Ancient Warfare, Volume II

Ancient Warfare, Volume II:

Introducing Current Research

Edited by

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and Jared Kreiner

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INTRODUCTION: THE MANY FACES OF ANCIENT WARFARE

GRAHAM WRIGHTSON

This volume stemmed from the first reiteration of the International Ancient Warfare Conference Series (IAWC) begun and run so successfully before the pandemic by Geoff Lee. During the pandemic we had the idea of a remote conference through Zoom, and I took the initiative in setting that up finally in 2022. That June saw 25 presenters from all over the world connect remotely via zoom to engage in great papers and discussions on topics from Greece and Rome to China.

The first volume of this book series, *Ancient Warfare: Introducing Current Research* resulted from the very first International Ancient Warfare Conference Series (IAWC) meeting Geoff Lee hosted in Aberystwyth in September 2013. That it has taken almost a decade for the second volume to come out is more a testament to the state of academic publishing and the pandemic than the efforts of the editors. Finally, the second volume publishes a great mix of papers on all aspects of Greek and Roman warfare ranging from topics to delight a purist such as military tactics and logistics, through more social aspects of war such as religion and women, to the reception of historical wars in more modern times. It presents papers from graduate students and established professors alike in keeping with the inclusive and welcoming nature of the conferences.

The conference has developed into a hybrid version with two in-person meetings held simultaneously in Europe and the USA both connected remotely through Zoom. The 2023 version saw gatherings at Bonn in Germany and Sioux Falls in South Dakota, as well as online presentations coming from as far afield as Sri Lanka, Australia, and New Zealand. The 2024 conference, under a new name the War in the Ancient World International Conference (WAWIC), will host simultaneous gatherings in Vienna and Chicago with the hope to expand in person offerings in other continents or regions in the future.

We hope to have compiled a volume that demonstrates the wide array of topics currently studied by researchers around the world, while also presenting rigorous scholarship that brings new ideas to the forefront. Rather than having a definitive theme, these papers, just as those in the first volume, represent the broad array of research currently going on around the world.

Arranged chronologically in Greek and Roman history sections, the papers take readers through all manner of current topics on ancient warfare from traditional battle narratives or strategic analyses of campaigns, through the logistical considerations of armies in the field, to the ideology of women in war. As befitting the nature of the conference, the authors featured in this volume blend together current graduate students with both early career and more established academics. The end result, we hope, is a fascinating insight into the many different types of research military historians do and end the stigma of the study of warfare simply being the study of the movements of men with weapons on a battlefield. The study of ancient war deals with a myriad of different topics and deals with themes in all types of history: social, cultural, economic, religious, literary, numismatical, epigraphical, ethnographical, topographical, prosopographical, and mythical as well as the usual political and military. The study of ancient war is a field that is growing in popularity and continues to surprise with many innovative new ideas.

The first two chapters in the book examine women in war and myth from two different perspectives. In the first, **"**Dying for 'doing': Mythical Athenian heroines in service of the city," Ioannis Mitsios examines the theme of sacrifice for the city or state. He argues that the cases of women sacrificing themselves in war "situated the Athenian virgin women as the ideal examples and paradigms of bravery. The males were expected, given their elevated and superior status, compared to the females, to act with the same (if not with more) courage and bravery during the battle." The power of women to influence their men in war is a fascinating topic in modern studies of warfare both ancient and modern and the second chapter examines how more modern women utilized the actions of ancient women as a model.

Phyllis Brighouse argues in her paper, "The Appropriation of Women in Classical Literature during the Great War (1914-18) by the *Girls' Own Paper*," that women in Britain saw their roles as encouraging the men in war and to do so needed to strengthen their own resolve. These women latched on to the moral behavior exemplified in Greek myths, such as the

self-sacrifice described by Mitsios previously, with a specific focus on the Trojan War. She concludes, “A conflation of ancient and modern, it may be seen, was used by the publishers of the *Girls Own Paper* to strengthen the resolve of its female readership at a time of suffering and loss during the Great War.” Both these papers confirm the enduring and wide-reaching impact of Greek culture and stories of war.

The next two papers in the volume examine more traditional aspects of warfare studies, namely armament and tactics. Florian Feil in his paper, “‘Not a few hoplites’: The evolution of Illyrian infantry, 5th to 3rd century BC,” examines the evidence for the type of infantry used in Illyria in the Fourth and Third centuries BCE. He argues that contrary to current scholarly opinion though more widely associated with light infantry, the Illyrians actually began relying on a core group of hoplites just like other Greek cities of the era. This changes completely our understanding of warfare in the region and our interpretation of all the battle descriptions that have survived.

Graham Wrightson harks back to more traditional avenues of military history to examine battlefield tactics. He argues in his paper, “A new interpretation of the Battle of Panion,” that contrary to popular belief it is possible to reconstruct the events of the Battle of Panion through a comparative analysis of the theory of combined arms and a detailed study of unit deployment within the battlefield topography. His analysis provides an updated detailed examination of a battle that has been largely ignored since Belazel Bar Kochva’s influential analysis in 1978. Both these papers demonstrate that innovative recent research can update even more traditional avenues of military history.

