

HAVE VULTURES LEFT THE BATTLEFIELD? SCAVENGERS AND WAR IN GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY*

Abstract: There is much talk in the *Iliad* of dead warriors abandoned to vultures, and information about vultures tormenting armies can be found in ancient works from various literary genres. Surprisingly, however, when we look at the battle depictions of Greek historians, we do not find vultures portrayed as lurking on the battlefield. The question that arises is why the Greek historians did not adopt this significant element of the Homeric depiction of war. This article will attempt to explain, from various different perspectives, the absence in Greek historiography of vultures and other ferocious beasts in the Homeric role.

Keywords: Greek historiography, war narratives, battlefield, vultures, dogs, scavengers

1. Introduction

There is much talk in the *Iliad* of dead warriors abandoned to vultures. The practice of leaving the body as food for birds is described in the first verses of the *Iliad*, and later in Book 11. Vultures are recalled as a threat throughout the poem. Equally often, characters in tragedy speak of throwing the bodies of dead soldiers to birds of prey. Information about vultures tormenting armies can be found in ancient works from various literary genres and fields of knowledge. Surprisingly, however, when we look at the battle depictions of Greek historians (who were, after all, authors committed to describing military struggles) we do not find vultures portrayed as lurking on the battlefield. These birds are mentioned in a few insignificant instances, which indicates only that the historians were aware of their existence.

What is more, Greek historiography lacks the usual companions of vultures, i.e. hungry dogs, which traditionally, starting with Homer, were envisioned as a threat to dead warriors. It can be safely said, therefore, that battlefields in the descriptions of Greek historians are, by and large, free from any predatory animals.

The question that arises then is why the Greek historians did not adopt this significant element of the Homeric depiction of war. The most obvious answer is that hoplites fight as a collective force, and they are portrayed

* I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewer for *Histos* for useful suggestions, and to Prof. John Marincola for many helpful comments.

neither as heroes nor barbarians who rejoice in the complete annihilation of their enemy. In fact, vultures and their companions are not present in non-epic Greek battle poetry either, although archaic poets occasionally portray bodies abandoned on the battlefield; painters too avoided depicting them in the context of hoplitic struggles. (A few preserved images of vultures pecking at fallen warriors seem to represent the picture of pre-hoplite warfare.) Therefore, a broader thesis can be formulated: vultures do not constitute an element of hoplitic warfare narrative. Once ‘expelled’ from the battlefield, they could not return, when new elements of non-hoplite methods of fighting were introduced, for example peltasts or light-armed mercenaries. Doubts arise, however, as to whether this is the only possible historiographical answer. This article will attempt to explain, from various different perspectives, the absence of vultures and other ferocious beasts known from their Homeric role—i.e., scavengers as a real and possible threat—in Greek historiography.

2. Vultures and Other Scavengers: Greek Terminology

The vulture is a widespread species in Greece, and was the best known scavenger of ancient times.¹ The population of vultures was most probably very large. These birds cleared the streets in cities and villages of carrion (especially dead donkeys).² Undoubtedly, vultures followed armies, if only because the animals that regularly pulled the Greek wagon trains could potentially become their victims.³

The Greeks referred to the vulture by various names and often also identified it with other species of birds of prey. As a result, there are more than ten terms that can refer to this bird in the Greek language. The most popular were *γύψ*, *αἰγυπιός*, *φήνη*, as well as *ἀετός* which, for the main part, denoted an eagle. Among the above-mentioned representatives of the species, *gyps* is a basic and undeniable scavenger which preys on the flesh of both dead animals and dead people. In the case of *aigypios* and *phēnē* vultures, ancient writers were not in agreement about whether these birds also ate human corpses.⁴ In turn, writers avoided associating the eagle with carrion,

¹ Hughes (2014) 21.

² See Lynch (2011) 113 n. 239.

³ Arnott (2007) 60, s.v. *gyps*.

⁴ In general on the vulture in ancient Greece, see Boraston (1911) 216, 229–34; Keller (1913) 27–36; Thompson (1895) 1–10, 16, 47–50, 180; Arnott (2007) 2–3, 6–7, 60–1, 188, see also *τόργος*, *γυπαίετος*, *ὑπαίετος*, *λευκόγρυψ*, *ὄρειπέλαργος*, *περκόπτερος*, *ζῶκος*, and *κινναμῶνον ὄρνεον*.

preferring to refer to it only as a predator of live animals.⁵ Other bird species were, very rarely, mentioned in Greek literature as scavengers; however, in these cases the Greeks often used general terms for winged creatures, such as ὄρνεα and ὄρνιθες, which could denote species related to vultures.

Vultures were not the only creatures with a bad reputation. The dog (κύων), which was known to the Greeks from at least Mycenaean times, is also referred to as a cruel scavenger.⁶ Of all the animals, however, the attitude of the Greeks towards the dog was the most ambivalent, because it was both an enemy and a friend to humans. Apart from dogs, a dead human body could be attacked by other random wild four-legged creatures (θήρεια), e.g. a wolf (λύκος). It should be added too that a few accounts of voracious water animals devouring human meat have also been preserved.

3. Vultures *et consortes* in the *Iliad* and Near Eastern Tales of War

In the *Iliad*, Homer mentions animals 1,283 times.⁷ Even though the vulture, most often referred to as a *gyps* or, more generally, as an *oiōnos* (i.e. ‘bird of prey’),⁸ appears in his work only about a dozen times, the very mention of the bird can terrify the soldiers more than the sight of galloping horses pulling chariots of armed enemies. This is because dead soldiers are the potential spoils of Homeric vultures. The birds do not eat horse carcasses; in the entire *Iliad* only two horses lose their lives or get injured.⁹ However, the warriors make threats to each other that their bodies will be torn apart by vultures; or (in two cases) they are depicted lying on the ground, left to be eaten by the scavenging birds.¹⁰ In fact, the very first sentence of the *Iliad* mentions the birds of prey (*oiōnoi*) that Achilles will feed with the bodies of heroes; and in Book 11 warriors lie dead upon the ground ‘far dearer to the vultures than to their wives’.¹¹

These vultures are often accompanied by dogs (*kynes*), which on the Homeric battlefield may behave much like wolves. Importantly, these are neither dogs trained for war, nor are they necessarily stray animals: Priam

⁵ Bridge (2003) 62–4.

⁶ In general on the dog in ancient Greece, see Kitchell (2014), s.v. ‘dog’.

⁷ Voultziadou and Tatolas (2005) 1877.

⁸ For the identification of the Homeric vulture, see Boraston (1911) 216, 229–34.

⁹ Hom. *Il.* 8.81–5, 16.467–70; Delebecque (1951) 101.

¹⁰ Vulture (*gyps*): Hom. *Il.* 4.237, 11.162, 16.836, 18.271, 22.42; bird of prey (*oiōnos*): 1.4–5, 2.393, 8.379, 11.395, 453, 13.831, 17.241, 22.354, 24.411.

