

## TYRTAEUS 12 WEST: COME JOIN THE SPARTAN ARMY

Few scholars are likely to quibble with a characterization of early Spartan historiography as a highly speculative affair, for it is necessarily so, given the small quantity of evidence available.<sup>1</sup> That being the case, it is all the more important that the data we do possess be fully exploited and given their proper weight. Tyrtaeus 12 (West) is, in this author's estimation, one such piece of evidence which stands to benefit from further analysis.<sup>2</sup> For the contention developed here that the poem is both genuinely Tyrtaean while at the same time unique in the corpus has potentially important implications for our understanding of early military developments at Sparta.

### I. THE UNIQUENESS OF 12 (WEST)

Although, as Pritchett has observed, Tyrtaeus never speaks of the joy of battle, Spartan hoplite superiority, or Spartan values, his is a name that nevertheless conjures up something of the hyperbolic in the glorification of everything martial.<sup>3</sup> Lending no small support to such characterizations is the poem generally considered to be his finest work: 12 (West).<sup>4</sup> It is certainly the unique theme of this poem, extolling the ἀρετή of the battlefield beyond all other human accomplishments, which is largely responsible for its reputation (as well as for doubts about its authenticity).

Scepticism about the genuineness of 12 is at least understandable. To set this poem, which so effectively magnifies military glory, into the midst of an unpleasant war decades long and involving numerous, largely inglorious losses (which indeed we must do if we are to assume Tyrtaean authorship) strikes a discordant note, an eventuality that is, moreover, in sharp contrast to the rest of the corpus which seems to fit the milieu of the Second Messenian War quite well. Denying 12 to Tyrtaeus is the simplest solution to this difficulty.

Aside from the critical issue of the poem's content (covered separately below), most other objections to the authenticity of 12 can be summarized as stylistic and tactical questions. Wilamowitz, for example, questioned the originality of 12 on both of these grounds.<sup>5</sup> He found in the phraseology of the poem little evidence of the archaisms

<sup>1</sup> In his review of M. Meier's *Aristokraten und Damoden*, A. S. Bradford's observation that future evaluations of Sparta's early history and institutions are warranted only by new evidence, new methods or new interpretations is an important caveat: *CR* 50 (2000), 641–2.

<sup>2</sup> That is, 9 Diehl, Gentili-Prato: *Poetarum Elegiacorum Testimonia et Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1979). M. L. West's numbering has been employed here: *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* 2 (Oxford, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> W. K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography* 5 (Berkeley, 1985), 16. For the reception of Tyrtaean themes in modern times, see C. W. Müller, 'Der schöne Tod des Polisbürger oder "Ehrenvoll ist es, für das Vaterland zu sterben"', *Gymnasium* 96 (1989), 317–40.

<sup>4</sup> C. M. Bowra, for example, called these verses 'the most literary, the most original, and the best constructed of the surviving works of Tyrtaeus' (*Early Greek Elegists* [Cambridge, 1935], 62). See also E. Schwinge 'Tyrtaios über seine Dichtung (Fr. 9 G.-P. = 12 W.)', *Hermes* 125 (1997), 387–95.

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Lyriker* (Berlin, 1900). Bowra ([n.4], 62) also rejected the authenticity of 12, suggesting an Athenian provenance for the poem. More recently, G. Tarditi has continued the challenge in 'Parenesi e Areté nel Corpus Tirtaico', *RFIC* 110 (1982), 257–276.

which he felt one should expect at this early period in Sparta.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, he maintained that the armour and tactics alluded to therein were inconsistent with Tyrtaeus' historical setting.<sup>7</sup> The first of these concerns has been effectively answered by Jaeger.<sup>8</sup> Jaeger presents well over a dozen persuasive similarities to the phraseology of 12 from elsewhere in the corpus. For example, in line 12, ἐγγύθεν ἰστάμενος is echoed by ἐγγύθεν ἰστάμενοι (1.17), πλείον ἰστάμενοι (8.38), and ἐγγύς ἰών (8.29).<sup>9</sup> Parallels are also presented from other early elegists which accord quite closely with the language of 12.<sup>10</sup>

