as a military unit in the Near East: W. Manitius, *Das stehende Heer der Assyrikerkönige und seine Organisation*, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 24 (1910), 97-149; 185-224, espec. 189-191; E. Salonen, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* IV (1972-75), 244-247, s.v. *Heer*.

50) The parallels for warrior groups of fifty men make an interpretation of the Spartan πεντηχοστύς as 'a fiftieth' (as again by T.J. Figueira, *Population Patterns in Late Archaic and Classical Sparta*, TAPA 116 (1986), 165-213, espec. 179) in my opinion untenable. In another context I hope to come back to the questions of Spartan army organization.

than the seventh century, or else one might have expected them to figure more prominently in such a war-epic as the *Iliad* (the same being true *a fortiori* for the rare hundred or two hundred mentioned above). Once we hear also of twenty warriors laying an ambush (4, 530) and twice of twenty opponents killed as a proof of heroic prowess (XVI 810; 847). Any special meaning can in my opinion not be ascribed to these numbers⁵¹). The situation is different however, when one comes to the lower numbers that are mentioned or that can be found by counting the warriors in particular scenes. Now real structures emerge.

Twelve seems to be a number of victims. The shouting of the unarmed Achilles causes twelve Trojan φῶτες ἄριστοι to drop dead from sheer terror (XVIII 230). Later Achilles catches twelve ἀγλαὰ τέκνα or κοῦροι from the Trojans (XVIII 336-337; XXI 26-33) with the purpose of sacrificing them on the funeral pyre of Patroclus (XXIII 22; 175-181). Diomedes kills twelve Thracians, πάντας ἀρίστους in their sleep (X 487-488; 560). Patroclus' ἀριστεία may be mentioned here too. Chasing the Trojans from the ships he first slays Pronoos (XVI 399), then Thestor (401-402), then again Erylaos (411), after whom he kills nine Lycians mentioned together in a catalogue of victims (415-417). The whole group of twelve names is clearly taken together by the poet (*cf.* πάντας, *l.* 418), although one can distinguish the catalogue of nine from the first three victims who are each dealt with in a short descriptive elaboration and of whom at least one is said to be killed in his chariot⁵²).

Seven does not seem to have any special connotations in a military context. Yet a suggestion of (sacrificial) victims may be surmised here too, as well as a possibly Near Eastern flavour in the seven guardposts around the Greek camp, implying that the camp itself is a beleaguered city with seven gates⁵³). Clearly, twelve and

51) Germain, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 43) 19, thought of troops manning ships (of twenty rowers).

52) *Cf.* Strasburger, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 41), 60; Germain, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 43), 17-18 (for the connection with sacrifices). Also IX 328-329 could be seen in this light: Achilles has destroyed 12 cities from his ships (*i.e.* on the islands) and 11 on the mainland—the 12th 'victim' would be Troy itself.

53) The ἱερὸν τέλος of X 56 points to the sacred character of the citywalls (compare 'holy Troy' and other 'holy' cities in the *Iliad*). It is possible that the seven guard posts (IX 80-88) implying seven gates in the wall around the camp reflect oriental images of the walled or seven-gated city.

seven may be symbolic or sacred numbers, but in the *Iliad* their role in military organization is very restricted. On the other hand, the numbers five and, especially, nine have an outspoken significance in the military sphere.

Five is the typical number of army divisions and of divisional commanders. We have already seen (*supra* p. 25) how the Myrmidons under Patroclus attack the enemy in five στίχες, each led by its own commander (XVI 171-197), and how the Trojans advance in five divisions (πένταχα, XII 86-87), or under five commanders with Hector as commander-in-chief. The latter situation is also envisaged in XV 329-342, where Hector, Aeneas, Poulydamas, Polites, Agenor and Paris are mentioned and where Hector again is the leading commander (l. 306: ἤρχε δ' ἄρ' Ἑκτωρ, and l. 327: Τρωσὶν δὲ καὶ Ἑκτορι κῦδος...). Again, on the Greek side the Boeotian contingent has five commanders (II 494-495), whilst Nestor marshalls his Pylians under the command of five officers (IV 293-296)⁵⁴). Undoubtedly there is some underlying principle here. We find it also in traditions about fivefold divisions of the polis or the people in archaic times. The mythical Kouretes are said to have settled in Caria in five μέρη, (*Diod.* V 60,2-3), while the people of Samothrace were in oldest times divided into five φυλαί (*Diod.* V 48,1). Legend told of the colonization of Chios by Dinopion and his five sons (*Paus.* VII 4,8) and of the conquest of Achaia by the Achaioi from Sparta under five βασιλεῖς (*Paus.* VII 6,1-2). The Dorian *pentapolis* and the *pentapolis* of the Philistines spring to mind. Perhaps one may think here also of the mythical five *Spartoi*, the archetypal warriors of whom the Theban aristocracy was said to be descended. Five βασιλεῖς we also meet in Eleusis before its inclusion into Athens (*Hom. Hymn to Dem.* 473-477). Of Megara (*Plut. Mor.* 295B) and Mantinea (*Strabo* VIII 437) we are told that they consisted of five villages before these were united in a *synoikismos*. There may be some connection with the notion, well attested elsewhere, of the city or the country divided into four parts or quarters

54) Perhaps also in some other scenes in which five heroes are mentioned there might be a connection with fivefold army divisions or fivefold commands: XI 489-491 (Ajax Telamonius kills five Trojans); XIII 477-479 (five heroes come to the help of Idomeneus); XIV 424-426 (five *aristoi* protect Hector); XV 301-302 (five Greeks hold on against superior numbers).

with a fifth and very small, sometimes even imaginary part acting as the symbolic centre of the community⁵⁵). Irish saga, for instance, is full of this symbolism of four quarters (called *coiceda* or 'fifths') around the small Meath where Tara functions as the religious centre of the whole island⁵⁶). Of Kresphontes, the legendary first king of Dorian Messenia, tradition told that he settled the population, Dorian and non-Dorian alike, in five poleis, among which Stenyklaros ἐν τῷ μέσῳ was the political centre or βασιλειον, i.e. the seat of Kresphontes himself (Ephorus, *FGrH* 70 F 116; Nic. Damasc. *FGrH* 90 F 31). One is reminded of archaic Athens with its four φυλοβασιλεῖς and its ἄρχων βασιλεύς 'in the centre'. However this may be, the epic fivefold army division could still be encountered in the classical Peloponnese. In the battle of Mantinea in 418 the regular army of Argos consisted of five λόχοι (Thuc. V 72,4), and fifth-century Corinth had in all probability a college of five στρατηγοί⁵⁷). It was Sparta however, clinging to archaic institutions in this as in so many other fields, that could show a whole range of fivefold subdivisions: five villages, five ephors, colleges of five arbiters, judges, oikists, festival-leaders, five ἀγαθοεργοί (whatever their precise function may have been), and, above all, an army organized almost to the end of the fifth century on the basis of five λόχοι⁵⁸).

These fivefold divisions naturally presuppose the existence of a bigger whole that is at least for the purpose of war divided into

55) Examples in B.E. Siebs, *Weltbild, symbolische Zahl und Verfassung* (Aalen 1969), 13-17; 24-27; 86-87.

56) A. & B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage* (London 1961), 118-190 (a comparable division of Celtic Wales: *ibid.* 173-185). The *Book of the Conquests of Ireland* moreover frequently mentions five leaders conquering the island (the *Fir Bolg* under five leaders, etc.).

57) The number of Corinthian *strategoi* is not known for certain; J.B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth* (Oxford 1984), 232-233, thinks of a college of eight, because of the eight *phylai* of the classical city. Thucydides twice mentions five *strategoi* (I 29,2; 46,2) and at other times always a lesser number (three: II 83,4; two: IV 43,1; one: I 60, 1-2). Herodotus' 5000 Corinthian hoplites at Plataeae (IX 28) suggest however, an army based on 'fifths', which would fit the evidence from Thucydides perfectly.