¹¹ Hom. *Il.* 1.4–5, 11.162.

laments that he is going to be eaten by the dogs that he himself has bred.¹² Indeed, as Redfield has correctly observed, a dog devouring a human corpse is much more terrifying than a scavenging bird since, as opposed to the latter, dogs live alongside humans and are a part of human culture.¹³

It is true that (except in the two above-mentioned cases) the narrative of the *Iliad* does not actually portray scenes of mutilation by birds. Vultures are mentioned throughout the poem as a threat in the vaunting speeches. But the description of Achilles' battle in the river in which the mutilation is actually a fact—the bodies of warriors devoured by fish and eels¹⁴—emphasises the energy of the real (not hypothetical) scavengers: they lick the blood from the wound, bite and tear the fat over the kidneys. Similarly, Glaucus reproaches Hector for not being able to save Sarpedon from the dogs; and Aphrodite helps to preserve Hector's corpse by keeping away the dogs.¹⁵ The warriors in the *Iliad* seem equally threatened by air-, land- and water-creatures—by nature both above and below them.

In consequence, an obvious question arises related to the role of vultures and their predatory companions in Homer's work. Scholars have noted that first and foremost, the animals allow cruel Homeric heroes to rejoice at depriving their enemy of a place in human memory (the lack of a grave). Equally important is the fact that this remains a punishment for those who are sluggish in battle, or those who commit betrayals and break their promises. Lastly, they are a component of the dramaturgy of battle scenes.¹⁶

Traditionally, scenes of birds of prey feasting on the battlefield are an element of Near Eastern tales of war, which preceded Homer's writings by over two thousand years. We need only mention the Egyptian *Battlefield Palette*, which presents the bodies of the fallen being devoured by vultures and a lion; and the *Stele of the Vultures*, which depicts Sumerian soldiers being torn apart by vultures.¹⁷ The Old Testament battlefield also includes predatory animals.¹⁸ Most importantly, in the 7th century BC (i.e., roughly contemporary with Homer) an Assyrian king depicted scavengers in writing

¹² Hom. *Il.* 1.4, 2.393, 13.831, 17.127, 241, 255, 273, 558, 18.179, 271, 283, 22.66–75, 89, 354, 23.184–5, 24.409–11; see Faust (1970) 8–31; Kitchell (2004) 178.

¹³ Redfield (1975) 200; In the *Iliad*, in addition to birds and dogs, fish can also eat the blood and fat of warriors: Hom. *Il.* 21.120–7.

¹⁴ Hom. *Il.* 21.123, 203–4.

¹⁵ Hom. *Il.* 17.153, 23.184–5.

¹⁶ See Segal (1971), esp. 2, 4–5, 11, 31; Vernant (1991) 71–2.

¹⁷ *The Battlefield Palette*, c. 3150 BC, London, British Museum EA 20791; *The Stele of the Vultures*, c. 2450 BC, Paris, Louvre AO 50.2346–8, see Winter (1985) 16; for other examples (including examples from Çatalhöyük) see Hamblin (2006) 26, 315.

¹⁸ E.g., 1 *Sam.* 17.44–6; *Job* 39.30; *Isa.* 18.6; *Jer.* 7.33, 19.7, 34.20; *Ezek.* 39.17–20.

and paintings. An extant inscription mentions feeding the bodies of enemies to dogs, pigs, wolves, vultures (or eagles), and other birds and fish. We also have a relief that presents birds and fish consuming fallen warriors.¹⁹

Importantly, some Greek vases from Tenos and Eretria, which come from the same period, show large birds pecking at fallen soldiers, who seem to belong to the pre-hoplite type.²⁰ Everything points to the fact, therefore, that scavenging animals prowling the battlefield constituted a part of the warfare narrative in Homer's times, and that this was, perhaps, adopted from the East; although, as Vermeule concluded, 'There is no real reason to regard the theme as barbarous'.²¹

4. The Greek Historians' Workshop and the Homeric Model of Describing War

In *The Greek Historians* T. J. Luce states:

The ancient historians seem to have been quite content with their inheritance from Homer. After the first historians had adopted the essential form which his epic poems took—a narrative of events, together with direct speeches—the proper mold for the genre of history was forever set. No one thereafter, at least no serious or substantial historian, deviated greatly from the format.²²

Modern scholars agree that the Greek historians adopted the Homeric model of describing war and battle scenes, to various degrees. The adopted elements include: a focus on great deeds (*klea andrōn*) that are worthy of passing down to their descendants; indications of the causes of the events; the presentation of military campaigns (with a particular focus on city sieges); descriptions of the behaviours of warriors when they are faced with great obstacles and suffering; and taking divine signs and oracles into account.²³

¹⁹ The Inscription of Assurbanipal, 7th century BC, Luckenbill (1927) 304, no. 795; the relief of Assurbanipal, palace in Nineveh, 7th century BC, London: British Museum ANE 124801.

²⁰ The *pithos* from Tenos, 7th century BC, Athens, National Archaeological Museum 2495; the *pithos* from Eretria, 7th century BC, Archaeological Museum of Eretria 16620–21; Vermeule (1979) figs. 20–1; cf. the Etruscan-Corinthian *oenochoe*, end of 7th century BC, Villa Giulia: Brendel (1978) fig. 38.

²¹ Griffin (1980) 45–9; Vermeule (1979) 103–7.

²² Luce (1997) 4.

²³ See, for example: Strasburger (1972); Marincola (2006) 9–10; id. (2011); Rengakos (2006); Rood (2007) 154.

Scavenging animals, however, which Homer introduced to the literature, were almost completely ignored by the historians, and they certainly do not constitute a *topos* of warfare. According to our surviving historical accounts, no Greek soldier was devoured by vultures or dogs after a regular battle. Furthermore, if the historians mention scavengers at all, they use ambiguous terms such as ‘birds’ or ‘wild animals’ (*thēria*). Vultures and dogs also do not appear in soldiers’ invectives or in pre-battle speeches, in contrast to a Homeric insult that does survive, namely, the comparison of enemies to women (*gynaikas*).²⁴

Of course, it should be remembered that we have only a fraction of the preserved works and theoretical discussions of ancient historians at our disposal. In addition, it should be noted that ancient historians did not establish schools, even though discussions about what should be described and what should be omitted in writing history carried on between them for centuries. As Nicolai notes, ‘the Greek and Roman historians came from the schools of grammarians and rhetors: the formation of the historian was the same as that of the orator and there was no specific preparation for the writing of history’.²⁵

In making their choices Greek historians did take into account various common elements of the scenery of warfare: e.g., stripping armour from the defeated enemy; celebrating their victory; making sacrifices of thanksgiving; burying their fallen comrades; and dividing the booty.²⁶ However, none of them made the vulture or another scavenger a constant or even occasional element in the description of what happened on a Greek battlefield after the battle itself.

5. Scavengers and the Classical Greek Historians

In Herodotus’ *Histories*, the oldest prose description of Greek battles, vultures appear as scavengers only once, and the meaning of their presence is uncertain. When trying to dissuade the king from sending Mardonius with the army to Hellas, the Persian dignitary Artabanus states that the commander will end up being torn apart by dogs and birds (*ornithes*) in the country of the Athenians or the Lacedaemonians, or someplace in between (7.10). This remark is in opposition to another remark which Herodotus makes in his own person, namely, that the Persians do not bury their dead until birds or dogs have dragged the bodies around (1.140; cf. 3.16). One

²⁴ Hom. *Il.* 8.163–5, 11.389; cf., e.g., Hdt. 9.20; Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.19.