Tyrtaean authorship has also been questioned on stylistic grounds by Fränkel.<sup>11</sup> Fränkel felt that the long introduction, the balance, and the articulation of the poem were indications that the poem was too 'modern' for Tyrtaeus, and that 12 should therefore be dated toward the end of the Archaic Period.<sup>12</sup> That these admitted structural peculiarities of the poem need not be attributed to a lack of authenticity is a point which has been well argued by Snell.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, van Groningen's analysis of 12 as being essentially bipartite with the second element consisting of a *parénèse* provides a reasonable rationale for the apparent discrepancy.<sup>14</sup> In this poem, unlike his other surviving war poems, Tyrtaeus deals with one idea, one dominant motif, with the weight of the poem resting on the final exhortation in verses 43–4, which represent a conclusion that flows from the argumentation in the rest of the poem. This structural uniqueness merely serves to show that the approach used by Tyrtaeus in 12 is unlike that employed in his other poems, not that the poem was composed by someone else.

The second argument used against the authenticity of 12 in the past hinges on the date and manner of the Spartan adoption of phalanx-type tactics and organization. In a critique written before the discovery of the Berlin papyrus (18–23 W), Wilamowitz used the mention of the word phalanx in 12.21 (as well as the hoplite-style armaments listed in the poem) to mount a historical challenge to 12's authenticity on just this basis.<sup>15</sup> But, as Jaeger has argued, the description of hoplite weapons and phalanx tactics in the new fragment is completely consistent with the description of battle given in 12.<sup>16</sup> In hindsight, neither stylistic nor tactical objections seem persuasive enough to cast any serious doubts upon the poem's genuineness. Both arguments are best seen as symptoms of an unwillingness to accept authenticity from a different primary motive

<sup>6</sup> Wilamowitz (n. 5), 9.

<sup>7</sup> Specifically, Tyrtaean authorship is rejected on the grounds that the poem mentions the phalanx and its equipment (Wilamowitz [n.5], 114).

<sup>8</sup> Werner Jaeger, 'Tyrtaios über die wahre ἀρετή', *Scripta Minora* 2 (Rome, 1960), 75–114. Beyond the use of μάλιον in line 6, Wilamowitz offered little in positive terms to dispute Tyrtaean authorship. On the other hand, the Homeric use (lines 43–4) of the impersonal τῆς with the third-person imperative is paralleled both in Callinus (1.5, 9), a virtual contemporary of Tyrtaeus, and elsewhere in Tyrtaeus as well (7.31). The epic phraseology of Poem 12 overall has been noted by Bowra (n. 4), 51; T. Tarkow, 'The role of poetry in the new Sparta', *AC* 52 (1983), 59; and L. Thommen, *Lakedaimonion Politeia* (Stuttgart, 1996), 48–9.

<sup>9</sup> Jaeger (n. 8), 85.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Solon 1.32, Tyrtaeus 9.29–30. See also Jaeger (n. 8), 103.

<sup>11</sup> Hermann Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, trans. M. Hadas and J. Willis (Oxford, 1973), 337–9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>13</sup> B. Snell, *Tyrtaios und die Sprache des Epos* (Göttingen, 1969), 27–36.

<sup>14</sup> B. A. van Groningen, *La Composition Littéraire Archaique Grecque* (Amsterdam, 1960), 79.

<sup>15</sup> Wilamowitz (n. 5), 114–15. On Wilamowitz's analysis here, see Jaeger (n. 8), 83.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture* 1 (Oxford, 1939), 84, and A. M. Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons* 1 (Edinburgh 1964), 181.

altogether, namely the uniqueness of the poem within the corpus because of its special emphasis on ἀρετή.

## II. TYRTAEUS 12'S RE-EVALUATION OF *ARETE*

In his influential article, Jaeger went so far as to call Tyrtaeus' use of ἀρετή in 12 an 'Umwertung' of the word.<sup>17</sup> This tendency to see 12 as a re-evaluation of the concept of ἀρετή and as a credo for the transformation of the Spartan state (whereby the individual is to subordinate his personal goals to the good of the πόλις) has been largely followed by later writers.<sup>18</sup> Although not all have ventured quite so far,<sup>19</sup> it does seem undeniable that political persuasion lies at the heart of the poem. Tyrtaeus is selling us something here.<sup>20</sup> Instead of taking what Tyrtaeus has to say here about ἀρετή in such absolute terms (that is, as laying down a new philosophical basis for the Spartan state), might it not be preferable to see 12 as a practical poetic appeal to a concrete situation actually being faced by the poet and his countrymen?