58) Five *Karneatai*: Hesych. s.v.; five *Bidiaioi*: Paus. III 11,2; Dorieus and four *synktistai*: Hdt. V 46,1; five arbiters: Plut. *Sol.* 10,4; five judges: Thuc. III 52,3. On the Spartan army of the fifth century (a notorious web of problems) see recently Figueira, *op. cit.*, *supra* n. 50.

fifths. Consequently, their being mentioned in the *Iliad* points to a conception of the Trojan War in which it was the people, the nation, the polis, or whatever one may call the Dark Age Greek communities, that waged that war or that sent its contingent to an allied Greek army. Such a conception is certainly older than the notion of military units of fifty men mentioned above (*supra* p. 35-6) and may for all we know go back to the dark Age or to even earlier times. Yet it could not belong to the oldest version of the epic story. For there the pivotal role was played not by the community as a whole, but by the more or less private bands of warriors. It is to them and to their typical number nine that we now have to turn.

We have seen (*supra* p. 31-2) that the *φάλαγγες καρτεραί* awaiting the onslaught of Hector and his Trojans in XIII 90 ff consist, at least in the front, of nine heroes mentioned by name; that Teukros shoots under the approving eye of Agamemnon a catalogue of nine opponents including Priam's son Gorgythion (VIII 273-308), and that Patroclus starts his *ἀριστεία* with the killing of three aristocratic Lycians followed by a catalogue of nine more Lycians (XVI 399-417). That is not all. In V 498 the Greeks stand close together (*ὑπέμειναν ἀολλέες*) to sustain the attack of the Trojans. When that comes nine heroes are mentioned in the front: the two Ajaxes, Odysseus, Diomedes, Agamemnon, Krethon, Orsilochos, Menelaos and Antilochos (*Il.* 519-560). When Hector rages among the Greeks, the poet introduces the catalogue of his victims by asking: 'Who was the first, who was the last, whom Hector killed, Priam's son, when Zeus gave him superior strength?' Nine names are mentioned then, all of *ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν*, distinguished from the anonymous *πληθὺς* (XI 299-305). Against the Trojans forcing their way inside the Greek camp to the ships, nine heroes put up a combined resistance: Athenians, Epeians, Boeotians, and Locrians, under the leadership of Menestheus (XIII 690-700). The Trojans themselves advance, expecting final victory, under the command of eight *ἡγεμόνες* with Hector as the ninth and their commander-in-chief (XIII 790-802). In the ensuing battle again nine Greek *ἄριστοι* bear the brunt of the Trojan attack: the two Ajaxes, Peneleos, Antilochos, Meriones, Teukros, Agamemnon, Prothoënor and Pro-machos (XIV 442-522). When Patroclus and his Myrmidons arrive on the scene the Greek counter-attack starts off with nine heroes

storming against the enemy: Patroclus himself, then Menelaus, Meges, Antilochos, his brother Thrasymedes, Little Ajax, Peneleos, Meriones and Idomeneus (XVI 284-350). Everyone kills his man, but Patroclus slays two opponents, one being Pyraichmes, a ἡγεμῶν of the Paeonians (XVI 284-292, cf. II 848). So the catalogue of the victims here is also determined by the number nine, with a tenth man added: a leader who deserves a more elaborate description and who is killed by the first man on the other side⁵⁹). Then follows Patroclus' great ἀριστεία that opens with his routing twelve Lycians, or, as we have seen, three Lycians and a group of nine warriors mentioned in a short catalogue (XVI 399-417). Again a leader appears as the tenth man whose final duel to the death requires a scene of its own: Sarpedon (ll. 418 ff). When after this Zeus has made even Hector a temporary coward fleeing from the battlefield in his chariot, Patroclus resumes his onslaught: 'Who was the first, who was the last, whom you killed, Patroclus, the day that the gods ordained your death?' Again the names of nine heroes are mentioned (XVI 692-696). Again a tenth man appears, the leader *par excellence*: Hector himself returning to the fight. But Patroclus' spear misses him and kills his charioteer Kebriones (XVI 727-743)⁶⁰). Around his body fierce fighting ensues in which Patroclus can bring his heroism to a climax. 'Three times hurling himself forward, a match for Ares himself, three times he slew nine men' (XVI 784-785). With that however he has surpassed his measure; Apollo paralyses him, Euphorbos wounds him with a spear, and Hector, 'as a lion falling onto an exhausted boar', finishes him off (XVI 786-828). A little later another catalogue might also be connected with the notion of the warrior group of nine: Hector, now in the armour of Patroclus, urges his Trojan allies on (XVII 215-218). Ten names are given but with an explanation added to the last one (... τε καὶ Ἐννομον οἰωνιστήν). Shortly afterwards Achilles himself is again involved in the fighting,

59) Cf. Strasburger, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 41), 23.

60) This may resemble the pattern in VIII 273-276; 300-308: Teukros kills nine men and wants to kill Hector as number ten, but hits his charioteer; XVI 693-696; 726-743: Patroclus kills nine Lycians, aims for Hector as the tenth, but kills his charioteer; XVI 415-417; 419ff: Patroclus kills nine Lycians and then Sarpedon as number ten.

chasing the terrified Trojans back to their citywalls. It is suggested that most of his victims are chariot-fighters operating individually. But in XXI 139-182 Achilles kills Asteropaios, leader of the Paeonians, and immediately seven more Paeonians, who have seen their first man falling and are petrified by fear. These seven (*Il.* 209-210) form together with Asteropaios a group of eight, but also with Pyraichmes, the other Paeonian leader who has already been killed by Patroclus, a group of nine warriors.

The frequent occurrence of this number nine is not the result of mere chance. All through the *Iliad* 40 scenes can be discerned in which on any side five or more warriors are mentioned by name in the actual fighting. Of these, ten scenes describe chariots in action. Here the numbers of warriors vary from five to fourteen and no pattern is in my opinion revealed, whereas the number nine is conspicuously absent⁶¹). On the other hand, in 28 scenes showing groups of named heroes fighting on foot, the numbers range from five to ten and a clear pattern emerges. Twelve times it is nine warriors that are mentioned⁶²). Finally two more scenes are, so to speak, of a mixed character, with groups of nine heroes in the fighting, but also showing at least one of them in a chariot⁶³). Now if in the scenes of fighting on foot the named warriors would have been distributed at random, but within the group limits of five to ten, the chance of every number from five to ten to occur in each of these scenes would have been about one out of six. Therefore, among the 28 scenes each of these numbers would have occurred four or five times if they had been chosen randomly. The twelve times that the number nine figures in these scenes make that number clearly significant. It must surely mean that the numbers of warriors are *not chosen at random*, and that the poet has a clear

61) These ten scenes in which five or more warriors are mentioned and at least one of them is on or with a chariot on the battlefield are: Greeks: XVII 575-625 (5); Trojans: V 9-83 (8); V 144-159 (8); V 461-584 (7); VI 5-36 (14); XI 91-146 (6); XI 314-342 (7); XI 420-458 (6); XIII 361-672 (14); XV 414-591 (8).

62) These twelve scenes with groups of nine warriors on foot are: Greeks: V 498-566; VII 159-169; XI 301-305; XIII 90-126; XIII 689-700; XIV 440-522; Trojans and allies: VIII 273-308; XIII 790-802; XVI 306-350; XVI 415-417; XVI 692-696; XXI 139-210.

63) VIII 253-266 (Diomedes on a chariot); XVI 284-350 (Patroclus on a chariot).

preference for the number nine as regards the groups of heroes fighting on foot. One may even go further. Nine must have been a *typical number* for a group of warriors and consequently for a primitive and 'heroic' battle order. The chariot scenes on the other hand lack any hint of fighting in groups. Here the chariot seems to be the attribute of individual as opposed to collective heroism⁶⁴).

The preference of the poet himself for the number nine can be observed moreover in two passages in which he also counts the heroes mentioned by name, just as we have done above. In VIII 253-266 the Greeks rush out of their camp, across the moat and into battle, encouraged by a good omen. First Diomedes, after him Agamemnon and Menelaos, then the two Ajaxes, Idomeneus and Meriones, Eurypylos, 'and as number nine Teukros' (Τεῦκρος δ' εἵνατος ἦλθε, l. 266). Again, for the duel with Hector 'the best of all the Achaeans' volunteer (VII 159-168): Agamemnon, Diomedes, the two Ajaxes, Idomeneus, Meriones, Eurypylos, Thoas and Odysseus. 'They stood up all nine of them' (οἱ δ', ἐννέα πάντες, ἀνέστησαν, l. 161). Clearly the poet shows a liking for counting heroic numbers. Often we hear that someone is 'the first' to enter the fight and to kill an opponent, or, conversely, 'the first' to be killed in an ἀνδροκτασία by some greater hero⁶⁵). Sometimes the second victim in a catalogue is introduced by αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα ('and after him' ..., while the catalogue of Patroclus' twelve victims in XVI 399-415 has πρῶτον, δεύτερον, followed twice by αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα⁶⁶). Also the poet offers excuses where he is unable to give the numbers of the heroes involved, because there are too many (XVII 260-261). Memorizing names is of course a gift of the Muses. It is these goddesses that the poet invokes when he wants to give the longest catalogue of names in the whole epic, the list of all the leaders of the Greek army (II

64) Sometimes it is said that Greeks or Trojans attack on their chariots in a collective charge (cf. XIII 253-255; XV 352-387; XVI 167; XX 393-395) or that such a charge is called for (VIII 179; XI 289; XII 50-65; XV 258). But the actual mass fighting on chariots is never described. The whole topic conveys a strong impression of the unreal—see also the literature in n. 46 above.