²⁵ Nicolai (2007) 21.

²⁶ See Hau (2013) 57–74.

might, therefore, observe ironically that Mardonius should have been pleased with the fate that awaited him. Nonetheless, this is far from the Homeric model. Herodotus mentions wild beasts (*thēria*) one other time, to inform his readers that they devoured some of the Persian castaways near Mount Athos; but the deaths here were not due to an armed fight, but rather because of a storm (6.44). The above-mentioned examples indicate that, although Herodotus knows perfectly well the role of predatory animals on the battlefield, he chooses not to portray them.

Thucydides generally passes over vultures and other scavenging creatures in silence. He does, however, note in his account of the plague at Athens that birds (*ornea*, *ornithes*) and other animals (*tetrapoda*) that normally feasted on human flesh disappeared after the plague (2.50). Like Herodotus, therefore, Thucydides also knows about predatory creatures, but, again like Herodotus, he does not place them on the battlefield. Nor in the works of Xenophon does any battle end in the feasting of scavengers, even though Xenophon too shows a familiarity with the habits of wilds beasts when he writes about captives that may fall victim to dogs or wolves (*lykoi*) because they are too old to keep up with a marching army (*Ages.* 22).

6. Scavengers and the Historians of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods

As we might expect from what we have seen above, Polybius unsurprisingly mentions vultures (*gyphes*) in this context only once, when describing the siege of a city. In this incident he notes that birds show the city's attackers an unguarded fragment of the fortifications, where the citizens have thrown human corpses, as well as the carcasses of horses and draught cattle (7.15.8). A city dump is not, of course, part of the battlefield. In other remarks, Polybius mentions (1.82, 84) the Carthaginians throwing living captives to wild animals (*thēria*).

Similarly, in the works of Diodorus and Strabo, vultures and dogs mostly avoid the battlegrounds. Only Diodorus' account of Perdiccas' attack on Egypt ends with the soldiers being devoured by beasts living in the Nile (18.35.6: crocodiles?). Generally speaking, wild animals settle for random living victims or dead bodies, which are often thrown to them on purpose, in remote barbarian lands. Diodorus mentions the village dogs that tore Euripides apart, but he does not allow such aggressive four-legged creatures onto the battlefield.²⁷

²⁷ Diod. 13.103.5, 17.105.2; Str. 6.1.12, 2.6, 11.11.3, 8, 15.62.

Vultures and other scavenging animals do not appear in the work of Arrian, even though there is a description of the bodies of the soldiers of Alexander the Great that are left by the roads because there is no possibility of burying them (e.g., *Anab.* 6.25). In his descriptions of the battles among Hellenistic rulers, Appian sets dogs in direct opposition to vultures, writing that Lysimachus' dog defended the king's body from birds (*ornea*) and other animals (*thēria*) after the battle (*Syr.* 10.64). This constitutes another case where there is a distortion of the Homeric model, since here the Homeric faithful companions—vultures and dogs—fight against each other.

Although this paper is mainly concerned with Greek historiography, we should also take note of a fairly small number of historical descriptions where wild beasts are shown prowling Roman battlefields, although it is often the bodies of convicts, traitors and other proscribed people which are left to their mercy.²⁸ Wild animals appear in a terrifying prophecy from the famous seer Marcius, saying that the fallen in the Battle of Cannae will be eaten by fish, birds (*aves*), and the other animals (*fera*) who inhabit the Earth (*Livy* 25.12.6). Another spectacular show takes place near Philippi, where vultures appeared in great numbers, but in this case as a sign rather than as a natural part of the description of the battlefield: they circle above the camp soundlessly and then attack the living conspirators.²⁹ The works of the Roman historians include only a few additional examples of descriptions of scavengers on the battlefield.³⁰

It is otherwise in Roman poetry. Lucan provides an exceptionally terrifying image after the Battle of Pharsalus of wolves, lions, bears, and dogs that caught the scent of those who had fallen, and of a multitude of vultures that flapped their wings and feasted on the battlefield in Thessaly (*Phars.* 7.825–46). Interestingly, in Rome, the appearance of vultures could sometimes be interpreted as a positive sign for the victorious commanders,³¹ some hints of which may be found in Plutarch's Roman *Lives*. Plutarch considers amusing the tale told by Alexander of Myndus about vultures (*gy pes*) accompanying the army of Gaius Marius, when the soldiers greeted the birds, trusting that certain victory awaited them.³² Additionally, in the *Romulus*, Plutarch writes that the Romans, in their divinations from birds, hold in high regard the vulture,³³ a preference that no doubt goes back to the

²⁸ E.g., Tac. *Ann.* 15.44; App. *BC* 1.73; Hdn. 8.5.9; Cass. Dio 47.3.2.

²⁹ App. *BC* 4.134 (*ornea*); Flor. 2.4.7; Cass. Dio 47.40.8 (*gy pes*); cf. Plut. *Brut.* 39.3 (*ornea*).

³⁰ Amm. Marc. 17.1.1, 31.7.14–16; Val. Max. 1.5, 11.

³¹ D. Hal. *A. R.* 1.86.3; Liv. 1.7; App. *BC* 3.13.94; Cass. Dio 46.46.2; 47.2.3.

³² Plut. *Mar.* 17 (Alexander of Myndos).

³³ Plut. *Rom.* 9.5; cf. *Quaest. Rom.* 93. In *Rom.* 9.6, Plutarch quotes Herodorus of Heraclea, a mythographer and contemporary of Thucydides, who wrote that even

fact that they were the birds espied by Romulus and Remus in their augury competition.

7. Vultures on the Battlefield in other Literary Genres

Explicit information about scavengers tormenting armies, and especially vultures, is preserved in Greek and Roman genres other than historiography. For instance, Aristotle quotes Herodorus of Heraclea as saying that vultures appear suddenly in great numbers, following the tracks of armies. The impression of their ferocious nature is intensified by the faulty belief that the origin of these birds lies in another part of the world:

... and hence Herodorus, father of Bryson the sophist, says that vultures (*gyphes*) come from some other country unknown to us, citing as evidence that no one has ever seen a vulture's nest, and that vultures suddenly appear in large numbers in the wake of armies.³⁴

The association between vultures and the battlefield was well-known also to Plutarch, although he does not include birds in his description of battles. He does, however, quote an oracle, which most probably concerns the vulture that arose before the Battle of Chaeronea:

Heracles rejoiced at the sight of vultures. He considered them to be noble birds, because they did not eat living creatures. Despite the existence of this Greek account, it is hard to imagine a Homeric hero greeting scavenging vultures with joy. In the *Iliad*, when Athena and Apollo take the form of vultures, Homer does not use the traditional term *gyphs* but instead uses the name *aigybios*; the *aigybios* vulture does not eat human corpses in Homer's works (Hom. *Il.* 7.58). As Detienne (1977) 23–4 correctly emphasises, the vulture remained for the majority of Greeks a bird that was hated by both gods and humans.

