

“The hoplite”

THE *OTHISMOS* DESCRIBED IN PAUL BARDUNIAS' ARTICLE OFTEN DID NOT COME TO PASS. IT WAS A TEST OF A MAN'S COURAGE “WHO KEEPS HIS POST IN THE RANKS AND STEADILY FACES THE SWIFT WOUND THE SPEAR MAY PLOUGH” (EURIPIDES, *HERAKLES* 162). THE OVERLAPPING WALL OF SHIELDS, BRISTLING WITH SPEAR POINTS WAS AN INTIMIDATING SIGHT. MORE THAN ONCE ONE SIDE BROKE BEFORE BOTH FORMATIONS MADE CONTACT.



1.2.17 and 6.5.25) seems to suggest the spear was carried in the underarm position, attempting to thrust under the shield. He is contradicted by several others who indicate the spear was carried and thrust overhand. Both the bronze statuette and the image on the amphora shown here seem to suggest that the latter was for Greeks the accepted position and this then, is what Les Powers has reproduced on the cover. Not that this is written in stone, of course...

The Corinthian helmet, of the *Hermione* type, is on display in the Altes Museum, Berlin, Germany. It has been heavily restored, which explains the asymmetrical shape. The warrior model can be seen in the same museum. The black-figure amphora dates to the late 6th century BC and was made in Athens. It is now on display at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, the Netherlands ■

The hoplite phalanx is described by several ancient authors. They report numbers in the phalanx, numbers per rank, quirks of the formation and, of course, we can read about the clash of arms itself. But it never hurts to have pictures and artifacts to improve upon the image delivered by the authors, especially if they are contradicting. This is for instance the case where it concerns the exact posture of the hoplite right before the phalanxes crashed into each other. Xenophon (*Anabasis*