65) The first to rush into battle: VIII 253; XVII 257; or to start an *androktasia*: IV 457; VI 5; XI 5; XI 92; XIV 442; XIV 511; or the first to be killed by a greater hero: XI 420; XII 191; XVI 399; XVI 699; or the first to flee: XVII 597.

66) Cf. XII 193; XVI 696. See for this counting of slain warriors also F. Létoublon, *Défi et combat dans l'Iliade*, REG 96 (1983), 27-48, espec. 42-45.

484-493). But invocation of the Muses also takes place when the deaths of several heroes are to be described and their names should be preserved for posterity (XI 218-220; XIV 508-509). The question 'Who was the first, who was the last that X killed ...' must be understood as addressed to these goddesses. The formula is used four times. Once it is followed by six names (V 703-707) and three times by nine. Thus the number of the typical warrior band appears to be guaranteed by the Muses⁶⁷).

Within a group of nine heroes sometimes one of their number clearly acts as the leader, for instance Menestheus (XIII 689-700) or Hector (XIII 790-802). Also the nine can stand in some relation to a tenth hero, outside or above their number⁶⁸). The nine victims of Teukros (VIII 273-276; 300-308) fall, so to speak, as preparations for the real target: Hector. Already Gorgythion is killed by an arrow that is aimed at Hector. After his death the tenth projectile hits Hector's charioteer who dies as a substitute for his master. Similarly the catalogue of Patroclus' nine victims (XVI 693-696) leads to a climax: Patroclus would have taken Troy itself, if Apollo had not stopped him (*ll.* 698-711). Again a tenth opponent appears: Hector, and it is again the Trojan charioteer, now Kebriones, who dies in his place (*ll.* 726-743). Likewise the death of Sarpedon occurs after Patroclus has slain a list of nine Lycians (XVI 415-417). In XXIV 249-251 Priam calls his sons together after the death of Hector. Nine names are mentioned, certainly not all the sons that are still alive, but nine, to contrast them with the tenth who is now absent and of whom none can be the equal: Hector (*ll.* 253-254).

As we have seen (*supra* p. 25), the *φάλαγγες* in the *Iliad* are best understood as heavily armed warriors in single lines. Several of these lines can march one behind the other to the battlefield. In the

67) A variant of the formula occurs in VIII 273: 'Who was the first of the Trojans that the excellent Teukros killed?'—followed by eight names. It is perhaps not by chance that the other question: 'Who was the last...' is omitted here, for the last name mentioned is not really the last one; that is the number nine of this group: Gorgythion (300-308)—and even he is not in fact the last one killed by Teukros, for that is Hector's charioteer Archeptolemos (312).

68) *Cf.* above n. 60. This can be observed also outside the Homeric epic. One example among many others: Okeanos has nine 'normal' streams, the tenth one is the Styx (*Hes. Theog.* 787-791); more examples in Roscher (*supra* n. 43).

actual fighting descriptions of *φάλαγγες* arrayed in depth like the *ζυγά* of the classical battle order are extremely rare⁶⁹). Instead, the epic *φάλαγγες* can normally be identified with the *πρόμαχοι* fighting in front of a mass of light armed troops or even fighting on their own, without the support of lesser armed *λαοί*. When acting together the *πρόμαχοι* normally form a line. That order can be discerned or presupposed even when terms like *φάλαγγες* or *στίχες* are lacking in the description⁷⁰). Here the groups of nine heroes often fit in. We have counted already nine warriors in the *φάλαγγες καρτεραί* of XIII 125-131. Clearly the nine Trojan *ἡγεμόνες* in XIII 789-805 marching into battle in front of 'the others' convey the image of a little phalanx (especially ll. 800-801). The same is true of the nine *πρόμαχοι* who in V 498-566 are fighting 'closely together' (*ἀολλέες*, l. 498); and of the heroes who defend the camp against the enemy 'together' (XIII 685-693). Wherever the nine as a group are distinguished from the lesser armed or 'the mass' one might think of them as forming a little phalanx formation on their own. Thus in XI 301-305 nine *ἡγεμόνες* in front of the *πληθὺς* or in XVI 692-696 nine Trojans killed, 'the others' fleeing. If one considers the derivation of the term *φάλαγγες* from small groups of spearmen; the fact that in Dark Age Greece the thrusting spear must have been a rather elitist weapon; the identification of the *φάλαγγες* with the *πρόμαχοι*; the predilection of the epic for groups of nine *ἄριστοι* or *πρόμαχοι*—then the conclusion can be drawn that at least in the older layers of the epic the *φάλαγγες* had their 'ideal type' in groups of nine heroes.

But it is not only in the *Iliad* that groups of nine warriors can be met. Again, Irish saga offers striking parallels. Typical numbers are a basic feature here. Three, seven and in the case of warrior groups fifty and thirty regularly occur. But above all groups of nine abound. Chariots and chariot-fighters are frequently mentioned

69) Possibly XIII 131-133 (= XVI 215-217) describes several lines of heavy-armed arrayed in depth like the *ζυγά* of the classical battle order—although in my opinion this interpretation is not self-evident and here also one line could have been envisaged by the poet. In other scenes (cf. IV 252-254; 281-282; 427-428; XIII 795-802; XVI 171-197) the several lines march to the battlefield, but are not described as being arrayed in depth in the battle itself.

70) For instance: VIII 60-63; XII 105; XIII 800; XIV 371-375; XVI 266-268.

numbering nine⁷¹). Troops of nine men seem to be a general rule⁷²). Messengers number nine men⁷³). The redoubtable dog of Culann can only be held in check by nine men⁷⁴). The hero Dagda can with one blow of his iron battle-axe kill nine men⁷⁵). The great warriors are each a match for at least nine men and kill their enemies in battle nine at a time, especially the famous CúChulainn⁷⁶). Hence the references to chopped-off heads and headless bodies in groups of nine⁷⁷). Everywhere one meets the number nine, so that, consequently, the 'above-normal' heroic deed seems to require expression in higher numbers. 'Three times nine' figures as a fitting superlative. Three times nine men accompany a hero⁷⁸). Three times nine men fall in battle by the hands of a great warrior⁷⁹). Again it is CúChulainn who regularly slays his enemies in groups of three times nine together—one is reminded of Patroclus 'three times hurling himself forward and three times slaying nine men'⁸⁰). By simple multiplication the groups of three times nine become, more prosaically, groups of twenty-seven and CúChulainn kills his opponents twenty-seven at a time⁸¹).

It would be wrong to suppose that all this is without any relation to historical reality. The Irish prose epic reflects in many respects Celtic Iron Age Europe⁸²). There and in other Indo-European cultures the institution that the Germans call *Männerbund* played a

71) Thurneysen, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 32), *passim*; Rees, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 33), 192-193; also: G. Dottin, *L'épopée irlandaise. Introduction, traduction et notes* (Paris no year), 48-49; M.-L. Sjoestedt, *Dieux et héros des Celtes* (Paris 1940), 82.

72) Thurneysen, 130, 455, 483, 527, 648; Dottin, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 71), 41, 74.

73) Thurneysen, 386; Dottin, 107.

74) Thurneysen, 134; Sjoestedt, *op. cit.*, (*supra* n. 71), 88.

75) Thurneysen, 473; cf. F. Le Roux & C.J. Guyonvarc'h, *La civilisation celtique* (Rennes 1982), 101. An interesting parallel could be seen in Areithoos who was 'wont to crush the *phalanges* with his iron battle-axe' (VII 141).

76) Thurneysen, 133; 470; 552.

77) Thurneysen, 182; 570; Dottin, 158.