³⁴ Arist. *HA* 563a, 615a, quoting Herodorus of Heraclea, the abovementioned mythographer (trans. D. M. Balme): ... καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ Ἡρόδωρος ὁ Βρύσωνος τοῦ σοφιστοῦ πατήρ φησιν εἶναι τοὺς γυφῶν ἀφ' ἑτέρας γῆς, ἀδήλου ἡμῶν, τοῦτό τε λέγων τὸ σημείον, ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐώρακε γυφὸς νεοττιάν, καὶ ὅτι πολλοὶ ἐξαίφνης φαίνονται ἀκολουθοῦντες τοῖς στρατεύμασιν. The Greeks performed a kind of symbolic exteriorisation of the vulture in saying that it was a foreign bird that came to Greece from a different continent. Although Aristotle disclaimed this idea, it was preserved in Greek tradition for a long time. It was believed that vultures did not build nests, and that the species was comprised of only females that gave birth to their offspring after being impregnated by the wind (Arist. *HA* 563a, 615a; Antig. *Mir.* 42; Plut. *Rom.* 9.7; Ael. *NA* 2.46). Furthermore, from their earliest literature, the Greeks would 'send' vultures to Hades to act as the executors of bodily penalties for the dead (e.g., Hom. *Od.* 2.576–600; Apollod. 1.4.1; Plut. *De sera* 10; Luc. *Luct.* 8).

For the battle on Thermodon wait thou, all-black bird;
There thou shalt have in abundance the flesh of men.³⁵

The Stoic philosopher Cornutus, who flourished in the reign of Nero, refers to vultures as the holy bird of Ares, because they gather next to those slain by the god of war (*De nat. deor.* 21). Aelian offers proof that vultures follow a marching army into foreign lands (*NA* 2.46):

Vultures even follow in the wake of armies in foreign parts, knowing by prophetic (*μαντικός*) instinct that they are marching to war and that every battle provides corpses, as they have discovered.³⁶

Pausanias writes with some distaste that after the battle between the Celts and Greeks in the Thermopylae gorge, the barbarians were indifferent as to whether their fallen brothers in arms would be devoured by wild beasts or be fought over by vultures (10.21.7).

Furthermore, some authors, as with Aelian cited above, ascribe to vultures the ability to predict the place and time of a battle a few days beforehand. Plautus and a diviner named Umbricius (quoted by Pliny the Elder) claim that vultures are already circling above the battlefield three days before a battle.³⁷ Similarly, Horapollo, who is the supposed author of a treatise on Egyptian hieroglyphs entitled *Hieroglyphica* (5th century AD), explains that vultures know where a battle will take place seven days before the event, and additionally, will mark the borders of the battlefield. For this reason, he says, ancient kings sent scouts to check which parts of the battlefield were being observed by the vultures (1.11).

Even in a satirical work by Lucian, who describes a fictional war between the inhabitants of the Sun and the Moon, vultures appear on the battlefield in the form of half horses/half vultures (*hippogyroi*) and fight in the ranks alongside other bird hybrids; and so the birds, even though playfully conscripted into the army, are still associated with the battlefield (*VH* 12–18).

³⁵ Plut. *Dem.* 19 (trans. B. Perrin): τὴν δ' ἐπὶ Θερμώδοντι μάχην μένε, παμμέλαν ὄρνι· ἢ γηναί τοι κρέα πολλὰ παρέσσειται ἀνθρώπεια. Cf. Plut. *Pom.* 31; *De Cap. ex Inim.* 3; *De vitando* 4, 8.

³⁶ Ael. *NA* 2.46 (trans. A. F. Scholfield): καὶ μέντοι καὶ ταῖς ἐκδήμοις στρατιαῖς ἔπονται γῦπες, καὶ μάλα γε μαντικῶς ὅτι ἐς πόλεμον χωροῦσιν εἰδότες, καὶ ὅτι μάχη πᾶσα ἐργάζεται νεκρούς, καὶ τοῦτο ἐγνωκότες.

³⁷ Plaut. *Truc.* 2.3.16; Plin. *NH* 10.7.19.

8. Did Historians ever see Scavengers?

When one considers the absence of scavengers in historical narrative, the first questions that come to mind are: could it be that the Greek historians failed to notice vultures circling near the battlefield? Did they perhaps not see dogs at prey nearby?³⁸ Many historians (and other writers) took part in military campaigns, often as commanders. Some thought that a lack of military experience was reason enough for disqualifying a historian, due to the belief that a historian should, first and foremost, skilfully describe what he himself had observed. F. Echeverría briefly explains the importance of such experience:

Military service by ancient writers has always been at stake when assessing the reliability of the military information they provide in their writings. Military details provided by veterans, who had seen proper action and thus had first-hand knowledge of warfare in their time, seem more reliable and accurate, so we tend to judge their military experience favourably. Fifth-century Greek were also starting to emphasize ‘autopsy’, personal experience as a witness, as a source of authority, an idea that crystallized in the classical historians.³⁹

Paradoxically, very little is known about the military training of the father of history, albeit he probably had such experience.⁴⁰ Thucydides, of course, was general (*strategos*) for Athens during the Peloponnesian War. Xenophon, who resembles in some ways a modern war correspondent, was a mercenary, while Polybius was cavalry commander (*hipparchos*) in the Achaean League. Polybius, of course, dedicated his entire Book 12 to criticising the historian Timaeus, and chief among his criticisms is Timaeus’ lack of experience on the battlefield.⁴¹ A few centuries later, Lucian ridiculed the pseudo-historians who, he suggests, had never seen a battle even in a painting (*hist. conscr.* 29).

Greek historians did show an interest in battlefields as such, including the natural landscapes in which they were located. Herodotus claims to have

³⁸ Additionally, some sources mention that trained dogs were sometimes used by ancient armies for military purposes: for attack, for patrols, as guards, as messengers. However, there is no evidence of this in ancient historiography. Herodotus noted that Xerxes’ army was accompanied by Indian hounds, but no indication is given as to the purpose for which they were required: Hdt. 7.187, see Forster (1941) 114–117; Cook (1952) 38–42; Mayor (2014) 286–287.

³⁹ Echeverría (2017) 74.

⁴⁰ See Tritle (2007) 209–10.