On the face of it, the poem itself suggests that we should do just that. Tyrtaeus is not proposing a general definition of all ἀρετή in line 13 with the phrase ἧ ἀρετή. He is merely proclaiming the previously discussed martial ἀρετή supreme (as is argued for by the following phrase τὸδ' ἄεθλον).<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the use of ταύτης in line 43 to describe this ἀρετή is also a strong indication that Tyrtaeus has all along been focusing only on the one particular ἀρετή of courage, rather than attempting to redefine the concept. The mention of speed as an ἀρετή in line 2 (ποδῶν ἀρετῆς) is significant in this regard: there are apparently other types of ἀρετή, if far inferior in Tyrtaeus' eyes. Finally, in line 10, the prepositional phrase ἐν πολέμῳ is still needed to apply ἀρετή to this most important sphere of virtue. Following Tyrtaeus' exhortations leads one to become an ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός in war but not necessarily a possessor of every sort (still less the only sort) of ἀρετή. Neither is the picture of ἀρετή given here by Tyrtaeus so strikingly different from that which appears elsewhere. In fact, Tyrtaeus' view of the nature of ἀρετή presented here is very much in the main stream of Greek thought: he describes it as (i) a quality that must be acquired through struggle (12.10–11); (ii) a power in its own right, granting the ability to accomplish significant feats (12.20–1); (iii) a source of renown to its possessor (12.31–2); and (iv) a benefit to the community as a whole (12.15).

Hesiod's portrayal of ἀρετή is relevant to the first category mentioned (12.10–11), that is, its attainment comes only through great effort (*Op.* 286–92).<sup>22</sup> The gods have

<sup>17</sup> Jaeger (n. 8), 92.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Snell (n. 13), 51; Thommen (n. 8), 48–51; and M. Meier, *Aristokraten und Damoden* (Stuttgart, 1998), 272. Similarly, Bowra (n. 4), 70.

<sup>19</sup> David Campbell (*Greek Lyric Poetry* [London, 1967], 177–8) rejects the analysis of both Jaeger and Bowra in finding here a single standard of ἀρετή defined solely by the state.

<sup>20</sup> 'Tyrtaeus' main task [in 12] is not to prove a proposition, but to win his audience's emotional acceptance of something which is naturally repugnant . . .': H. J. Shey, 'Tyrtaeus and the art of propaganda', *Arethusa* 9 (1976), 8–9.

<sup>21</sup> The parallel positions of the two pronouns ἧδ' and τὸδ' along with the nouns they modify argues for both phrases to be taken in the same way ('this is'). While Douglas Gerber (*Euterpe* [Amsterdam, 1970], 77) suggests that either 'this is ἀρετή' or 'this ἀρετή' are possible, he implies that the latter is better supported by the context. Compare M. L. West's 'this is the highest worth': *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford, 1993), 26. See also C. Prato, *Tyrtaeus* (Rome, 1968), 130: 'questa (è) la (vera) arete . . .'; and José Lasso de la Vega, 'El Guerrero Tirteico', *Emerita* 30 (1962), 45: 'Esta es la areté, la cualidad excelente y primera en el ideal de hombre.'

<sup>22</sup> On Tyrtaeus' use of Hesiod in this context, see H. Munding, 'Tyrtaeus 9 Diehl (= 12 West)

made ἀρετή a thing earned by sweat (289), and the path to ἀρετή is difficult and laborious at first, but positive results flow once the summit of ἀρετή has been attained (290–1).<sup>23</sup> Another pertinent feature of Hesiod's depiction of ἀρετή is his εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται (291). This notion of effort culminating in acquisition, a breaking of the barrier so to speak, is described in almost identical language by Pindar (πρὸς ἄκρον ἀρετῆς ἦλθον, *Nem.* 6.23) and Simonides (ἵκη τ' ἐς ἄκρον ἀνδρείας, 74.7; where ἀνδρείας responds to Ἀρετὰν of line 2).<sup>24</sup> In 579, Simonides uses language similar to Hesiod's in describing the difficulty involved in attaining ἀρετή. She dwells δυσσαμβάτοις' ἐπὶ πέτραις (2), and is unavailable to anyone ᾧ μὴ δακέθυμος ἰδρῶς ἔνδοθεν μόλη (5–6). The idea of an ἀρετή that can be acquired, albeit only with great effort, is thus neither original in, nor unique to, Tyrtaeus.<sup>25</sup>