The next two papers, though spanning Greek and Roman topics, examine the influence of image, propaganda, and religion in the actual conduct of wars. In his paper, “The Unusual Encounter Between Demetrius III and Alexander Jannaeus: Religious Beliefs as a Motivating Factor in Ancient Warfare,” Kenneth Atkinson argues that religious beliefs motivated Jews to wage war and played the key role in the wars of Demetrius III and Jannaeus as well as the associated propaganda. This paper reminds us of the importance of personal motivations for fighting in wars rather than simply the whims of individual statesmen or states.

Borja Vertedor Ballesteros argues in his paper, “Deterrence and Self Representation: the Roman Headquarters at Syracuse,” that when in a camp on campaign the Roman army headquarters acted as a conduit for

Roman power abroad and sought simultaneously both to attract allies or peace concessions and to deter enemy action. He concludes that the Roman military "camp was not only a perfect machine for intimidation and violence, but it also acted, systematically, as a point of reference and representation of Rome's political and diplomatic power." The camp itself served as pro-Roman propaganda in presenting the image that furthered Rome's goals in foreign territory and motivated people's actions, similar to the motivation of religion argued by Atkinson above. Both papers show how crucial it is to view military matters through other lenses.

The next two papers both present new interpretations of often discussed aspects about how the Romans waged war. In the first paper, "*Illa vero pars calliditatis egregia et ab omni reprehensione procul* remota... Hannibal, the Carthaginians and the stratagems in Valerius Maximus," Gabriele Brusa examines the long running debate concerning the Roman use of trickery in war specifically in the writings of Valerius Maximus who drew a distinction between treachery and skillful strategies employed by the Romans and the Carthaginians. He argues that Carthaginian treachery is wrong and un-Roman but the use of skill in battle is praiseworthy, yet the Romans unlike the Carthaginians did not need only to rely solely on stratagems because they could win through Roman *virtus* – courage and manliness. The Roman way of war still continues to fascinate scholars and general readers alike.

François Gauthier in his paper, "The Suspension of the War-Tax (*Tributum*) in 167 BCE: A Short-Sighted Decision?," examines how Rome paid for its wars. He argues that "the war-tax paid by Roman citizens eligible for military service" once the mainstay of the Roman military war chest was not canceled in favor of annual income from defeated enemies as the culmination of a determined financial plan. He concludes that "the suspension of *tributum* was not based on a rational long-term plan in which the systematic implementation of provincial taxation was supposed to replace it. Rather, the senate gradually took steps to quickly raise revenues through mining activities instead of creating new provincial fiscal regimes."

The next four papers examine the impact of wars on wider Roman society, even to the soldiers themselves, and how these wars affected other cultures. In the first paper, "From battle to text: a review of the word Actium in Latin literature as a resource for identity and geographical monumentality," Nelson Henrique da Silva Ferreira examines the role that the Battle of Actium assumed in Roman literature as a representation of

culture and collective consciousness. He concludes that "in literature, the term seems to be adaptable and, regarding collective memory, although education or propaganda could influence its meaning, it may have been quite open to different approaches." In this paper we see just how impactful even something as simple as the name of a battle could be.

Continuing in this lens of analysis, Jared Kreiner's paper, "The Impact of the Tacfarinas Revolt beyond Africa," assesses just how far reaching was a revolt against Roman rule in northern Africa. He analyzes the grain supply crisis affecting Rome in the year 19 CE, which led to the questioning of Imperial control, and argues that the troubles began with the little-known revolt in Africa. His examination provides a useful assessment of how well the Emperor Tiberius dealt with crises. As a contrast to the prior paper, we see how military setbacks could impact Roman society just as much as victories, especially in the immediate term.

Byron Waldron's paper, "Neglected Iranian and Syriac Evidence on the Persian Campaigns of Gordian III and Galerius," examines an important war in the later Roman Empire through oft-ignored non-Roman sources. His analysis demonstrates the wide-ranging impact Roman wars had on everything around them especially on neighboring cultures and societies. Moreover, Waldron makes the excellent argument for the importance of "seeking to fully employ this array of traditions where appropriate, to challenge existing Romano-centric narratives that have solidified over time." Thus, we are better able to find the truth. "By integrating two non-Roman historical traditions into current reconstructions of Roman campaigns, the case studies in this article argue that we should be reassessing the wars of Gordian and Galerius. Moreover, they suggest that important pieces of information in non-Roman sources might still be awaiting scholarly attention." His excellent paper opens the door for future scholarship to mine more fully other non-Roman sources of information.