⁴¹ Pol. 12.25g, 25h, 28g.

seen a battlefield in Egypt (3.12),⁴² and gives the first preserved example of ‘battlefield tourism’ when he describes the soldiers of Xerxes viewing the dead on the battlefield of Thermopylae (8.25). Subsequent historians often write about the damage done to the terrain around the battlefield.⁴³

9. Scavengers: Barbarian or Greek, Excluded or not Excluded?

The study of Greek associations connected with the battlefield can also follow the trail of ‘barbarism’, a problem which has already been mentioned in the context of Herodotus’ Persians.⁴⁴ In fact, the Greeks, at least from the time of Herodotus, classified as barbaric (*barbarikos*) the custom of throwing the bodies of the dead to animals. Thus when the Persian in Timotheus of Miletus laments that he is fated to become in a foreign land food for the birds who eat raw meat,⁴⁵ he is reflecting the old fear of the epic heroes, now falsely ascribed to the barbarian Persians. As A. De Jong rightly concludes:

Greek literature abounds in descriptions of corpses being eaten by dogs and birds, remaining unburied. In general, these texts do not describe Persian practices, but reflect an important Greek literary *topos*, current from Homer onwards. To be eaten by dogs and birds is a constant threat to the heroic qualities of the participants in the Trojan war.⁴⁶

Indeed, study of Persian material culture has demonstrated the existence of a great diversity of ways in the disposal of the dead,⁴⁷ but as Arrington notes, ‘There is no testimony of the Persians burying their war dead in order to honor the bodies’.⁴⁸

⁴² If we can believe Herodotus, he saw Persian and Egyptian skulls lying around on the battlefield of Pelusium (525 BC). He says he noted a similar phenomenon at Papremis (459 BC). He claimed that Persian skulls were thin and Egyptian skulls were strong, though some scholars doubt that Herodotus ever visited these battlefields: see, e.g., Thomas (2000) 31.

⁴³ Hughes (2013) 128–42.

⁴⁴ See above, pp. 121–2; ancient descriptions of Persian corpses being eaten by dogs and birds: De Jong (1997) 440–4.

⁴⁵ Timotheos, *Persae* (PMG 791) 120–1; cf. the anonymous epigram, *On a Persian*, A.P. 9.498.

⁴⁶ De Jong (1997) 441.

⁴⁷ See Grenet (1985) 31–42. On the Zoroastrian funerary practices, the exposure of corpses, see De Jong (1997) 432–9, 440–4.

⁴⁸ Arrington (2015) 25.

According to Greek authors, it is not only the Persians who followed the custom of throwing the bodies of the dead to scavengers. Other peoples as well considered it bad luck if birds and dogs did not quickly devour the dead, including the fallen bodies of brave warriors. Strabo, for example, reports that the Magi (in the interior of Cappadocia, near the Taurus) leave their bodies to be eaten by birds; and at Taxila (in modern-day Pakistan) he notes that the dead are thrown out to be devoured by vultures. Strabo also says that the Caspians considered it more fortunate if birds devoured their dead exposed in the desert than if they were eaten by wild animals and dogs; but if no animals dragged them away, they considered the dead cursed. Aelian reports that the Vaccaei (a Celtic tribe in Spain) used to offer to vultures the corpses of those warriors who had fallen bravely in battle.⁴⁹

It can even be assumed that the Greeks had excluded vultures and hungry dogs from the battlefield even earlier than Herodotus, since they are not mentioned in the works of Hesiod or in the ‘military’ verses of Archilochus, Tyrtaeus and Alcaeus. The decaying body of a warrior is pictured on Heracles’ shield but it is the star Sirius, rather than animals, that helps to annihilate the body (*Sc.* 150–3). Archilochus (292 W²) similarly presents the earth as ‘eating’ the fallen dead. Two centuries before Herodotus, Tyrtaeus instructed young soldiers to take care of their elders, indicating that the sight of an old naked warrior abandoned in the dirt of battle is contemptible; yet not even here is there mention of a threat to that warrior in the form of a vulture or a dog (10.20–6 W²).

It should be added that painters from before Herodotus’ time also avoided presenting Greek soldiers being devoured by animals; and in cases where they did, they depicted events such as the ‘barbarian’ Pygmies fighting cranes, scenes which presented no similar issue since these were fantastic creatures who of course did not follow the code of Greek battle honour.⁵⁰

In all this, one element raises doubts. The situation is very different in the theatre, where the audience could hear characters speak of the bodies of soldiers (not only the bodies of barbarians) thrown to vultures and dogs.⁵¹ Furthermore, in those dramatic works that referred to Homeric epic, but were contemporary with Herodotus and Thucydides, scavenging animals were not only partial to war victims, but we might even say that war victims

⁴⁹ Str. 15.3.20, 15.1.62, 11.11.8; Ael. *NA* 10.22; cf. for example: Diod. 17.105.2; Paus. 10.21.7; Sil. *Punica* 3.340–3; 2.265–9.

⁵⁰ See Dasen (1993) 187.

⁵¹ Scenes of battle and the battlefield were never presented on stage, of course, so spectators did not actually view them.

were quite a popular meal for them.⁵² In Sophocles' *Antigone*, a play written when Herodotus was composing his history,⁵³ birds and dogs play a major role on the battlefield after battle, whereas the Greeks in Herodotus' *Histories* are not troubled by scavengers. When Creon says that he wants to outrage Polynices' corpse by having it devoured by birds and dogs, one may wonder in light of the historians' portrayal whether his action would be seen as Homeric or barbarian.

10. The Absence of Carrion? The Greek Battlefield after the Battle

One may ask whether perhaps scavengers did not have a chance to get to their prey because of the speed with which the battlefield was cleared of corpses. In fact, the preserved accounts indicate that in the classical period, the victorious army would strip the armour from their fallen enemies and erect a monument of victory (*tropaion*) immediately after gaining control over the battlefield. At the same time, under an agreement with the enemy, the victorious army would give back the bodies of the fallen so that these could be buried with dignity.

A few reservations, however, should be made in this regard. Firstly, the custom of reclaiming the bodies from the enemy was established in the Greek world most probably around the middle of the 5th century BC.⁵⁴ By contrast, the archaic poets depict bodies left lying on the battlefield. Similarly, the soldiers of the still 'archaic' Herodotus are not portrayed as worrying about the bodies of their brothers-in-arms. Secondly, as modern historians have noted, there are significantly more problems with clearing the battlefield than ancient historians suggest: there are copious amounts of blood left on the battlefield; difficulties in stripping off armour from battered corpses; problems in identifying the fallen; problems with transporting the bodies and with burials, as well as the fact that the enemy had no moral obligation to take care of his fallen opponents—all of which certainly allows for scavengers

⁵² Aesch. *Supp.* 800–1; *Sept.* 1014, 1020, 1036; Soph. *Ant.* 29, 205–6, 257, 697, 1017, 1021, 1081–2; *Aj.* 830, 1065, 1297; Eur. *Ph.* 1634, 1650; *HF* 568; *Tr.* 450, 600; *Rh.* 515; *El.* 897; for references in epic, see, e.g., Ap. Rhod. 1.1010–15.

⁵³ Sophocles' *Antigone* was staged between 442 and 438 BC (for the date see Lewis (1988)). If we accept the biographical tradition, Herodotus spent time in Athens in the 440s and possibly later. On the friendship between Herodotus and Sophocles: Plut. *An seni resp. ger.* 3, with West (1999).