Tyrtaeus' claim that ἀρετη produces tangible abilities is also not without parallel (12.20–1). Solon used ἀρετή in the sense of mental and rhetorical ability (23.16), while in Homer the word is applied to that quality which brings success in general (*Od.* 14.212), as well as to effective martial courage (*Il.* 11.90).<sup>26</sup> Nor is the renown that accrues to the possessor of ἀρετή here at all unique (12.31–2). Simonides tells us that Leonidas left behind ἀρετὰς μέγαν . . . κόσμον ἀέναον τε κλέος (26.8–9). Perhaps the most poignant representation of the lasting fame to be won by ἀρετή is found in Simonides as well, for it raises those who have died gloriously for their country καθύπερθε . . . δώματος ἐξ Αἴδεω (121D, 3–4), a sentiment going even farther than Tyrtaeus' ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γῆς περ ἔων γίγνεται ἀθάνατος (12.32).<sup>27</sup>

Finally, in terms of the benefit conferred upon the group by individually possessed ἀρετή (12.15), Jaeger points out that Tyrtaeus' ξυνὸν ἐσθλόν is an essential equivalent to the later κοινὸν ἀγαθόν.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the possession of ἀρετή had always been viewed as a benefit to the political entity, as Adkins has shown.<sup>29</sup> Odysseus, for example, describes the benefits accruing to a population from exceptional leadership in similar terms (ἀρετῶσι δὲ λαοὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, *Il.* 19.107–14).<sup>30</sup> And Xenophanes based

auf dem Hintergrund des Hesiodischen Areté-Passus (E. 286–292)', in C. Neumeister (ed.), *Antike Texte in Forschung und Schule* (Frankfurt, 1993), 29–37.

<sup>23</sup> M. L. West, in *Hesiod, Works and Days* (Oxford, 1978), 230, translates the last phrase 'for all its (previous) difficulty'.

<sup>24</sup> See D. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962), 298. Page's numbering for Simonides has been followed where possible.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of ἀρετή as a process of 'becoming' as opposed to 'being' in Simonides, see L. Woodbury, 'Simonides on Ἀρετή', *TAPA* 84 (1953), 135–63 (esp. 146–7).

<sup>26</sup> Tyrtaeus' 'ability' ἀρετή brings about precisely the same result in 'turning the ranks of the enemy' (12.21). We may mention in this connection as well that the clearly ability-centred ποδῶν ἀρετῆς of 12.2 is entirely consistent with the Homeric concept (cf. esp. *Il.* 20.411–12).

<sup>27</sup> *Anth. Pal.* 7.251. For earlier parallels, compare Hesiod's πλοῦτῶ δ' ἀρετῆ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ (*Op.* 313), and Homer's ἡμετέρης ἀρετῆς μεμνημένους (*Od.* 8.244), τῶ οἱ κλέος οὐ ποτ' ὀλεῖται ἧς ἀρετῆς (*Od.* 24.196–7) and οὔτῳ γὰρ κέν μοι εὐκλείη τ' ἀρετῆ τε εἶη ἐπ' ἀνθρώποις (*Od.* 14.402–3).

<sup>28</sup> Jaeger (n. 8), 92.

<sup>29</sup> '[The possessors of ἀρετή are the ones] who are able effectively to defend the group, [and] accordingly, must unite in themselves courage, strength, wealth and high birth; and since these are the qualities of which society holds itself to be most in need, they are denoted and commended by *agathos, esthlos* and *arete*' (A. W. H. Adkins, *Moral Values and Political Behavior in Ancient Greece* [New York, 1972], 13).