The fourth paper in this section, Brendon McCarthy argues that injuries received in war had a greater impact on the everyday experience of Romans than previously understood. Using the evidence of modern studies of Traumatic Brain Injuries and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy this paper examines how severe injuries could affect the lives both the veteran soldiers and those around them. He concludes that viewing ancient soldiers, "with a strong understanding of TBI based on modern research allows us to better understand the risks of ancient war." All four of these papers demonstrate the wide-ranging impact of war, and its study, outside of the usual confines of the battlefield and the campaign.

The final two papers examine the ideology of war either in representations on coins or in religious doctrine and serve as a great endpoint for the volume by both examining threads begun in earlier papers. Despina Iosif, in her paper, "Warfare and *Canones Sacrorum Contemptores,"* rounds out the chronological papers with a detailed assessment of the conduct of soldiers under the later Christian emperors and how far religion impacted war. As a counterpoint to Kenneth Atkinson's earlier paper on the importance of Jewish beliefs as an encouragement to wage certain wars, Iosif argues that "Christian involvement in military affairs started creating problems for the Christian conscience from the beginning of the fourth century." Regardless of the era, location or states involved, this paper confirms that religion has always played a crucial role in war.

Julia Wetzel, in her paper, "With the Courage of an Emperor: Virtus and the Empress in Roman Propaganda," connects back to the first papers in the volume concerned with the depictions of women in war. She examines the idea of manly Roman virtue – *virtus* – as a feminine trait when used by empresses in coinage or as Emperors deploying female imagery on their coins. This paper also connects with Gabriele Brusa's examination of the term *virtus* and reveals the importance of considering all aspects of Roman propaganda. She concludes that the Roman empress's "image became an extension of the emperor's image while becoming a tool for him to use, and an example for the masses to emulate." This paper, just as all the others in this volume, demonstrates the enduring appeal of military history in many forms.

There are many intricate areas to examine in the field of ancient warfare and this volume presents just a few. From propaganda to logistics and tactics to religion, this small collection of papers provides insight into the many different themes concerned with ancient warfare and opens numerous doors for other scholars to open to even more analyses. Though an old topic, ancient history can and does still provide us with many new ideas and a myriad of ways to think about the past.

"Dying for 'Doing'": Mythical Athenian Heroines in Service of the City

Ioannis Mitsios

We have no example of historic human sacrifice in ancient Greece. The only exception to this rule may be the sacrifice of three captive Persian princes (nephews of Xerxes) by the Athenian general Themistocles, as attested by Plutarch (*Them.* 13.2-5). On the contrary, we have a number of cases of human sacrifice in Greek mythology. In my paper, by employing an interdisciplinary approach, taking into consideration the literary, epigraphic, iconographic and topographic evidence, along with the historical and ideological context of the classical period, I will examine the phenomenon and context of the voluntary sacrifice of the virgin for the salvation of the city. In another paper I have examined Athenian heroines that sacrificed themselves for the salvation of the city during times of mythical plagues or famines; here I look at self-sacrifice in the context of war.[1]

We have from Greek mythology examples of women (mostly virgin) with unparalleled physical strength that compete against (and sometimes defeat) their male counterparts. Pindar (*Pyth.* 9.26) attests that the heroine Kyrene caught the attention of Apollo because of her fight with lions, while Hesiod (*Ehoiai* fragm. 76 MW), speaks about the heroine Atalanta, who participated in the hunt of the Kalydonian boar and defeated the hero Peleus in wrestling.

Alongside the mythological examples, there are some historical ones (most of them provided by Thucydides) of women who fight at the side of men during times of war and show remarkable strength and bravery, contributing to the defeat of the enemy. Thucydides (3.74.1) in his account on the stasis

[1] Ioannis Mitsios, "Ancient pandemics in mythical Athens: the Leokorai and the Hyakinthids," *Interface* 17 (2022): 85- 108.

of Corcyra speaks of the brave act of women, who joined their men, "fighting from the rooftops" and "standing their ground beyond their nature". In another passage, Thucydides (2.4.2) attests a similar incident, where the women of the Plataeans (along with slaves) joined the fight "pelting their enemies with stones and tiles," contributing to the defeat of the Thebans. Another well-known (and very characteristic) historical example concerns Telesilla, the Argive poetess. Pausanias (2.20.9), in his passage describing the conquest of Argos by the Spartan King Cleomenes, attests in detail her brave acts.

In all these cases, the brave and heroic acts of women, both in the mythological and the historical examples, are active. In the mythological examples, the women show unparalleled strength, something to be admired, while in the historical ones, they compete and fight as active participants in the episodes and contribute to the defeat of the enemy. But what happens if some women show their brave, heroic and patriotic acts through a passive behavior by committing suicide and voluntary sacrifice for the salvation of the city?