78) Dottin, 98; Sjoestedt, 118-119.

79) Dottin, 42; 48.

80) Thurneysen, 386; 392; 454; 459.

81) Thurneysen, 133; 188; 274-275; 399; 473; 558; 562.

82) Dillon, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 34); K.H. Jackson, *The Oldest Irish Tradition. A Window on the Iron Age*, Cambridge 1964. For comparison between Irish saga and Homer see also F. Bader, *Rhapsodies homériques et irlandaises*, in: R. Bloch (ed.), *Recherches sur les religions de l'antiquité classique* (Paris 1980), 9-83.

significant role. Groups of more or less professional warriors, better armed and thus socially better off than the rest of the population, hence privileged bands, held together by group loyalties and initiation rites, lived 'en marge' as regards normal society, preying if need be on friend and foe alike⁸³). In Irish saga we meet the *fiana*, warrior groups of nine men strong⁸⁴). Among the trials a new candidate for entrance into the *fian* had to sustain was the following. Standing in a pit and armed only with a shield and a stick he had to parry the spears thrown at him by nine men, because 'the law of the *fiana*' required a warrior not to flee even before nine men⁸⁵). Comparable bands of professional fighters were known among the early Germans. Here the *berserkir* or ecstatic 'bear-warriors' formed groups or fraternities of usually twelve men strong, with initiation rites and codes of behaviour forbidding among other things to flee before eleven or twelve opponents⁸⁶). Far into the Middle Ages Scandinavian kings maintained special elite troops of twelve men strong⁸⁷). Elsewhere the traces of similar warrior bands can be detected, e.g. among the Indo-Iranians and, very probably, in archaic Italy⁸⁸).

There can be little doubt that this phenomenon was also known in Early Greece. Hints of heroic or ecstatic warriors, acting both individually and in groups or *confréries guerrières* can be found in the *Iliad* and elsewhere⁸⁹). Apart from war the normal activities of the

83) Generally: H.P. Hasenfratz, 'Der indogermanische Männerbund', ZRGG 34 (1982), 148-163.

84) Sjoestedt, 109-121; Rees, 62-69; J. de Vries, *Heldenlied und Heldensage* (1961), 117-118; L. Weiser, *Altgermanische Jünglingsweihen und Männerbünde* (Baden 1927), 68-69; also, Thurneysen, 211; 274-275.

85) Weiser, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 84), 69; Sjoestedt, 111-112; Rees, 64.

86) Weiser, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 84), 44; 48; 61-70; O. Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen I* (Frankfurt 1934), *passim*; idem, *Verwandlungskulte, Volkssagen und Mythen* (Vienna 1973), 161; J. de Vries, *Kelten und Germanen* (1960), 108-114.

87) Höfler, *op. cit.* 1934 (*supra* n. 86), 310; *op. cit.* 1973, 161.

88) S. Wikander, *Der arische Männerbund* (Lund 1938), 67-95; G. Widengren, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran* (1969), 9-44; G. Binder, *Die Aussetzung des Königskindes Kyros und Romulus* (Meisenheim am Glan 1964), 17-38; H.S. Versnel, *Historical Implications*, in: C.M. Stibbe, G. Colonna, C. de Simone, H.S. Versnel, *Lapis Satricanus* (The Hague 1980), 95-150; Alföldi, *Struktur...* (*supra* n. 34), 79-80; 88; 118-119; 124.

89) Cf. B. Lincoln, *Homeric λύσσα: Wolfish Rage*, IF 90 (1975), 98-115; G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore-London 1979), 34-38.

groups are hunting and eating together. Αἰζήτιος is a rare and old word denoting both hunter and warrior and possibly pointing to such warrior bands⁹⁰). The same connection has been suggested for the term ἥρωες itself⁹¹). In any case the *Iliad* shows us the ἄριστοι on both sides as groups of ἔταιροι regularly taking their meals together (cf. IV 257-274; XVII 577; XVIII 298; XX 84). Once we are told that the great Ajax was honoured by Agamemnon and the other Greek leaders with an extra large portion of beef (VII 321-322), a 'champion's portion' and typical of these comrades-in-war⁹²). The connection between the epic ἔταιροι warring and feasting together and the historical ἑταιρεῖαι and συσσίτια in Greece has been observed before⁹³). Yet we should beware of constructing simple equations of Homeric ἔταιροι or πρόμαχοι with either epic φάλαγγες and groups of nine heroes, or with historical ἑταιρεῖαι and συσσίτια. Often, they overlap in that the heroes in the *Iliad* can at one time be part of a band of nine warriors, or form a small phalanx, and at another, not necessarily with the same company or in the same numbers, sit in groups at their dinners. In the real world groups of nine heroes forming bands of ἔταιροι can well have been a feature of Dark Age Greece. We have no direct evidence for them, but perhaps we are entitled to postulate their existence not only on the basis of the Homeric predilection for bands of nine warriors, combined with parallel phenomena in not totally unrelated cultures mentioned above, but also on some vague traces that might be interpreted as relics of their existence.

First, there is the mythical band of warriors: the nine *Kouroi* or *Kouretes*. Their number could be explained from the sacred charac-

90) Always the warrior band is also a band of hunters: cf. for example, the Germanic warrior-hunters: R. Much *e.a.* *Die Germania des Tacitus* (Heidelberg 1967), 234-236.

91) F. Crevatin, *Eroë*, RSA 6/7 (1976/77), 221-235. This remains only a possibility. It is certain, however, that *heros* originally denoted the living warrior and only got its religious connotation in the late 8th century, cf. M.L. West, *Hesiod. Works and Days* (Oxford 1978), 370-373.

92) Plato still recommends the rewarding of brave soldiers with extra portions of meat (*Rep.* 458DE; *Leg.* 921D). For this institution among the Celts cf. N. Chadwick, *The Celts* (Harmondsworth 1970), 270.

93) C. Talamo, *Per le origini dell' eteria arcaica*, PP 16 (1961), 277-303; D. Roussel, *Tribu et Cité* (Paris 1976), 123-132; Versnel. *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 88); also recently, the contributions on *hetaireiai* in O. Murray (ed.), *Symptica*, Oxford 1990.

ter the number nine has in cult and myth. One could point to such groups as the nine Muses for a parallel⁹⁴). Nevertheless, the connotation of the *Kouretes* with some prototype of a warrior band is strong. According to Pythagorean lore the number nine was called *κουρητις*, i.e. the number of the *κοῦροι*⁹⁵). Could it be that archaic folklore held some memory of *κοῦροι* operating in groups of warriors, just like the *κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν* who were believed to have once set out for and taken Troy?

Then, there is Sparta with its institutionalized bands of comrades in war, hunt and meal: the *συσσίτια*. How big were they? According to one source (Plut. *Lyc.* 12,2) 'about fifteen men', according to another (*schol.* Plato, *Leg.* 633A) 'ten'. The latter number may have been derived from the *Lakedaimonion Politeia* ascribed to Xenophon, where a Spartan king on campaign is said to share a mess with the polemarchs and three Spartiates (13,1), forming a company of ten men. But the scholiast's note can also very well have gone back to an independent source. In any case, in my opinion the two numbers could possibly be reconciled when one assumes the age classes of twenty to thirty to have been present in the *συσσίτια* for their meals, but not yet to have attained the status of *ὁμοιότης* which would make them full members only at the age of thirty⁹⁶). 'Ten' would then apply to the real 'peers' of thirty and older, perhaps up to the end of military age, i.e. sixty. 'About fifteen' would apply to all grown-up men eating together, from the age of twenty on and including the over-sixty⁹⁷). That may be, but of course ten is not

94) For the *Kouretes* cf. J.E. Harrison, *Themis* (1927) 1-74; 194-199; M.L. West, *The Dictyaeon Hymn to the Kouros*, JHS 85 (1965), 149-159; J. Bremmer, *Heroes, Rituals and the Trojan Horse*, SSR 2 (1978), 5-38, espec. 23-26. For the *kouroi* also: A. Hoekstra, *Epic Verse before Homer. Three Studies* (Amsterdam 1981), 76-81, and for other sacred enneads: Roscher, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 43).

95) Ps. Iamblichus, *Theol. Arithm.* 58 (= Kern, *Orph. Fr.* 314); cf. W.H. Roscher (1903), 24 n. 89; H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Courètes* (Lille 1939), 570 n. 1. The number nine is not dealt with by Burkert, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 43).