⁵⁴ Krentz (2002) 23, 32–4.

to be added to the list of ancient complications.⁵⁵ Yet even when the historian who was the temporally closest to Homer, i.e. Herodotus, describes the battlefield at Thermopylae, where Xerxes gave orders to impale the severed head of Leonidas, he says nothing about vultures or scavengers:

Having thus spoken, Xerxes passed over the place where the dead lay; and hearing that Leonidas had been king and general of the Lacedaemonians, he bade cut off his head and impale it. ... Yet for all that, they who had crossed over were not deceived by what Xerxes had done with his own dead; for indeed the thing was laughable; of the Persians a thousand lay dead before their eyes, but the Greeks lay all together assembled in one place, to the number of four thousand.⁵⁶

Here Herodotus suggests that no predators disturbed the corpses in any way. Similarly, Xenophon does not mention vultures in the dramatic description of the battlefield after the Battle of Coronea in 394 BC between the Thebans and Spartans:

Now that the fighting was at an end, a weird spectacle met the eye, as one surveyed the scene of the conflict—the earth stained with blood, friend and foe lying dead side by side, shields smashed to pieces, spears snapped in two, daggers bared of their sheaths, some on the ground, some embedded in the bodies, some yet gripped by the hand.⁵⁷

Other sources describe heaps of corpses in rivers mixed together with cattle and horses, as well as bodies mingled with fish and cast away with them by the wind along the coast, not to mention piles of corpses lying on the

⁵⁵ See, for example: Hanson (1989) 203; Vaughn (1991) 38–62; Wheeler and Strauss (2008) 236.

⁵⁶ Hdt. 7.238; 8.25 (trans. A. D. Godley): ταῦτα εἶπας Ξέρξης διεξήμει διὰ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ Λεωνίδεω, ἀκηκῶς ὅτι βασιλεύς τε ἦν καὶ στρατηγὸς Λακεδαιμονίων, ἐκέλευσε ἀποταμόντας τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀνασταυρῶσαι ... οὐ μὲν οὐδ' ἐλάνθανε τοὺς διαβεβηκότας Ξέρξης ταῦτα πρήξας περὶ τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἑωυτοῦ· καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ γελοῖον ἦν· τῶν μὲν χίλιοι ἐφαίνοντο νεκροὶ κείμενοι, οἳ δὲ πάντες ἐκέατο ἀλέες συγκεκομισμένοι ἐς τὸν χωρίον, τέσσερες χιλιάδες.

⁵⁷ Xen. Ages. 2.14 (trans. E. C. Marchant): ἐπεὶ γε μὴν ἔληξεν ἡ μάχη, παρῆν δὴ θεάσασθαι ἔνθα συνέπεσον ἀλλήλοις τὴν μὲν γῆν αἵματι πεφυρμένην, νεκροὺς δὲ κειμένους φιλίουσιν καὶ πολεμίοσιν μετ' ἀλλήλων, ἀσπίδας δὲ διατεθρυμμένας, δόρατα συντεθραυσμένα, ἔγχειρίδια γυμνὰ κολεῶν, τὰ μὲν χαμαί, τὰ δ' ἐν σώματι, τὰ δ' ἔτι μετὰ χεῖρας.

battlefield for many days without protection.⁵⁸ Yet even if it was shameful to forsake their brothers in arms who had fallen in battle, it happened that the Greeks sometimes did not or could not fulfil their religious and moral duty. Even then, however, vultures and other scavengers do not appear in historical accounts as a result of negligence or of failing to honour the obligation to bury the dead,⁵⁹ as happens in tragedy⁶⁰—and this despite the fact that there are important connections between tragedy and historiography.⁶¹

II. The Idealisation of Battle?

Some modern scholars, in analysing the manner in which the Romans depicted fallen soldiers, claim that the authors intentionally avoided presenting their listeners and readers with unpleasant imagery from the battlefield, such as the rotting of corpses, the stench of dead bodies, and the portrayal of soldiers as carrion.⁶² Could it be that vultures did not fit into the image of a glorious death? Did the audience for historical works in Greece and Rome have an aversion to imagining a mutilated warrior and the actual horrors of the battlefield? The ‘beautiful death’ (*kalos thanatos*) after all has Homeric roots.⁶³ But is this the correct interpretation in the case of vultures?

The *Iliad* was, among other things, the educational foundation for the Greeks, far more so than historical accounts, which never achieved the status of epic: only in the Hellenistic period did the historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon enter the canon,⁶⁴ and the principal positions still belonged to the poets. Nor is it possible to determine from our sources what the audience for historical works in Greece and Rome was: who read the accounts or attended the readings?⁶⁵ Greek and Roman readers or listeners would have known of vultures on battlefields from their familiarity with the *Iliad*.

⁵⁸ For example: Hdt. 6.120, 7.223, 238, 8.25, 9.25; Thuc. 1.54, 4.99, 7.85; Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.12; *Ages.* 2.14–15; Pol. 5.48, 15.14; Diod. Sic. 15.55.4–5; Poseidonius, *FGHist* 87 F 29; Plut. *Tim.* 28–9.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Thuc. 4.97–101; 7.72, 75, 84–5; Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.12; Pol. 5.48, 15.14; Diod. Sic. 15.55.4–5.

⁶⁰ For the moral and religious duty of burying the dead, see, e.g., Eur. *Supp.* 312–13, 524–7, 537–40, 670–2.

⁶¹ Of course, the relationship between historiography and tragedy is not clear-cut: see Rutherford (2007), esp. 510–11 for emotional engagement in each genre.

⁶² See Morgan (1992) 14–29; Hope (2015) 157–78.

⁶³ Vernant (1991) 50–74.

⁶⁴ Marrou (1956) 168; Nicolai (2007) 13–26, esp. 19–23.

⁶⁵ Momigliano (1978); Flory (1980); Nicolai (2007) 23–5.

Yet even the Homeric battlefield omits certain things, and although the poet was fond of describing injuries inflicted in battles (which is also not common in the historians), Homer never speaks of the stench or rot of the battlefield. As Vermeule notes: ‘Homer’s lions do not roar and his battlefield does not stink’.⁶⁶ Therefore, it cannot be the case that vultures and the accompanying stench of rotting bodies were eliminated from historical descriptions in this combination because of their inappropriate nature.

Even though, as has been mentioned already, ancient historians did not establish schools, one may say that they did believe in an educational goal for their works: for some, histories were supposed to be ‘textbooks’ of politics and military art, which could shape the ability of their readers to predict events based on the past and also serve as a warning for future generations. Although historians ‘were often more interested in telling a good story than reporting factual truth’,⁶⁷ the historians themselves claim repeatedly that history could only bring benefit if it presented the truth, and that its greatest enemy was falsehood.⁶⁸ If our interpretation here is correct, this is a case where the idealisation of battle may have stood in opposition to the goal of literal truth. Even allowing for the fact that the definition of truth in ancient historiography is very complex, undoubtedly the absence of scavengers in war narration makes for a ‘good story’ rather than ‘factual truth’. The historians’ battlefield, like Homer’s *pedion*, does not stink, but historians did not even ‘allow’ Homeric vultures to prey on hoplites.