The phenomenon of the death of one for the salvation of the many *("unum pro multis dabitur caput"*) is known as "*dying for doing*" and the passive behavior of the participant (more specifically the self-killing) is a heroic act, having the same results as fighting in battle, leading to victory and the defeat of the enemy.[2]

My examination will focus on the heroines of Athens: Aglauros, the daughter of Kekrops and the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids, daughters of Erechtheus, who, along with heroines from Boeotia, provide the only known examples of mythical virgins who voluntarily sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the city during times of war.[3] The context of their self-sacrifice has been examined by a variety of scholars.[4] My examination will mostly

[2] Emily Kearns, "Saving the City," in *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander*, eds. Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 329.
[3] Examples from Boeotia include Metioche and Menippe (daughters of Orion), also known as the Koronides, as well as Andokleia and Alkis (daughters of Antipoinos), king of Thebes. Another example may be the daughters of Skedasos, at Leuktra, although they remain nameless. For the issue, see Emily Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1989), 59-60.
[4] Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 57-63; Kearns, "Saving the City*"*, 327-32, 338-42; John Wilkins, "The State and the Individual: Euripides' Plays of Voluntary Self-Sacrifice," in *Euripides, Women and Sexuality,* ed. Anton Powell (London:

emphasize: a) the impact of the brave act, b) its relation to the role of men, who die on the battlefield, c) the Funerary Speeches, spoken at Kerameikos, as well as d) the gender and identity parameters.

Human sacrifice is a very common pattern in ancient Greek myth and in some cases the sacrifice is avoided and the victim escapes death. The best-known female sacrificial victim in ancient Greek mythology, and one of the most famous heroines, receiving panhellenic cult in Brauron,[5] Megara,[6] and Achaia,[7] remains Iphigeneia, daughter of King Agamemnon and Queen Clytemnestra. Although Iphigeneia is the most known example of a sacrificial victim, there are several differences between her sacrifice and the sacrifice of the Athenian heroines examined here: a) the decision of her sacrifice is not taken by herself, but by her father, b) she is sacrificed, instead of committing suicide and c) most importantly, she escapes death in the end, being transformed into a deer, by Artemis.[8]

As I have already stated, paradigms of maidens who voluntarily sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the city during times of war exist only in Athens and Boeotia, with Athenian examples being: a) Aglauros, the daughter of King Kekrops and b) the Erechtheids or Hyakinthids, daughters of King Erechtheus and Queen Praxithea.

I begin my examination with Aglauros, daughter of King Kekrops.

Routledge, 1990), 190-91; Christopher Collard, M. J. Cropp and K. H. Lee, *Euripides: Selected fragmentary plays* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1993), 192; Jennifer Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 101-03; Utah Kron, "Patriotic Heroes" in *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, ed. Robin. Hägg (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1999), 78-79; Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *Athenian Myths and Festivals: Aglauros, Erechtheus, Plynteria, Panathenaia, Dionysia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28-9, 78-80, 105-08; Ioannis Mitsios, "The Iconography and Cult of Heroes on the Acropolis of Athens from the Late Archaic to the Classical period: Contribution to the Study of Athenian Autochthony" (Ph.D. diss., University of Athens, 2018), 20-27, 28-35.

[5] For her cult in Brauron, see Euripides (*IT*, 1462-7).

[6] For her cult in Megara, see Pausanias (1.43.1).

[7] For her cult in Achaia, see Pausanias (7.26.5).

[8] Sourvinou-Inwood, *Athenian Myths and Festivals: Aglauros, Erechtheus, Plynteria, Panathenaia, Dionysia*, 31 n. 25, 32. For a comparison between Iphigeneia and the Athenian heroines, especially the Hyakinthids, the daughters of king Erechtheus, see Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 57, 60; Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 104-06.

Aglauros (Daughter of King Kekrops)

The Athenian heroine Aglauros is mostly known from her involvement in the birth of Erichthonios. According to the mythical tradition and the account of Apollodorus (3.14.6), Athena placed her son Erichthonios in a chest, which she entrusted to the daughters of Kekrops, Aglauros, Herse, and Pandrosos (also known as the Kekropids or Aglaurids), though forbidding them to open it. The daughters of Kekrops are often depicted in the episode of the birth of Erichthonios, in the infamous “anodos scenes”, where Ge hands the baby Erichthonios to Athena.[9] On a kylix of the Codrus Painter, dating from c.430 BC, now in Berlin, the daughters of Kekrops are securely identified, thanks to the surviving inscriptions (**Fig. 1a+b**).[10]

Fig. 1a. Berlin, Antikenmuseen F 2537. PHOTO: The birth of Erichthonios.

[9] For the depiction of the Kekropids in the birth of Erichthonios, see *LIMC* I (1981) s.v. Aglauros, Herse, Pandrosos no. 6-13, and Mitsios, *The Iconography and Cult of Heroes on the Acropolis of Athens from the Late Archaic to the Classical Period: Contribution to the Study of Athenian Autochthony*, 92 n. 268 (with emphasis on depictions from vases deriving from the Acropolis itself).
[10] Berlin, Antikenmuseen F 2537; BAPD 217211.