96) I hope to return to this subject elsewhere. On the Spartan *syssitia* see recently: S. Hodkinson, *Social Order and the Conflict of Values in Classical Sparta*, Chiron 13 (1983), 239-281, espec. 242 (for the ambiguous status of the age-group 20-30); also: N.R.E. Fisher, *Drink, Hybris and the Promotion of Harmony at Sparta*, in: A. Powell (ed.), *Classical Sparta. Techniques behind her Success* (London 1989), 26-50.

97) Cf. Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 5,7: The over-sixty are allowed to bring lamps or torches, which is strictly forbidden for the others (Plut. *Lyc.* 12,7). As for food, 'the

nine. But each συσσίτιον had its official leader, the κρεοδαίτης, or distributor of the meat, a figure that must once have been the leader of the band in hunt and war⁹⁸). It may not be too farfetched to see in the Spartan συσσίτια originally groups of (ideally) nine peers-and-a-leader, just like the king on campaign should have nine comrades in his tent. It is possible that this notion of (ideally) nine comrades in a band is reflected in the organization of the *Karneia*, a festival that has been well described as a preparation for war. During nine days nine groups of nine men each were assembled in nine tents, a mimicry of the army fitted out for action⁹⁹). If there is some truth in this, it could well be explained as some fossilized relic of an older age in which bands of, nominally, nine warriors were a feature of Spartan as well as of other 'primitive' societies in Greece.

Returning to the *Iliad* we may delineate the cultural surroundings of these warrior bands a little further. As we have seen (*supra* p. 41-2) groups of nine heroes and groups of chariots seem almost mutually exclusive. Now the collective use of chariots must have been a conspicuous feature of warfare in the Mycenaean states of southern Greece. This could just possibly suggest that the warrior groups of nine belong either to the post-mycenaean world or to an outer-mycenaean zone somewhere in central or northern Greece. The second possibility seems to me more plausible considering the fact that after all chariots are strongly connected with the target itself of the heroic band: the city of Troy or Ilios (*cf. infra* p. 56). Similarly, the φάλαγγες must have their roots in 'spearmen', but φάλαγξ meaning 'spear' is not attested in any Greek document. If its existence should nevertheless be postulated it should be located probably not in the official language of Mycenaean Greece, but more likely in some linguistic stratum older than or outside of the vocabulary of the Linear B scribes¹⁰⁰). Finally, the Coast Guard Tablets from Pylos reveal small numbers of professional soldiers,

older ones' eat the famous black soup, leaving the meat for 'the younger ones' (Plut. *Lyc.* 12,6)—is it the 20-30 who are thus distinguished from the others, or are the over-sixty in this respect distinguished from the younger ones?

98) For the function of *princeps* ('he who takes first'), often the *Jagdherr* or *Opferherr*, *cf.* W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berlin 1972), 47-48; 59.

99) Demetrius of Scepsis *ap.* Athen. IV 141ff.

100) The term φάλαγξ does not occur in Linear B. Neither does δόρυ. For κερκίδες see above n. 30.

but numbers based on a decimal system of organization: not at all groups of nine¹⁰¹). This also points for the latter to a *milieu* later than or outside of the Mycenaean civilization. Taking all of this into account, one is inclined to think of the typical warrior band of nine heroes as a phenomenon on the fringe of the Mycenaean world, let us say somewhere in Thessaly, and going back as an element in heroic poetry to, as a first guess, the 13th or 12th century B.C. It was very different from another principle of organization that we have shortly outlined above (p. 37-8), the fivefold division of the army. The latter is based on the whole community being engaged in war, the band of nine on the other hand is rather an instrument of private warfare. These two do not necessarily exclude each other in the sense that they could not have existed side by side in the same society. But they represent two different images of war. As for the *Iliad* we can be sure that the private warrior band of nine men was the oldest and the constitutive element, forming as we shall now see, the core of the epic itself.

4. *Warrior enneads, catalogues, and the Iliad.*

In the *Iliad* the poet rarely mentions the number nine in the context of warrior groups. Only twice he says that the heroes involved in a particular scene number nine men (VII 161; VIII 266). And only once he has the phrase that is so common in Irish prose epic: 'three times nine men he slew'. Nonetheless we have found many groups of nine warriors by simply counting names. This suggests that collections or catalogues of names must often have been created with the number nine already in mind. Either these groups of nine names go back to a very early stage of the epic tradition—or, alternatively, it is often only the number nine that is original, the names themselves having been attached to the various scenes at a secondary stage of the development of the epic. The latter possibility should certainly be preferred.

The groups of named heroes numbering nine can in the *Iliad* be divided into two categories. The first category consists of enneads

101) Cf. M. Lejeune, *La civilisation mycénienne et la guerre*, in: J.-P. Vernant (ed.), *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris-The Hague 1968) 31-51, espec. 34-43.

of well known heroes. Not even two groups in this class are exactly the same. Some of the great heroes are mentioned in nearly all of the groups, others figure only in a few of them. The two Ajaxes score highest, Little Ajax being named seven, Ajax Telemonius six times. Meriones is also mentioned six times, Agamemnon and Antilochos each five times, Diomedes and Menelaos each four, Odysseus, Idomeneus, Peneleos, and Teukros three, Eurypylos, Meges and Thoas only two times¹⁰²). We do not have to suppose that these enneads of various composition go all back to the oldest layers of the epic. What we have here is, of course, variations on a theme. Tradition required for many a scene of battle nine heroes; the oral poets in the course of transmitting and enlarging their songs duely provided the names. In the process more names must have come to be attached to the story of fighting around legendary Troy than any 'original' song could have mentioned. Still, the bare framework of the number nine must have been there practically from the start. These enneads of names presuppose its existence. That this notion of a warrior band of nine is in the background of the scenes in which nine heroes are mentioned fighting or preparing themselves to fight, is in my opinion confirmed by two of these enneads in which in both cases a group of seven well known heroes has been added to in order to comply with the norm. In these scenes each time two unknown warriors figure, being there simply to make up the list of nine, and, significantly, to be killed by the enemy. Thus in V 519-566 the two Ajaxes are mentioned, Odysseus, Diomedes, Agamemnon, Menelaos and Antilochos, but also Krethon and Orsilochos. They are the only ones who fall in the battle. Similarly, in XIV 442-522 nine heroes attack the Trojans: the two Ajaxes, Peneleos, Antilochos, Meriones, Teukros and Agamemnon, and again two lesser names: Prothoënor (*l.* 450) and

102) The two Ajaxes: V 519; VII 164; VIII 262; X 228; XIII 126; XIV 442 and 459-460; Little Ajax also in XVI 330; Meriones: VII 166; VIII 263-264; X 229; XIII 93; XIV 514; XVI 342; Agamemnon: V 537; VII 162; VIII 261; X 233; XIV 516; Antilochos: V 565; X 229; XIII 93; XIV 513; XVI 318; Menelaos: V 561; VIII 261; X 230; XVI 311; Diomedes: V 519; VII 163; VIII 254; X 227; Idomeneus: VII 165; VIII 263; XVI 345; Odysseus: V 519; VII 168; X 231; Teukros: VIII 266; XIII 91; XIV 515; Peneleos: XIII 92; XIV 487; XVI 335-341; Eurypylos: VII 167; VIII 165; Thoas: VII 168; XIII 92; Meges: XIII 692; XVI 313.

Promachos (l. 476)—'kleine Kämpfer' acting out their little roles in dying on the battlefield. It has been suggested that at least these lesser warriors are an invention of either Homer himself or of his immediate predecessors¹⁰³). In the case of Prothoënor and Promachos deliberate invention seems likely enough. Not even their names have an air of individuality, for are not all heroes at times 'impetuously storming forward' (Προθοήνωρ), and always πρόμαχοι?