<sup>30</sup> This is not far removed from the ξυνὸν ἐσθλόν of Tyrtaeus. Cf. A. W. H. Adkins (*Merit and Responsibility* [Oxford, 1960], 66) on this passage: 'for *aretan* is to have *arete*'. See also F. Jacoby ('Studien zu den älteren griechischen Elegikern', *Hermes* 53 [1918], 32), who interprets the ξυνὸν ἐσθλόν as 'ein Schutz für die ganze Stadt' and finds the forms for this verse in *Il.* 16.262 and 3.50.

his demand for respect on the argument that his wisdom was more beneficial to the city than athletic prowess, demonstrating that for him, as for Tyrtaeus, the benefit which *ἀρετή* provided to the state was the key to measuring its true worth (2.22).<sup>31</sup>

Tyrtaeus' use of the word *ἀρετή*, therefore, falls short of the extraordinary in the context of Greek usage elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> The entire thrust of Tyrtaeus' appeal is motivational—not a modernistic 'virtue for virtue's sake', but *ἀρετή* sought for good and persuasive reasons. This is true even in light of the poem's appeal to the 'common good' treated immediately above. Tyrtaeus has taken pains to couch even this dimension of *ἀρετή* more in terms of self-interest than of self-sacrifice (in contrast to what we find in the other fragments as we shall see below). Without the *ἀρετή* won in battle, a man has no remembrance or place in poetry (12.1).<sup>33</sup> The warrior who dies honourably in battle confers glory by his actions on his family and country (12.24) in addition to being gloriously honoured by his countrymen in his own right (12.27). His tomb and offspring are distinguished among men (12.29), and he himself wins enduring fame (12.31). In life he has the overt recognition of all (12.37), stands out amidst his fellow-citizens (12.39), and enjoys special privileges (12.38), which serve as marks of distinction. The emphasis of 12 is thus unquestionably on the benefits, particularly the fame and renown, that a man receives from the acquisition of *ἀρετή*, not on the good that the group receives through his heroic actions. Although the two concepts are certainly not incompatible, this predominant stress on the individual rewards to be gained in the quest for *ἀρετή* points to what we suggested at the beginning of this section: Tyrtaeus was writing to persuade. Poem 12 is designed to sway its hearers to a particular course of action, not to ratify a commonly held sentiment. Here, then, is where the uniqueness of 12 truly lies, not in any philosophical construction of *ἀρετή*. For the primary object of Tyrtaeus 12 is not to encourage warriors *in* battle, but to bring them into the ranks in the first place. A brief comparison of 12 with the rest of corpus will show that the thematic differences do indeed fall along these lines.

### III. TYRTAEUS 12 AND THE CORPUS

Despite stylistic similarities and the use of a common vocabulary, there is a palpable dissimilarity between 12 and the other poems of Tyrtaeus. Although they share the same basic subject matter (war) and the same general purpose (motivation for war), the approach is nevertheless noticeably divergent. Poem 12 emphasizes the positive, the glorious, and, most significantly, the personal aspects of war in contrast to the other poems which stress the negative, the realistic, and the collective aspects of combat.

<sup>31</sup> For the essential similarity in the concept of patriotic duty and social obligation in Homer and Tyrtaeus, see P. A. L. Greenhalgh, 'Patriotism in the Homeric world', *Historia* 21 (1972), 535.

<sup>32</sup> Theognis, for example, puts his own definition of *ἀρετή* in more absolute terms (*ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶσ' ἀρετῆ' στι*, 147). The weight Tyrtaeus places upon *θεοῦρις ἀλκή* (12.9) serves merely to give 'this *ἀρετή*' rhetorical emphasis as the most important *ἀρετή* in a group of *ἀρεταί*. See Tarkow (n. 8), 49.

<sup>33</sup> This is the interpretation of *λόγω* given by Gerber (n. 21), 75, and also by Tarkow (n. 8), 63. The idea of enduring reputation through poetry is, of course, a commonplace (e.g. Sappho 55; Theognis 245–6; Bacchylides 3.96–8). Tyrtaeus follows this idea up with *δόξα* in line 9, used as a virtual synonym for *ἀρετή*. See Jaeger (n. 8), 90.

*Fame versus shame*

The fundamental appeal behind Tyrtaeus' argumentation in 12, the offer of fame to the one who achieves ἀρετή, is unique in the corpus. Absent from the other fragments are the promises of immortality and universal acclaim. In their place Tyrtaeus puts shame, duty, and the threat of punishment. In Poem 5, the long hard struggle of the First Messenian War is recounted. The ancestors of Tyrtaeus' audience fought on unsuccessfully for nineteen years, but persistence paid off as victory came in the twentieth year. This comparison of the two situations serves to shame the hearers should they prove less stalwart than their predecessors.<sup>34</sup> Fragment 6 has the effect of denigrating the opposition, for in it the Messenians are portrayed as ὄνοι worn down by huge burdens (6.1), forced even to mourn for their hated masters (6.4–5) to whom they must give a full half of their production (6.3). Rather than attempting to elicit sympathy for the Messenians, Tyrtaeus is doubtless attempting to arouse a sense of humiliation at the idea of giving in to such a foe.