Fig. 1b. Berlin, Antikenmuseen F 2537. PHOTO: The Aglaurids (named) in the birth of Erichthonios.

Pandrosos was the only daughter who obeyed the rules of Athena, while Aglauros and Herse disobeyed Athena's orders, resulting in their death by jumping from the hill of the Acropolis. Given the testimonies of Apollodorus, Aglauros is a disobedient heroine and her feminine curiosity causes her death. She serves as a paradigm to avoid and her disobedient behavior is depicted in some vases of the classical period.[11] One example includes an alabastron from the National Archaeological Museum at Athens, attributed to the Karlsruhe Painter, dating from 470/60 BC. (**Fig. 2**).[12]

[11] For the depiction of the disobedient and disloyal behavior of Aglauros and Herse, see Mitsios, *The Iconography and Cult of Heroes on the Acropolis of Athens from the Late Archaic to the Classical Period: Contribution to the Study of Athenian Autochthony*, 81 n.224.

[12] Athens, National Archaeological Museum 17917; BAPD 209099.

Fig. 2. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 17917. Alabastron with the disobedient behavior of Aglauros.

Besides her involvement in the birth of Erichthonios, Aglauros is connected with other mythological motifs, more specifically the war between Athens and Eleusis. In this episode we come across a completely different aspect of Aglauros and the heroine is presented in a very different positive context. According to the testimony of Philochoros (*FGrH 328 F105*), when the Eleusinian King Eumolpos attacked Athens, during the kingship of Erechtheus, the Delphic oracle reported that the city of Athens would be saved only if someone sacrificed themselves. Then, the heroine Aglauros threw herself off the walls of the Acropolis in order to save the city. The act of leaping from a cliff is common in Greek mythology, resulting in heroization and deification, and other examples of such heroines exist, as in

the cases of Ino and Molpadia (Hemithea).[13] In terms of Aglauros, her jumping from the cliffs of the Acropolis resulted in the foundation of a sanctuary, where the Athenian ephebes came to take their ephebic oath. The location of the shrine has been securely identified on the east slope of the Acropolis, thanks to the discovery of an inscription found in situ by Dontas, and is associated with a cave (**Fig. 3)**.[14] Several literary sources (Demosthenes 19.303; Philoch. *FGrH 328 F 105*; Plut. *Alc.* 15.7-8) attest that the Athenian ephebes took their oath at the sanctuary of Aglauros, invoking her name along with other war deities, like Ares, as a witness for their oath.[15] There is no hesitation that by taking their oath to defend the city of Athens (with their freshly acquired arms) within Aglauros' sanctuary, the eighteen-years-old Athenian ephebes gave Aglauros a warlike character. This specific context is further highlighted by her connection to Ares, the god of war par excellence. According to the testimony of Hellanikos (*FGrH 323 A F1*) and Apollodorus (3.14.2), Aglauros was the wife of Ares and mother of Alcippe, while Porphyry (*Abst.* 2.54) attests that Aglauros was worshiped in Cyprus along with Diomedes, Ares' opponent in the Trojan War. Given the brave act of her self-sacrifice and heroic status, Aglauros was the chief patroness of the ephebes and formed the ideal heroine, a role model for the Athenian ephebes. In fact, the heroic self-sacrifice of Aglauros and her jump from the cliffs of the Acropolis for the salvation of the city of Athens acted as an example during historical times. Herodotus (8.53) attests that some Athenians also jumped from the cliffs of the Acropolis when the Persians invaded the city and were ascending the Acropolis.

[13] Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 203; Gregory Nagy, *Greek Mythology and Poetics (*Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 223-26; Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 102.

[14] George Dontas, "The True Aglaurion," *Hesperia* 52 (1983): 48-63.

[15] For the ephebic oath, see Reinhold Merkelbach, "Aglauros (Die Religion der Epheben)," *ZPE* 9 (1972): 277-83; Peter Siewert, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-Century Athens," *JHS* 97 (1977): 102-11.

Fig. 3 The shrine/cave of Aglauros on the east slope of the Acropolis.

Having examined Aglauros, let us now turn to the examination of the voluntary self-sacrifice of the daughters of King Erechtheus and Queen Praxithea, known as the Erechtheids or the Hyakinthids.