The second category of enneads is made up precisely by these lesser warriors who seem to be created by the poet only to have their deaths described. Most of them are Trojans or allies of Troy. Their names however, are mostly Greek. But sometimes Anatolian names appear, or names formed with a Greek suffix behind an Anatolian stem¹⁰⁴). Perhaps in Ionia such names have been added to the existing store out of a certain historical consciousness. They should suggest that the enemies of the Greeks in the Trojan War were really Anatolians¹⁰⁵). Such non-Greek names in the catalogues of nine are: Atymnios and Maris (XVI 317; 319), Pyris (XVI 416), Mydon (XXI 209), and possibly Moulis (XVI 696)¹⁰⁶). Among the Greek names there are several doublets: Ophelestes (VIII 274; XXI 210), Chromios (VIII 275; XVII 218), Melanippos (VIII 276; XVI 695), Erymas (XVI 345; 415), Asteropaios (XVII 217; XXI 139-183), and Thersilochos (XVII 216; XXI 209). Also some of the names look like having been taken from other legends, or having been created as *redende Personennamen*¹⁰⁷). The heavy alliteration in Ὀρσίλοχον μὲν πρῶτα καὶ Ὀρμενον ἦδ' Ὀφελέστην (VIII 274)

103) W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias* (Wiesbaden 1960), 58-63; 70; 125.

104) Cf. A. Scherer, *Nichtgriechische Personennamen in der Ilias*, in: H. Görgemanns & E. A. Schmidt (eds.), *Studien zum antiken Epos* (Meisenheim am Glan 1976), 32-45; H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen. Sprachwissenschaftliche und historische Klassifikation*, Göttingen 1982.

105) Scherer, *op. cit.* (supra n. 104), 33-34. For this 'historical consciousness' see also: B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (Göttingen 1975), 139-150.

106) Scherer, 42 (Atymnios), 43 (Maris, Pyris, Mydon), 38 (Moulis); cf. von Kamptz, 351 (Maron), 353 (Molos), 363 (Pyris), 309 (Mydon). Moulis might be Greek, however—cf. H. Mühlestein, *Jung Nestor Jung David*, A&A 17 (1971), 173-190, espec. 179-180.

107) Cf. H. Mühlestein, *Redende Personennamen bei Homer*, SMEA 9 (1969), 67-94; Hoekstra, *op. cit.* (supra n. 94), 61-66.

smacks of invention too¹⁰⁸). In general, it would be wrong to assume that catalogues of bare names are an authentic feature going back to the earliest stages of the epic. On the contrary, they represent a literary trend that can be seen also in the catalogue of the Nereids (VIII 39-49) and that would find its highest expression in the learned or pseudo-learned catalogues of Hesiod¹⁰⁹). In the *Iliad* they bear witness to a certain rationalism and an historical curiosity that tended to fill in the gaps that tradition had left open, and to provide names where the older songs had had only numbers. All this makes it highly probable that it was in Ionia and at a relatively late stage in the development of the epic that most of these enneads of lesser warriors were, so to speak, filled in with names. The idea of the group of nine however, that was so dominating, must have been much older.

That idea can still be followed a little further. We have seen that Patroclus at the height of his ἀριστεία 'hurled himself three times forward, and three times nine men he slew'. These 27 remain anonymous. But as for his other victims, like the poet in his invocation of the Muses we can ask ourselves: 'Who was the first, who was the last that Patroclus killed?' We can simply count names again and we find then that beginning with Pyraichmes the Paeonian (XVI 287) and ending with Hector's charioteer Kebriones (XVI 737) Patroclus kills exactly 27 named opponents¹¹⁰). Of course, one could think of pure chance. Patroclus however, acts as a substitute

108) Cf. C.R. Beye, *Homeric Battle Narrative and Catalogues*, HSCP 68 (1964), 345-373, espec. 356; 364.

109) In the older scholarly literature the catalogues are usually considered as belonging to the earliest stages of the epic, but see Kullmann, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 103), 124-137; W. Köhlmann, *Katalog und Erzählung* (Freiburg 1973), 1-15, and especially Beye, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 108).

110) C.B. Armstrong, *The Casualty Lists in the Trojan War*, G&R 16 (1969), 30-31; W. Whallon, *Is Hector androphonos?*, in: G.W. Bowersock *et al.* (eds.) *Arktouros. Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M.W. Knox* (Berlin-New York 1979), 19-24, espec. 20-21 with n. 1. The 27 victims of Patroclus are: (all in book XVI) Adrestos (694), Amphoteros (415), Areilykos (308), Autonoos (694), Elastos (696), Epaltes (415), Epistor (695), Erylaos (411), Erymas (415), Euippos (417), Echecklos (694), Echios (416), Thestor (401), Thrasytelos (463), Ipheus (417), Kebriones (727ff), Melanippos (695), Moullos (696), Perimos (695), Polymelos (417), Pronoos (399), Pylartes (696), Pyraichmes (287), Pyris (416), Sarpedon (419-502), Sthenelaos (586), Tlepolemos (416).

for Achilles. In a sense he is his duplicate on the battlefield¹¹¹). How many men were killed by Achilles himself? Again, we can count. Again they number 27¹¹²). Achilles is the best hero of the Greeks attacking Troy, his match or near-match on the Trojan side is Hector. How many Greeks did Hector slay, that 'killer of men' (ἀνδροφόνος)? We can count their names scattered through the epic and it appears that another 27 men fill the list¹¹³).

By now we can no longer speak of chance. There must have been some principle at work here. I can think of no other than this. The poet—Homer and a long list of singers before him—may have been free to some extent in attaching names to episodes, he cannot have been free as regards the numbers of these names. This means that he must have been bound by the tradition that had since long laid down that heroes on the battlefield number ideally nine men, that great heroes kill their opponents nine at a time, and that the really great heroes, the champions on either side, should kill three times

111) Cf. H. Mühlestein, *Euphorbos und der Tod des Patroklos*, SMEA 15 (1972) 79-89.

112) Whallon, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 110) counts 27 names, Armstrong, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 110) only 23. But these are the 23 victims of Achilles in books XX and XXI. To their number should be added Hector in book XXII and three men killed by Achilles outside the action that the *Iliad* describes, but yet mentioned in the epic: Amphimachos (II 874), Ennomos (II 860) and Eëtion (VI 416), making up a total of 27. The other 23 are: Ainiös (XXI 210), Areithoos (XX 487), Asteropaios (XXI 140ff), Astypylös (XXI 209), Dardanos (XX 460), Deukalion (XX 478), Demoleon (XX 395), Demouchos (XX 457), Dryops (XX 455), Echeulos (XX 474), Thersilochos (XXI 209), Thrasios (XXI 210), Hippodamas (XX 401), Iphitos (XX 382), Laogonos (XX 460), Lykaon (XXI 35ff), Mnasos (XXI 210), Moulios (XXI 472), Mydon (XXI 209), Ophelestes (XXI 210), Polydoros (XX 407ff), Rhigmos (XX 484), Tros (XX 463).

113) Whallon, *op. cit.*; Armstrong, *op. cit.* gives a total of 28. The explanation is simple. The Phocians are led by two commanders, Schedios and Epistrophos (II 517). This Schedios is a son of Iphitos and he is killed by Hector in XVII 306. But in XV 515-516 Hector has already killed a Schedios, a son of Perimedes and a commander of the Phocians. Here indeed Homer must have 'slept': there should have been only one Schedios, leader of the Phocians, a figure that has now been inadvertently doubled. So the real total of Hector's victims must be 27. These are: Agelaos (XI 302), Anchialos (V 609), Aisymnos (XI 303), Amphimachos (XIII 185), Arkesilaos (XV 329), Asaios (XI 301), Autoonos (XI 301), Dolops (XI 302), Helenos (V 707), Epeigeus (XVI 571), Eioneus (VII 11), Hipponos (XI 303), Koiranos (XVII 611), Lykophron (XV 430), Menesthes (V 609), Oinomaos (V 706), Opites (XI 301), Oresbios (V 707), Orestes (V 705), Opheltios (XI 302), Patroclus (XVI 786ff), Periphetes (XV 638), Stichios (XV 329), Schedios (XVII 386), Teuthras (V 705), Trechos (V 706), Oros (XI 303).

that number. This implies that the poet, especially where the victims of Hector are concerned, must have kept their number in mind nearly throughout the *Iliad*. Just as, for instance, the eight Paeonians killed by Achilles in XXI 139-182 and 209-210 form one ennead together with Pyraichmes in XVI 287, so all the victims of Hector more intricately make up a total of three times nine. Whether or not one deems this possible for a poet creating his epic completely without the help of writing, is a question I do not want to enter into. Indeed, he must have had a powerful memory, that is the least one could say.

A comparable phenomenon is revealed by the scattering of chariots in the epic. We have noticed already (*supra* p. 41-2) that fighting in bands of nine men seems to exclude the use of chariots. These latter rather look like private equipment that can be used according to the whims and wishes of the owner¹¹⁴).