12. Are Vultures ‘Boring’? Animals and Ancient Historiography

The aim of historiography is connected to another question, i.e. were animals considered an integral part of history at all? After all, the father of history in the very first sentence of his work declares that his task is to present matters which took place because of human actions (*τὰ γεγόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων*, *praef.*). Even so, Herodotus’ *Histories*, more than any other historical work, includes many animals. The presentation of military actions remained an unquestionable priority of any historian, of course, but one might wonder why Herodotus denied vultures their place in warfare, when he had time to describe a crocodile which no one had ever seen on the battlefield.

⁶⁶ Vermeule (1979) 91.

⁶⁷ Ruffell and Hau (2017a) 4.

⁶⁸ On historians’ declarations of truth and their lies, see Wiseman (1993); Ruffell and Hau (2017b).

Thucydides cannot be accused of the same omission, because animals play almost no role in his account: there is only sporadic mention of cavalry and a surprising reference to a mythological nightingale (2.29). Xenophon followed in Thucydides' tracks, though he does boast of having tasted the meat of a bird, the bustard (*Anab.* 1.5.3). Polybius, apart from his laconic mentions of horses, elephants, and sometimes the fauna in foreign countries, refers to the taste of a rabbit (12.3). Arrian includes a long description of a swallow pestering the sleeping Alexander (*Anab.* 1.25). The works of some other writers contain information about pigeons, pheasants, peafowl, guineafowl, the importing of dogs, and so forth.⁶⁹ And some writers went so far as to include tales about frogs and fish falling on a city with the rain, or about plagues of hares and snakes.⁷⁰

Undoubtedly, all of Greek historiography may be seen as a conflict between useful material and pleasure (*hēdonē*).⁷¹ Pleasure was provided by descriptions of, as the Greek authors put it, unnecessary trifles introduced for a momentary display, most of which smacks of exaggeration, superstition, 'feminine' prattle, peculiarity, dreams, and fables.⁷² Lucian describes the impression he received from a certain reading, during which the author presented a battle in seven lines and devoted the rest of his time to accounts of animals, that is, telling about a hunt in Mauretania, how he saw a herd of elephants, how he had almost been eaten by a lion, and how he bought giant fish in Caesarea (*hist. conscr.* 28)—and for Lucian this is clearly not the stuff of history.

Some historians were aware that tales about animals in history were an unnecessary digression. For instance, after praising the horse Bucephalus, Arrian writes that he had devoted so many words to it because of Alexander (*Anab.* 5.19); but such an explanation was hardly the rule. Even Tacitus, considered the most serious of Roman historians, gives a long description of the phoenix, introduced in a formal style and informing his readers that the

⁶⁹ For example, Charon of Lampsacus, *FGrHist* 262 F 3b; Alexis of Samos, *FGrHist* 539 F 2; Callixeinos of Rhodes, *FGrHist* 627 F 2; Agatharchides of Cnidus, *FGrHist* 86 F 15; Menodotos of Samos, *FGrHist* 541 F 2.

⁷⁰ For example: Hdt. 3.108; 4.105; Hegesandros of Delphi, *FHG*, fr. 42 (IV.421); Heraclides of Lembus, *FHG*, fr. 3 (III.168).

⁷¹ As Scanlon (2015) 164 explains: 'Thucydides was unusual in explicitly renouncing pleasure in his programmatic introduction (Th. 1.22.4), but most ancient historians, even Thucydides ... succeed through their ability to move the emotions as well as instruct, to involve the reader in the narrative, and to convey their version of the truth, shaped in an attractive form'; cf. Marincola (2013) 86; on pleasure see also Walbank (2002) 231–42.

⁷² For example: Thuc. 1.22; Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.1; Pol. 9.1, 12.24, 26b, 26c–d; Plut. *Her. mal.* 32; Luc. *hist. consc.* 9–13, 27, 57.

bird's arrival in Egypt triggered a heated discussion among scholars, including the wise men of Greece:

During the consulship of Paulus Fabius and Lucius Vitellius, the bird called the phoenix (*avis phoenix*), after a long succession of ages, appeared in Egypt and furnished the most learned men of that country and of Greece with abundant matter for the discussion of the marvellous phenomenon (*miraculum*).⁷³

It is possible, therefore, that the existence of vultures on the battlefield was simply so obvious a fact that it was unworthy of mention, as opposed to the accounts of exotic birds. One might compare Herodotus' remarks on the camel, where he says he will not describe those features of it that are familiar to the Greeks but rather offer them something that they don't know.⁷⁴ If, then, we assume that the criterion of pleasure is an important factor in a historical account, among such 'trifles' a crocodile in the Nile is undoubtedly much more interesting than a well-known vulture hovering over a soldier's body.

13. Concluding Remarks

In the *Iliad*, as well as in tragedy and other genres, scavengers constitute a threat for warriors. In Greek historiography, however, there is almost a complete absence of vultures and other beasts in the Homeric role. Nor do we find them in battle poetry and paintings that reflect the spirit of hoplitic battle. Why, when Homer was so influential throughout Greco-Roman culture, did historians not use vultures and other beasts to create a vibrant dramaturgy of their battle scenes, even though other Homeric influences can be seen? Why don't wild beasts appear as a consequence of individuals violating custom or law, as is often the case in drama?

The answer to these questions is complex, and certainty is impossible, but several factors will have been influential. Greek hoplites might indeed cringe at the thought of 'barbaric' vultures eating the bodies of their enemies, since it was at variance with their code of honour. The notion of the 'beautiful death', adapted from the *Iliad* to the hoplite world, did not wish to occlude such honourable conduct by including threatening scavengers, something

⁷³ Tac. *Ann.* 6.28 (transl. Church and Brodribb): *Paulo Fabio L. Vitellio consulibus post longum saeculorum ambitum avis phoenix in Aegyptum venit praebuitque materiem doctissimis indigenarum et Graecorum multa super eo miraculo disserendi.*

⁷⁴ Hdt. 3.103; cf. Aelian on the rhinoceros, *NA* 17.44.

which, as Greek notions of self-definition became more pronounced in the fifth century, would have come to be seen more and more as characteristic of barbarians. It is therefore possible that the historians deliberately omitted mention of vultures, as well as dogs and other beasts, from their descriptions in the process of the idealisation of battle. Of course, the Greeks knew, from the *Iliad* and from their own military experience, that scavengers were present on real battlefields, but they may have diminished their presence in the same way as they did that of bowmen: bows were present on real battlefields, but the Greeks characterised them as a barbarian weapon, in no way as glorious as the hoplite spear. Scavengers likewise were mundane and unattractive, and their presence could only diminish the glory of those who had fought and died. One thing is certain, however: the vultures had not left the battlefield. But no place could be found for them in a genre which focussed on 'great and marvellous deeds' and portrayed even the common soldier with a dignity and security that he can hardly have actually had on an ancient battlefield.