In Poem 10, disgrace comes to the fore as a negative motivation, while we hear little of the glories offered by military prowess as in 12. One expression in particular that needs to be carefully considered is τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλόν in 10.1. Although often compared to it, Tyrtaeus' καλόν is considerably less emphatic here than Horace's *dulce et decorum*,<sup>35</sup> and must not be divorced from the overall context where the threat of dishonour greatly preponderates.<sup>36</sup> First of all, the placement of καλόν at the beginning of the poem is most likely for shock effect,<sup>37</sup> and is quickly qualified by ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα: 'that is, if a man dies in the forefront of battle . . .'.<sup>38</sup> The phrase τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλόν is more of an assurance that a death, in the service of one's country, will find more social acceptance than a cowardly retreat. Even more significant is the fact that the entire remainder of the poem seems to have been set by Tyrtaeus in opposition to the lead phrase: 'Dying on the battlefield is honourable, *but* . . .'.<sup>39</sup> The build-up of negative words that oppose καλόν, the lone positive expression in the context, is worth observing: 'having abandoned' (10.3, προλιπόντα); 'to beg' (10.4, πτωχεύειν); 'he shames' (10.9, αἰσχύνει); 'he belies' (10.9, ἐλέγχει); 'a most vexatious thing' (10.4, ἀννηρότατον: the superlative answering to the positive adjective καλόν), 'wandering' (10.5, πλαζόμενον); 'hateful' (10.7, ἐχθρός), 'need' (10.8, χρησιμοσύνη); 'loathsome poverty' (10.9, στυγερῆ πενίη); 'baseness' (10.10, κακότης); and 'dishonour' (10.10,

<sup>34</sup> Fränkel ([n.11], 154–5) suggests, '[The poem] probably went on—"Shall we now prove inferior to the achievements of our ancestors and let go what they won?"]'.

<sup>35</sup> R. Stoneman in *Aischylos und Pindar*, ed. E. Schmidt (Berlin, 1981), 259.

<sup>36</sup> Jaeger (n. 8), 86.

<sup>37</sup> 'This [arresting beginning] is calculated to wake up a dull audience' (C. M. Dawson, 'Σπουδαιογέλοιον: random thoughts on occasional poems', *YCS* 19 [1966], 51).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Bowra ([n. 4], 60) translates καλόν 'noble'; Jaeger ([n.8], 93) renders it 'Ehrenvoll'. These translations seem justified in light of the moral twist given to αἰσχρόν in lines 16, 21, and especially 26: αἰσχρὰ τὰ γ' ὀφθλμοῖς καὶ νεμεσητὸν ἰδεῖν, ugly in the sense of being filled with retribution. Homeric usage also supports the taking of καλόν in a moral sense here. The sentiment that death for one's country is acceptable is found at *Il.* 15.496 in phraseology very close to that which Tyrtaeus uses in Poem 10 (οὐ οἱ αἰεὶκὲς ἀμνηνομένω περὶ πατρὸς τεθνάμεν). The two expressions 'fitting' (ἐπέουκα) and 'honourable' (καλόν) are linked in *Il.* 22.71–3 (νέω δέ τε πάντ' ἐπέουκεν Ἄρηϊ κταμένω δεδαῖγμένω ὄξει χαλκῶ ἰ κείσθαι πάντα δὲ καλὰ θανόντι περ ὅτι φανήη). Priam is making a moral rather than an aesthetic appeal to Hector as the sequel shows when he balances this statement with ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ πολὺν τε κάρη πολὺν τε γένειον ἰ αἰδῶ τ' αἰσχρῶσι κύνες κταμένοιο γέροντος, ἰ τοῦτο δὴ οὔκτιστον πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι (74–6).