So the same heroes who at one time act as part of a group of nine can at another be represented as fighting alone or in pairs. Mostly it is in such scenes that chariots appear on the battlefield. This makes it interesting to see if in the number of chariots on both sides also some pattern might be discerned. Again, among the Greeks nine of the great heroes are at one time or another chariot-fighters: Achilles, Patroclus, Diomedes, Agamemnon, Menelaos, Idomeneus, Meriones, Nestor, and Antilochos¹¹⁵). Apart from them two chariots of lesser warriors are mentioned: of Menesthes and Anchialos (V 609) and of Iphinoos (VII 14-16)—in both cases 'kleine Kämpfer' killed by the enemy. Among the Trojans and their allies we find thirty chariots driven by named warriors. Three of them are not slain in the battles that the *Iliad* describes: Aeneas, Glaukos and Deïphobos. The other 27 are mostly there to fill the ἀριστεῖαι of Greek heroes¹¹⁶). So indeed a pattern emerges. Nine

114) Cf. *supra* notes 46, 61 and 64.

115) Achilles: XIX 392ff; Patroclus: XVI 145ff; Diomedes: (*e.g.*) V 85ff; Agamemnon: (*e.g.*) IV 226-230; Menelaos: III 29; Idomeneus: VII 608-609; Meriones: XVII 610; Nestor: VIII 80-87; Antilochos: XVII 694-699. Odysseus does not have a chariot, in XI 488 he is brought to the chariot of Menelaos.

116) I count 27 named warriors with chariots (sometimes accompanied by a named charioteer, a brother) who are killed by the Greeks: Phegeus (and Idaïos): V 11ff; Odios: V 39; Phaistos: V 43-47; Echemon (and Chromios): V 160; Hector

great warriors fight the forces of Troy and of their opponents 27 are killed¹¹⁷). The pattern appears even to be confirmed by the fact that the last two mentioned among the nine Greek heroes in chariots, Nestor and Antilochus, cannot boast a slain opponent from among the Trojan chariot-fighters. In their stead, Odysseus and Teukros, not themselves in chariots, both eliminate one Trojan charioteer, thus making up the full heroic ennead killing its 27 men¹¹⁸).

As in the cases of the 27 victims of Patroclus, Achilles, and Hector, we have to assume that the singers in embroidering their chariot scenes had to some extent been free in attaching names, and later even small biographies, to the fallen warriors. But they were not free to step over the numerical bonds claspings these and other scenes of battle from tradition. It is noteworthy that far more chariots are mentioned among the defenders of Troy than among its attackers. It is a fact stressed by the epic itself. Only the Trojans are called *ἰππόδαμοι* in the *Iliad*, and only their allies are styled *ἵπποκορουσταί*, *ἵπποπόλοι*, or *ἵππομάχοι*. Chariot-fighting seems to be more typical of them than of their Greek opponents. The heroes as a rule use their chariots individually; where a collective action is envisaged they dismount and leave their costly equipment behind¹¹⁹). Therefore the nine Greek heroes in their chariots do not form a warrior band in the strict sense that they should fight

(*passim*); Pylaimenes: V 579-585; Axylos: VI 12-19; Adrestos: VI 37-38; Agelaos: VIII 256-260; Bienor: XI 92-94; Isos (and Antippos): XI 101-103; Peisandros (and Hippolochos): XI 122-127; Thymbraios: XI 320; Adrastos (and Amphios, sons of Merops): XI 328-334; Agastrophos: XI 338-342; Chersidamas: XI 423; Asios: XIII 384-386; Harpalion: XIII 656-657; Kleitos: XV 445-447; Akamas: XVI 342-344; Thestor: XVI 401-410; Sarpedon: XVI 426; Euphorbos: XVII 59, 81 (*cf.* 808-811); Hippodamas: XX 401; Laogonos (and Dardanos): XX 460-461; Rhigmos: XX 485-487; Lykaon: XXI 35-38.

117) Already G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (Oxford 1934) 152 n. 1, had noticed that 27 Trojans and only 9 Greeks possessed chariots (without giving the evidence) and asked for an explanation. His remark: 'I suspect that we have a combination of sources; for instance, tradition always gives chariots to the heroes of the Thebais, Adrastus, Amphiaraios, Tydeus & c, which might account for Diomedes', certainly goes into the right direction—*cf. infra*.

118) Odysseus kills Chersidamas (XI 423), Teukros kills Kleitos (XV 445-447). The point is that these two Trojans *could* just as well have been killed by one or two of the other Greek chariot-fighters. As it is, 27 chariot-fighters are killed by nine opponents.

119) See V 498-500; IX 708-709; XI 47-52; XII 76-85. It is a situation presupposed in many fighting scenes, *cf.* also XIII 455ff; 534ff.

together. That could only be done on foot. But it was the idea that such a band of nine heroes was at the core of the attack on Troy that forced the singers' imagination. So they restricted the number of their great warriors fighting on chariots also to that number. Thereby a certain assimilation of attackers and attacked inevitably occurred, if it is true, as we have suggested, that the band of nine warriors and the use of chariots in fighting were in origin mutually exclusive. And if for those warrior bands an historical homeland should be surmised on the northern fringe of the Mycenaean world, one thinks of central Greece, and of Boeotia in particular, as the land of chariots that could have been the target of such bands' attacks.

For the tale of the Trojan War must originally have told the exploits of nine heroes. When 'the best of all the Achaeans' declare themselves ready to fight Hector in single combat, they rise to their feet 'all nine': ἐννέα πάντες (VII 159). These nine are the nine βασιλῆες or γέροντες, again 'the best of all the Achaeans', who form the council of war (X 194-232; cf. IX 70; 89)¹²⁰. Consequently, nine heralds attend the 'kings' (II 96-98). Of course, we know that the great heroes in the Iliad number more than nine. But that is the result of centuries of oral poetry and must have been practically inevitable. For a famous story attracts in the course of its transmission more and more names, and with them more episodes. Besides, the framework of nines and twenty-sevens itself causes more names to be drawn into the story, for it tends to force the singers to comply with these numbers as much as possible. So, when one or more of the 'original' heroes for reasons that grow out of the story itself are permanently or temporarily absent, they tend to be 'replaced' by other names, thus enlarging the original stock. Old Nestor, for example, might be one of the kings-and-councillors, he could not be one of nine warriors on the battlefield. Other heroes, like Ajax Telamonius with his body-shield, or the archer Teukros, could not

120) Old Nestor is only part of a group of nine in X 220-233 where the councillors meet. One could say perhaps: the council consists of Agamemnon, Old Nestor, and seven great warriors—cf. II 404-408: seven *gerontes* called together by Agamemnon (and also III 146-148: Priam in Troy has seven councillors). But one should not press the number seven (or nine) here; Alkinoos of the Phaeacians has a council of 12 *basileis* (8, 390). Still, it is always a typical number.

be shown fighting in chariots, because their equipment did not allow them to. But also Ajax Son of Oïleus—the Little Ajax—is never shown as a chariot-fighter. It is a widely held opinion that he owes his separate being as an epic hero to a misunderstanding of the dual Αἶαντε, originally meaning 'Ajax and his brother Teukros'¹²¹). If this is true, most of the enneads of heroic names must have been created after the appearance of little Ajax as a separate figure in the story. For in the lists of VIII 253-266 and XIII 90-94; 126 the Αἶαντες (plural) are mentioned as well as Teukros, while in XIV 442-522 the Son of Oïleus is distinguished from Ajax Telamonius and Teukros appears also (l. 515). The list of VII 159-169 has again Αἶαντες (l. 164) in the plural and therefore presupposes the existence of the 'little' namesake. Only in V 519 ff, where Teukros is not mentioned, the dual Αἶαντε could just possibly mean Ajax and his brother Teukros. However, the differentiation between the two Ajaxes must have come at a very early stage. Ajax Telamonius himself looks like a figure of early Mycenaean times, whereas Oïleus' son has firm roots in central Greece and, it may be noted, in the story of the sack of Troy or (*W*)*ilios*¹²²). So the appearances of both Ajaxes among the groups of nine heroes on the battlefield do not preclude a relatively high date for these heroic enneads (as distinguished from the catalogues of 'kleine Kämpfer'). Possibly most names were already drawn in during the time that the epic was still in its mainland Greece phase. No doubt many more factors must have played a role in the growth of the number of participants. By the time of Homer the significance of the number nine figuring in so many scenes of fighting was, I suspect, largely forgotten. Yet that number was there and it was very often respected, restricting the poet's imagination in many scenes and so preserving some primitive outline of the saga.