Erechtheids/Hyakinthids (Daughters of King Erechtheus)

The mythological episode of the daughters of Erechtheus, the Erechtheids (or the Hyakinthids), takes place during the war between King Erechtheus of Athens and King Eumolpos of Thrace (instead of Eleusis, as in the case of Aglauros). The context of the mytheme is almost identical to the voluntary self-sacrifice of Aglauros, only with slight differences. King Erechtheus seeks advice from the Delphic oracle, getting the answer that the city of Athens will be saved only if he sacrificed one of his own daughters. Lykourgos (*Leoc.* 98-100), citing Euripides’ fragmentary preserved tragedy “*Erechtheus”,* states Queen Praxithea’s answer, when her husband, Erechtheus, informs her about the answer from the oracle:

> If our household had a harvest of sons in it, rather than daughters, and the flame of war were engulfing the city, would I not send my sons into battle with spears, fearing for their deaths? No, let me have daughters who can

> fight and stand out among men and not be mere figures raised in the city for no purpose. When mothers' tears send their children off to battle, many men become soft. I hate women who choose life for their children rather than the common good, or urge cowardice. Sons, if they die in battle, share a common tomb with many others and equal glory. But my daughter will be awarded one crown all to herself when she dies on behalf of this city, and in doing so she will also save her mother and you (Erechtheus), and her two sisters... are these things not reward in themselves? And do so, I shall give this girl, who is not mine except through birth, to be sacrificed in defense of our land. If this city is destroyed, what share in my children's lives will I then have? Is it not better that the whole be saved by one of us doing our part? And as for the matter which most concerns the people at large, there is no-one, while I live and breathe, who will cast out the ancient holy laws of our fore-fathers. Nor will Eumolpos and his Thracian army ever in place of the olive tree and golden Gorgon head plant the trident on this city's foundations and crown it with a garland, thus dishonoring the worship of Pallas (Athens). Citizens make use of the offspring of my labor pains, save yourselves, be victorious! Not for one life will I refuse to save our city. O fatherland, I wish that all who dwell in you would love you as much as I do! Then we would live in you untroubled and you would never suffer any harm.

The exact number of the daughters of Erechtheus varies, with sources stating either three,[16] four,[17] or six[18] daughters, named Protogeneia, Pandora, Chthonia, Prokris, Kreousa and Oreithyia.[19] In terms of their tragic fate, Euripides (*Ion,* 277-80) states that only one of the daughters, Kreousa, escapes death because of her young age. The brave act of the daughters of Erechtheus is much appreciated in ancient Greek myth and cult. In fact, it is rewarded by the goddess Athena herself.

In the tragedy of Euripides' "*Erechtheus" (*fr. *71-75)*, the goddess Athena declares that "the girls' souls have not gone to Hades and that she (Athena) has translated their spirits (*pneuma*) to the aether" and that "the daughters of Erechtheus will be famous in Greece and will be called goddesses, the

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[16] Euripides, "*Erechtheus*", talks of three daughters of Erechtheus.
[17] Apollodorus (3.15.1) and Hyginus (*Fab.* 46) attest the following four daughters of Erechtheus: Chthonia, Prokris, Kreousa and Oreithyia.
[18] Photios, s.v. Parthenoi names six daughters of Erechtheus: Protogeneia, Pandora, Chthonia, Prokris, Kreousa and Oreithyia.
[19] For a full account and presentation of the literary sources, see Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 202; Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: a Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 242; Douglas Frame, *Hippota Nestor* (Washington, DC/Cambridge: Center For Hellenic Studies, 2009), 448 n. 199.

Hyakinthids." *Catasterism*, or transporting a figure into a star or other heavenly body, is a reward for recognition of superior status and actually is considered the greatest honor of all, given that the shining star becomes one with the cosmos, situating the brave act on a cosmic level.[20]

Additionally, in terms of the cult of the Erechtheids, Athena gives the following instructions: "the girls are to be buried on the spot where they died and no wine will be used in the cult, but water and honey; furthermore, the daughters of Erechtheus will receive annual sacrifice, they will have choruses of girls and their temenos will be abaton" (*Erechtheus*, fr. 75-80). An inscription (*IG II² 1035*), dated to the 1st century BC, informs us about the existence of a Hyakintheion (a cult of the Hyakinthids) but its location is uncertain, since the inscription does not provide further information on its exact spot.[21] The cult and tomb of the Hyakinthids has even been connected with the west side of the Parthenon.[22] Given the importance of the brave act of the Erechtheids and its impact in myth and cult, several iconographic identifications and attributions have been proposed by scholars. The daughters of Erechtheus have been identified with the child figure decorating the central scene of the east frieze of the Parthenon (**Fig. 4**).[23] Additionally, the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids have been identified with the dancing Hyades at the "Akanthos column", in Delphi (**Fig. 5**).[24] Far from being secure on both cases of the identifications, the proposals indicate the

[20] Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 103; J.B. Connelly, *The Parthenon Enigma* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 147.

[21] Photius, s.v. Parthenoi, writing on the tragic fate of the Hyakinthids, states that: «*ἐσφαγιάσθησαν δὲ ἐν τωῖ Ὑακίνθωι καλουμένωι πάγωι ὑπὲρ τῶν Σφενδονίων*». Stephanos Byzantine states that: «*τῶν Ὑακίνθου θυγατέρων ἡ Λουσία ἦν, ἀφ'ἧς ὁ δῆμος τῆς Οἰνηίδος φυλῆς*», connecting the Hyakintheion with the deme of Lousia. The existence of Hyakintheion in the deme of Lousia has received mixed feedback by scholars: Jacoby, schol. to Phanodemus (*FGrH 325 F4*), page 178, accepts the existence of Hyakintheion at the deme of Lysia. Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 102 does not accept the identification, while Frame, *Hippota Nestor*, 449 remains neutral, stating that the Hyakintheion may have existed on the west part of the city of Athens. For the issue, see also Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 36, 190 n. 8; Kron "Patriotic Heroes", 79, who remain neutral.