ἀτιμία). It is clear where Tyrtaeus wishes to place his emphasis. Finally, in the exhortation that follows line 10, Tyrtaeus draws his conclusion not from *τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλόν*, but from the personal disaster that results from cowardice in battle: ‘So if there is no concern or respect for a wanderer . . .’. The second half of the poem then draws upon this theme, demonstrating the shamefulness of running away (10.19–27) and abandoning the older men (10.20) to a humiliating fate (10.26). The poem’s accentuation of the detriments of cowardice over the benefits of bravery is unmistakable.<sup>40</sup>

The situation in Tyrtaeus 11 is analogous. ‘Zeus is not afraid’ in the second line implies opprobrium for the Spartans if *they* should slacken, since the gods are neither at fault for, nor intimidated by, the situation.<sup>41</sup> A mild reproach aimed at the hearers’ guilty consciences is delivered in the phrase *μετὰ φευγόντων* (11.9), and the corpse run through the back is described as ‘shameful’ (11.19). While *ἀρετή* is available for the winning in 12, in 11 it is mentioned as something one stands to lose (11.14, *τρεσσάντων δ’ ἀνδρῶν πᾶσ’ ἀπόλωλ’ ἀρετή*). Since much of 11 involves an extended battle description, the disadvantages of desertion are not spelled out in the same detail as in 10, but Tyrtaeus summarizes the drawbacks in two compact and powerful lines that trigger shame and fear as much by what they do not say as by what they do (11.15–16, *οὐδεὶς ἄν ποτε ταῦτα λέγων ἀνύσειν ἕκαστα, ὄσσο’, ἦν αἰσχρὰ πάθῃ, γίνεται ἀνδρὶ κακά*).<sup>42</sup> Apart from what he says in 12, the primary objective for a warrior, according to Tyrtaeus, is more to be found in avoiding disgrace than in striving for individual distinction.

### *Heroism versus teamwork*

The struggle of combat is common to all of Tyrtaeus’ war poetry (e.g. *μάρναμαι* in 10.10, 10.18, 21.4, as well as in 12.33), but in 12, instead of a collective effort, we see a decidedly competitive tone. The appeal in 12 is to the individual rather than to the team, and the *ἀρετή* promised falls to the lot of the one, not to the many. The victory is provided by the hero alone, not by coordinated action of the rank and file, and the prizes won by the hero are uniquely his alone, and not shared with the group.

The poem of Tyrtaeus 12 leads off with two examples of athletic *ἀρετή*, running and wrestling. Tyrtaeus then puts *θοῦρις ἄλκη* (12.9) before all other *ἀρεταί* (as Xenophanes had preferred wisdom to victory: 2.13–14). Yet the athletic images with which Tyrtaeus begins the poem do not recede entirely from our view. Rather it is the aspiring warrior who takes the athlete’s place. He must endure (12.11) to become good (12.10); a prize is offered (12.13) which he is encouraged to win (12.14); and the rewards he receives are quite like those of the athletic victor (esp. 12.41–2; cf. Xenophanes 2.7). This discourse, ostensibly directed at a single individual who has ‘the right stuff’, stands in stark contrast to the ‘we’s’ and ‘all together’s’ of the Berlin papyrus (19.11, 19.12, 20.15) and to the plurals of 10 and 11 (esp. 10.13, 10.15, 10.18, 11.2, 11.3). Poem 12 addresses the individual *νέος* on his own terms (12.14), while the other poems address the collective *γένος* (e.g. 11.1). In 10.2, one dies striving *περὶ ἦ*

<sup>40</sup> A. W. H. Adkins is right in saying that line 30 does not constitute an exception: ‘[The word] *καλός* is not contrasted with *ζωὸς ἐών*’ (‘Callinus 1 and Tyrtaeus 10 as Poetry’, *HSCP* 81 [1977], 83). The point in line 30 is that a death in battle is no disgrace for a young man. Compare line 27 *νέοισι δὲ πάντ’ ἐπέουκεν* and the discussion in note 39 of *Il.* 22.71–5.

<sup>41</sup> So J. A. S. Evans on this idiom in ‘Tyrtaios, Fragm. 8, 1–2’, *Glotta* 40 (1962), 182–3.

<sup>42</sup> ‘[Cowardice] is probably the meaning of *ἦν αἰσχρὰ πάθῃ* v. 16 (“if things shameful befall him”)’ (Fränkel [n. 11], 158).