It is time to ask now whether traces of that primitive outline can also be detected in the beginning and the end of the Trojan War: the departure of the heroes and the capture of the city. We have the

121) Cf. P. von der Mühl, *Der grosse Aias* (Basle 1930), 30-31; R. Merkelbach, Αἶαντε, *Glotta* 38 (1960), 268-270; H. Mühlestein, *Le nom des deux Ajax*, *SMEA* 2 (1967) 41-52.

122) Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 12).

famous Catalogue in book II of the *Iliad* to tell us of the numbers of the departing army. In its present form it is very probably an extension (adapted to the demands of the story in the rest of the *Iliad* and perhaps attached to it by Homer himself) of a much shorter catalogue that had been developed almost parallel to the growth of the main body of 'Trojan' epic¹²³). What is presented as the last group of contingents in the Greek army, that from Thessaly, was probably at an earlier stage its very beginning. It is introduced by the phrase, unique for the Great Catalogue: 'Now those who lived in *Pelagikon Argos*...' (II 681). This must include all the contingents that are enumerated in the following verses, and not just the men from Phthia¹²⁴). Altogether nine contingents are mentioned, all from *Pelagikon Argos*, i.e. (roughly) Thessaly. Is it too rash to presume that here we have an echo of what on other grounds we already suspected to have been the core of the legend? It was from Thessalian Argos that a band of nine heroes, barons or kings, *Argeioi* or *Achaioi* at that, set out to raid a city rich in chariots¹²⁵). This must have been the root of the story and the prototype of all the heroic enneads that we meet in our *Iliad*. The leader of the war band was no doubt Achilles, 'Best of the Achaeans', who would slaughter three times nine opponents, and who was ultimately to die in order that the city should fall. When in the course of the epic's development the original heroes became kings leading contingents, the group of nine still determined much of the structure that was growing. First, Achilles' own contingent of Myrmidons complied with the norm, for throughout the *Iliad* the named Myrmidon heroes again number nine¹²⁶). Then, as we have

123) Cf. Kühlmann, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 109), 96-142, with a survey of the older literature on the subject. Further: A. Giovannini, *Étude historique sur les origines du Catalogue des Vaisseaux*, Bern 1969 (seventh-century origin); D. Marozzi & M. Sinatra, *Il catalogo delle navi; un problema ancora aperto*, SMEA 25 (1984) 303-316; L.M. Segoloni, *Tra filologia e archeologia: il Catalogo omerico delle navi*, Athen. 62 (1984), 601-619.

124) P. Loptson, *Pelagikon Argos in the Catalogue of Ships (681)*, Mnem. IV 34 (1981), 136-138.

125) It has been suggested more than once already that the origin of the Trojan saga should be located in Thessaly—see R. Drews, *Argos and the Argives in the Iliad*, CPh 74 (1979), 111-135, with further bibliography (cf. Drews, p. 133: 'Aeolic bards sang of the destruction of Troy by nine barons of Pelasgic Argos...'); also Meyer, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 12).

126) Kullmann, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 103), 126.

seen, the βασιλῆες of the whole army still number, ideally, nine, as do the named πρόμαχοι in so many scenes.

As for the end of the story, there is the famous Wooden Horse with the warriors in its belly. For various reasons I do not believe that it belonged to the oldest versions of the epic. Soldiers inside a wooden structure that is rolled towards the city, entering it finally through a breach, resemble Assyrian siegecraft too closely to be trustworthy as age old 'tradition'¹²⁷). Perhaps therefore we should not pay much attention to heroic numbers here. After all, Homer himself gives only a few names, and that in the *Odyssey*, of the ἄριστοι who had thus entered the city: Menelaos, Odysseus, Diomedes and Antiklos (4, 270-286), Neoptolemos (11, 523), and Epeios (8, 493; 11, 523). But there is a possibility that at the time this story was shaped (late 8th century B.C.?) there still may have been some notion, perhaps in non-Homeric tradition, of the ideal number nine for a group of heroic warriors¹²⁸). In any case it is remarkable that we meet nine names in Vergil, *Aeneid* II 261-264: Thessandrus, Sthenelus, Ulixes, Acamas, Thoas, Neoptolemus, Machaon, Menelaus and Epeos. Possibly Vergil's source was the Greek Peisandros, who in his turn might have known of a tradition of nine Greeks entering Troy¹²⁹). In Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica* perhaps we can find their traces too. Here no less than 30 names are given (XII 314-329)—and not even that list is complete the poet says (l. 327). In the actual fighting within Troy, however, described in book XIII, of these 30 named warriors only eight and a twin pair appear again: Neoptolemos, Menelaos, Odysseus, Diomedes, Little Ajax, Meges, Epeios, Idomeneus, Akamas and Demophon. It does not require much twisting of the evidence to

127) An interesting interpretation in terms of 'shamanistic' war magic in: W.J. Abaev, *Le cheval de Troie*, AnnESC 18 (1963), 1041-1070; I think it very probable that under the influence of reports on Assyrian siegecraft in the later eighth century the original magic device was reinterpreted as a 'wooden horse' carrying warriors into the city.

128) One may think here again of the nine Kouretes and similar groups. In the temple of Rhodian Lindos nine *panopliai* had been dedicated in memory of Tlepolemos' contingent for Troy: C. Blinkenberg, *Lindos. Fouilles de l'acropole. II Inscriptions* (Copenhagen 1941), nr. 28 III-XIV.

129) Macr. *Saturn.* V 2, 4-5; cf. J.W. Jones, *The Trojan Horse*, CJ 65 (1969/70), 241-247, espec. 243.

suspect that Demophon has joined his twin brother Akamas here, so to speak, as a supernumerary hero. But with this we have left the realm of any living tradition already far behind.

5. *Summary: shifting images of war.*

In the beginning of this article I stated that warfare in the *Iliad* is an amalgam of images. I have not tried to describe all of these here. For instance, one could think of the solitary figure of Ajax Telamonius with his body shield as conveying some idea of an early Mycenaean champion on the battlefield. At the same time this Great Ajax, sheltering with his proverbial shield the archer Teukros, points to tactics known from 6th century archaic vases. Similarly, the appearance of chariots in the epic has a range of references from Mycenaean to early archaic times. But where the heroic poetry on the sack of Ilios or Troy was born, somewhere in Thessaly and in the 13th or 12th century B.C. as I believe, it was the small warrior band, the typical band of nine, that determined to a considerable extent the presentation of the war in song and epic. It may have been roughly in the same time and region that the term *φάλαγγες* arose to denote a group of spearmen. When the nine heroes were thought of as *πρόμαχοι*, i.e. champions fighting in front of their people, a certain amalgamation with those spearmen took place. Here we have one of the major shifts in the epic imagery of war. From the solitary band of nine heroes attention turned to 'lines' of spearmen, the *φάλαγγες*, and from there to bigger formations and larger numbers. I suppose that this process got under way already in the Greek homeland, connected with an admixture of central and southern Greek elements into the body of 'Trojan' epic, but that it became predominant during and after the migrations to Aeolis and Ionia. At the same time, I would suggest, the city itself, the stake of the war, came to be identified with the ruins of an Anatolian fortress, and the war itself took on, like many a colonization, the shape of a panhellenic enterprise. Other images of war now also could make themselves felt, derived no longer from the actions of the *πρόμαχοι* only, but of whole tribes and nations arrayed for battle. Images of five divisions of the total army, or of all the people massed behind two leaders as twin champions that

were to bring good fortune (this latter an element that I also have not treated above). By the time of Homer even reflections of contemporary army regiments of regularly fifty men had found their way into the poem. Then we can speak of a real mixture of images, of mass fighting and individual combats; of *στίχες* or *φάλαγγες* as the rows or lines of armies, and of *φάλαγγες* as the formations of only small bands of élite warriors, shown at one moment as the front rank of a lesser and light armed mass of people, and at another as a band fighting on its own. In that latter capacity they prefigure the hoplites of archaic and classical times. But shimmering through all this we can detect a numerical framework shaping many scenes: the idea of the heroic band of nine. Mostly it is hidden beneath a catalogue of names, yet it is there in the *Iliad* that Homer left behind, offering us an inkling of the tale's remote beginnings.

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