[22] Connelly, *The Parthenon Enigma*, 232-33.

[23] J. B. Connelly, J. B. 1996. "Parthenon and Parthenoi: a Mythological Interpretation of the Parthenon Frieze," *AJA* 100 (1996): 58-66; Connelly, *The Parthenon Enigma*, 165-66.

[24] Delphi 1584. Gloria Ferrari, *Alcman and the Cosmos of Sparta* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 146-47.

importance of the daughters of Erechtheus in myth, cult and the iconography of the classical period.[25]

Fig. 4: The central scene of the east frieze of the Parthenon.

[25] In terms of the Parthenon frieze, the central scene of the east frieze is recognized by the majority of scholars as related to the Panathenaic festival, instead of the sacrifice of the daughters of Erechtheus. In terms of the "Akanthos column" in Delphi, besides the lack of any iconographic evidence of the daughters of Erechtheus, the identification of the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids with the dancing Hyades is problematic for a number of reasons. On this issue (and identification with Hyades), see Collard, Cropp and Lee, *Euripides: Selected Fragmentary Plays*, 194; Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 61-62; Connelly, *The Parthenon Enigma*, 244. Contra Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: a Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources,* 128; Sourvinou-Inwood, *Athenian Myths and Festivals: Aglauros, Erechtheus, Plynteria, Panathenaia, Dionysia*, 123-34 who do not accept the identification of the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids with the Hyades.

Fig. 5: Delphi 1584. The Akanthus Column in Delphi.

Gender Aspects

Having examined the Athenian heroines who voluntarily sacrificed themselves for the salvation of the city during times of war, as well as the impact of this act in myth, cult and iconography, let us now turn on their relation to the Funerary Speeches (spoken for the war dead at the area of Kerameikos) and its gender aspects.

Several different ancient authors mention the brave act of self-sacrifice of Aglauros and the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids for the salvation of the city. Demosthenes (*Funeral Speech,* 27-29), in his speech for the Athenian war dead in the Battle of Chaeronea 338 BC against the Macedonians, uses the brave act and heroic self-sacrifice of the Erechtheids as an example for the

communal good and the salvation of the city. Similarly, the orator Demades (*Hyper tes dodeketoias,* 37), talking on the self-sacrifice of the daughters of Erechtheus, attests that: "they triumphed over their feminine in their souls and that the weakness of their nature was made virile by devotion to the soil that reared them." In the epitaph for the war dead of the battle of Potidaea in 432 B.C. (*CEG, 10*), it is stated that: "the aether took the soul of the war dead, while the Earth took their bodies." It is very likely that this specific passage for the heroic death of the Athenian war dead at Potidaea was paralleled and recalled by the Athenians of the audience with the passage of Euripides' "*Erechtheus"* on the daughters of Erechtheus we examined above, where the goddess Athena translated the spirits of the Erechtheids to the aether.

Lykourgos (*Leoc.* 100), admitting the importance of the brave act of the daughters of Erechtheus, attests that the Athenians owe a debt to Euripides for passing the story of the self-sacrifice of the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids down to them, providing an example (*paradeigma*) and he further claims that the oath of Erechtheus' daughters was invoked alongside the oath of the ephebes and that of the Greeks at Plataea. The praise of the brave and heroic act of self-sacrifice of the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids continued undisrupted to the Roman period, where their acts were used as examples of bravery and valor. Characteristic cases are the testimonies of Cicero. In one passage (*Nat. D.* 3.19.5), Cicero attests that "most states have deified the brave for the purpose of promoting valor, giving as examples the daughters of Erechtheus," while in another passage (*Sest.* 21.48) he attests that "he will not be afraid of death, which even Athenian maidens, the daughters of King Erechtheus are said to have despised for the sake of their country." Taking into account the fact that the testimonies about the brave act of the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids continued undisrupted from the classical Greek period to the Roman times, we note the diachronic impact of their act and their importance as protectresses and city saviors during times of war. No matter the time period, classical Greek or Roman, the names of the daughters of Erechtheus (and their patriotic and brave self-sacrifice) were constantly recalled when the cities of Athens or Rome were threatened by war.