*Institute of History,
The Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland*

LUCYNA KOSTUCH
l.kostuch@wp.pl

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnott, W. G. (2007) *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Ζ* (London and New York).
- Arrington, N. T. (2015) *Ashes, Images, and Memories: the Presence of the War Dead in Fifth-Century Athens* (New York and Oxford).
- Boraston, J. M. (1911) 'The Birds of Homer', *JHS* 31: 216–50.
- Brendel, O. J. (1978) *Etruscan Art* (Harmondsworth).
- Bridge, S. (2003) *Where the Eagles are Gathered: The Deliverance of the Elect in Lukan Eschatology* (New York).
- Cook, H. R. M. (1952) 'Dogs in Battle', in T. Dohrn, ed., *Festschrift Andreas Rumpf* (Krefeld) 38–42.
- Dasen, V. (1993) *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece* (Oxford).
- De Jong, A. (1997) *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden).
- Delebecque, E. (1951) *Le cheval dans l'Iliade* (Paris).
- Detienne, M. (1977) *The Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology* (Princeton).
- Echeverría, F. (2017) 'Greek Armies Against Towns: Siege Warfare and the Seven Against Thebes', in I. Torrance, ed., *Aeschylus and War: Comparative Perspectives on Seven Against Thebes* (London and New York).
- Faust, M. (1970) 'Die künstlerische Verwendung von kyon 'Hund' in den homerischen Epen', *Glotta* 48: 8–31.
- Flory, S. (1980) 'Who Read Herodotus' Histories', *AJPh* 101: 12–28.
- Forster, E. S. (1941) 'Dogs in Ancient Warfare', *G&R* 30: 114–17
- Grenet, P. (1985) *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation* (Paris).
- Griffin, J. (1980) *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford).
- Hamblin, W. J. (2006) *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC* (New York).
- Hanson, V. D. (1989) *The Western Way of War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles).
- Hau, L. I. (2013) 'Nothing to Celebrate? The Lack or Disparagement of Victory Celebrations in the Greek Historians', in A. Spalinger and J. Armstrong, edd., *Rituals of Triumph in the Mediterranean World* (Leiden) 57–74.
- Hope, V. M. (2015) 'Bodies on the Battlefield: The Spectacle of Rome's Fallen Soldiers', in A. Bakogianni and V. M. Hope, edd., *War as Spectacle: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Display of Armed Conflict* (London and New York) 157–78).
- Hughes, J. D. (2013) 'Warfare and Environment in the Ancient World', in B. Campbell and L. A. Tritle, edd., *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World* (New York and Oxford) 128–142.
- (2014) *Environmental Problems of the Greeks and Romans: Ecology in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Baltimore and London).

- Keller, O. (1913) *Die antike Tierwelt*, vol. 2 (Leipzig).
- Kitchell, K. F. (2004) 'Man's Best Friend? The Changing Role of the Dog in Greek Society', in B. Santillo Frizell, ed., *Pecus: Man and Animal in Antiquity* (Rome) 177–82.
- (2014) *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z* (London and New York).
- Krentz, P. (2002) 'Fighting by the Rules. The Invention of the Hoplite Agōn', *Hesperia* 71: 23–39.
- Lewis, R. G. (1988) 'An Alternative Date for Sophocles' *Antigone*' *GRBS* 29: 35–50.
- Luce, T. J. (1997) *The Greek Historians* (London and New York).
- Luckenbill, D. D. (1927) *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, vol. 2 (Chicago).
- Lynch, K. M. (2011) *The Symposium in Context: Pottery from a Late Archaic House Near the Athenian Agora* (Princeton).
- Marincola, J. (2006) *Greek Historians* (*Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics*, no. 31; Oxford).
- (2011) 'Historians and Homer', in M. Finkelberg, ed., *The Homer Encyclopedia*, 3 vols (Malden, Mass. and Oxford) II.357–9.
- (2013) 'Polybius, Phylarchus, and 'Tragic History': A Reconsideration', in B. Gibson and T. Harrison, ed., *Polybius and His World: Essays in Memory of F. W. Walbank* (Oxford) 73–90.
- , ed. (2007) *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 2 vols (Malden, Mass and Oxford).
- Marrou, H. I. (1956) *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York).
- Mayor A. (2014) 'Animals in Warfare', in G. L. Campbell ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life* (Oxford) 282–293.
- Momigliano, A. (1978) 'The Historians of the Classical World and Their Audiences', *The American Scholar* 2: 193–204.
- Morgan, M. G. (1992) 'The Smell of Victory: Vitellius at Bedriacum', *CPh* 87: 14–29
- Nicolai, R., (2007) 'The Place of History in the Ancient World', in Marincola (2007) 13–26.
- Redfield, J. M. (1975) *Nature and Culture in the Iliad. The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago).
- Rengakos, A. (2006) 'Homer and the Historians: The Influence of Epic Narrative Technique on Herodotus and Thucydides', in F. Montanari and A. Rengakos, ed., *La poésie épique grecque: métamorphoses d'un genre littéraire* (Geneva) 183–209.
- Rood, T. (2007) 'The Development of the War Monograph', in Marincola (2007) 147–58.
- Ruffell I. and L. I. Hau (2017a) 'Introduction', in id. (2017b) 1–12.

- , edd. (2017b) *Truth and History in the Ancient World: Pluralising the Past* (London and New York).
- Rutherford, R. B. (2007) ‘Tragedy and History’, in Marincola (2007) 504–14.
- Scanlon, T. F. (2015) *Greek Historiography* (Malden, Mass. and Oxford).
- Segal, C. (1971) *The Theme of the Mutilation of the Corpse in the Iliad* (Leiden).
- Strasburger, H. (1972) *Homer und die Geschichtsschreibung* (Heidelberg).
- Thomas, R. (2000) *Herodotus in Context. Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge).
- Thompson, D’A. (1895) *A Glossary to Greek Birds* (Oxford).
- Tritle, L. (2007) ‘Warfare in Herodotus’, in C. Dewald and J. Marincola, edd., *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge) 209–23.
- Vaughn, P. (1991) ‘The Identification and Retrieval of the Hoplite Battle-Dead’, in V. D. Hanson, ed., *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London and New York) 38–62.
- Vermeule, E. (1979) *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art. And Poetry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles).
- Vernant, J.-P. (1991) ‘A “Beautiful Death” and the Disfigured Corpse in Homeric Epic’, in id., *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton) 50–74.
- Voultziadou E. and A. Tatolas (2005) ‘The Fauna of Greece and Adjacent Areas in the Age of Homer: Evidence from the First Written Documents of Greek Literature’, *Journal of Biogeography* 32: 1875–82.
- Walbank, F. W. (2002) *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge).
- West, S. (1999) ‘Sophocles’ Antigone and Herodotus Book III’, in J. Griffin, ed., *Sophocles Revisited: Essays Presented to Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford) 109–36.
- Wheeler, E. L. and B. Strauss (2008) ‘Battle’, in P. Sabin, H. van Wees, and M. Whitby, edd., *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare I: Greece, The Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome* (Cambridge) 186–222.
- Winter, I. (1985) ‘After the Battle is Over: The Stele of the Vultures and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient Near East’, in H. Kessler and M. Simpson, edd., *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Washington) 11–32.
- Wiseman, T. P. (1993) ‘Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity’, in C. Gill and T. P. Wiseman, edd., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Exeter and Austin, Tex.) 122–46.