In terms of Aglauros (the daughter of Kekrops), we have already mentioned that several different sources: such as Demosthenes (19.303), Philochorus (*FGrH 328 F 105)* and Plutarch (*Alc.* 15.7-8), attest that the Athenian ephebes took their oath at the sanctuary of Aglauros, invoking her name as a witness to their oath. It has been suggested that the connection of Aglauros, spelled Agraulos by some sources: such as Philochorus (*FGrH*

328 F 105), Polyaenus (1.21.2), and Apollodorus (3.14.2), with the ephebes and the guarding of the city is further indicated by the etymology of her name. Aglauros' name has been both interpreted as "bright water," while Agraulos' as the one "living in the field" and Boedeker parallels the etymology of her name with a passage of Aeschylus (*Ag.* 559-62), where it is stated that "those who were guarding the city sleep in the open and are in danger of the dew/humidity of the day," bringing in mind and resembling the name of Agraulos.[26] On top of that, the entrance of the Athenian ephebes inside the cave of Aglauros, in order to take their ephebic oath, has been interpreted as an autochthonous act and has been paralleled with the birth of the Athenian ephebes on a secondary "autochthonous" level.[27]

Having examined the self-sacrifice of Aglauros and the Erechtheids/ Hyakinthids, we note that the orators repeatedly pointed out the examples of sacrificial heroines for the salvation of the city. Additionally, they were often paralleling their brave acts with the current soldiers, indicating that if women were capable of showing such bravery, at least the same courage is expected from men. In fact, in some cases, they clearly attest the gender aspects of the self-sacrifice of the virgins for the salvation of the city, emphasizing the impact of their brave act in relation to the males.

The role of women in antiquity is limited and they are mostly engaged with house activities, outside the public activities of the polis. Mythological examples and historical testimonies confirm this. Iphigeneia (Eur. *IA,* 1394) attests that "one man's life is worth more than that of thousands of women" and similarly, Aristotle (*Pol.* 1269b18; 1275b23; 1275a22-3) treats women and slaves, as in some ways, parallels. Women are excluded from citizenship and Loraux has highlighted that "there were no true feminine *Athenaioi* but merely *Attikai* gynaikes".[28] Given their exclusion from citizenship and limited role, regardless of being biologically essential for the existence of the city, women were expected to contribute less to the society.

In total contrast to this belief stand the female heroines who voluntarily sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the city. Their act of saving the city is the biggest paradox of all, given the very limited role of women in

[26] Deborah Boedeker, *Descend from Heaven: Images of Dew in Greek Poetry and Religion* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 104, 105-08, 108-09.
[27] Boedeker, *Descend from Heaven: Images of Dew in Greek Poetry and Religion*, 112.
[28] Nicole Loraux, *Les enfants d'Athéna: Idées athéniennes sur la citoyenneté et la division des sexes* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1981), 124-25.

antiquity. The heroic and brave act of the self-sacrifice of Aglauros and the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids, serves as a paradigm both for the males and the females, making them the ideal heroines and role-models for all the Athenian citizens. It has been shown that the masculinization of the heroines assimilated their actions to those of warriors and made their myth a more palatable example for men.[29] Kron highlights that the female heroic behavior is much more amazing compared to the male one, since women's nature is much weaker than men's.[30]

There is no doubt that the self-sacrifice of Aglauros and the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids made them the ideal patriotic heroines, situating their brave act in the very centre of the polis. We have already mentioned that their names were spoken at the Funerary Orations at Kerameikos, honoring the Athenian war dead. Besides Kerameikos, the brave self-sacrifice of the heroines, more specifically the one of the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids, was presented on the Acropolis, at the theater of Dionysus, where Euripides' play "*Erechtheus"* was performed and viewed by almost five or six thousand Athenians during the annual city Dionysia festival.[31] On top of that, we discussed that Aglauros was worshiped on the east slope of the Acropolis, where her shrine was placed and a Hyakintheion (shrine for the Hyakinthids) existed, although its exact location remains uncertain.

The presentation of the brave acts of the sacrificial virgins both at the Kerameikos (at the Funerary Orations) and the Acropolis (at the theater of Dionysos), as well as the cult/shrine of Aglauros on the Acropolis and the existence of the Hyakintheion, placed the Athenian heroines in both locations where the Athenian identity was shaped: the Acropolis and the Kerameikos.

The acts mentioned above situated the Athenian virgin women as the ideal examples and paradigms of bravery. The males, given their elevated and superior status compared to the females, were expected to act with the same (if not with more) courage and bravery during the battle. Given that, it seems that the self-sacrifice of the Athenian heroines for the salvation of the city, besides being a heroic act, also had gender aspects and offered a role model for women, since on a symbolic level women and men were equal. Viewed from an Anthropological and Gender aspect, females were situated in the

[29] Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 104.
[30] Kron, "Patriotic Heroes*"*, 83.
[31] Connelly, *The Parthenon Enigma*, 146.

very public sphere, central to the polis and the commonwealth, ideal examples of brave and patriotic citizens.

Abbreviations

BAPD: Beazley Archive Pottery Database.

FGrH = Jacoby, F. 1923. *Die Fragmente der griechischenHistoriker*. (FGrHist) Weidmann, Berlin.

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