πατρίδι while in 12.13, one strives for a personal ἀρετή. Poem 12 resembles a collegiate recruiting interview in which the prospective athlete is promised everything, while the complications and difficulties that lie ahead are minimized. To continue the analogy, we find that the remainder of the corpus resembles more the genre of the ‘half-time pep-talk’ in which Tyrtaeus (in the role of a coach facing an actual game situation) has an entire team to motivate (not just a single star athlete).<sup>43</sup> In 12, ἀρετή is attainable (through becoming ἀγαθός in battle), being very much a prize to which all may be invited to aspire (12.43–4), but which, in practice, only a few can attain (12.39). But in 10.2, the presumption is otherwise, for in that context it is assumed that anyone who dies in battle is an ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός.<sup>44</sup> The ἀρετή of 12.13 is a prize to be won, but in 11.14 the soldiery in general are considered to already possess ἀρετή, and it is only by cowardly behaviour that it is lost. The warrior of 12 wins the victory single-handedly (like an athletic hero). By himself he ‘routs the enemy ranks’ (21), and ‘stems the tide of battle’ (22). As a result, the rewards won by the warrior of 12 are his own, just as the rewards attached to the lesser ἀρεταί in the priamel are purely personal.<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere in the corpus, however, the appeal is to the group at large (e.g. 10.13, μαχώμεθα; 20.15, συνοίσομεν ὀξὺν ἄρηα). In the Berlin papyrus (18–23 West), we see Tyrtaeus calling for obedience to the leaders (19.11; cf. 2.10), and co-ordinated action (19.12–13), in contrast to the individual efforts of their forefathers (19.8).<sup>46</sup> But in 12, despite being inferior to martial valour, the ἀρεταί of the priamel are nevertheless exceptional and are possessed by exceptional individuals. Similarly, only the one who ‘proves the best’ (33) in battle achieves the conspicuous fame and recognition offered in 12, whereby young, old, and contemporaries alike give place to the hero (41–2).

Viewed in this light, 12 is a curious development, and especially so if we are to date it later than Tyrtaeus’ other poems. For in shifting his focus away from the group and towards the individual, Tyrtaeus has struck a tone that sounds far more Homeric than ‘modern’. Such stress on individuality seems all the more strange in the context of the Spartan *agoge* (or, for that matter, of the massed phalanx), renowned for suppressing the same.<sup>47</sup>

### *Myth versus reality*

Comparing Archilochus’ statement to the effect that no one really remembers the dead (64) with Tyrtaeus’ promises of glory in 12, most of us would probably follow Fränkel in considering Archilochus’ view by far the more realistic.<sup>48</sup> The depiction of

<sup>43</sup> The ξυνὸν ἐσθλόν is just another acorn on the wreath, that is, an additional benefit to achievement, not the basis of the appeal.

<sup>44</sup> He does not ‘become’ such in battle. Bowra ([n. 4], 69) takes ἄνδρες ἀγαθοί as a technical term for casualties. Compare Simonides 26.6 (ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ὄδε σηκός).

<sup>45</sup> ‘Where there are positive rewards from these *aretai*, they are purely personal’ (Tarkow [n. 8], 51).

<sup>46</sup> So N. G. L. Hammond, ‘The Lycurgean reform at Sparta’, *JHS* 70 (1950), 51: ‘The sense [of 19.8–13] may then be that the Pamphyloï, Hylleis and Dymanes fought separately; “but we [perhaps the Spartans of Tyrtaeus’ day] shall obey our steadfast leaders without flinching, but we shall one and all combine forthwith to beat down [the foe? . . .] as we stand at close quarters to the spearmen”.’ Similarly, W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta* (London, 1968), 57: ‘They, *sc.* our fathers, used to go into battle . . .’

<sup>47</sup> See especially Plutarch (*Lyc.* 25). As Jaeger ([n. 8], 80) notes, the Spartan system was seen in antiquity as the model for repressing individualism.

<sup>48</sup> Fränkel (n. 11), 139.



war in 12, like the *ἄμφαλόεσσα ἄσπις* of line 25, is romanticized, and somewhat anachronistic. It is also very much different from the one he presents elsewhere. The picture of the slaughtered elder in 10.19–27 lying in the dust clutching at his bloody genitals is hardly one to recommend to a youth the glories of battle. Not so the promises of 12.21–2, where the *ἀγαθός* turns the tide single-handedly and wins eternal fame. In Poem 11, the call to courage is realistic (for some, at any rate, must die: *παυρότεροι θνήσκουσι*, 11.13), but in 12 it is purely mythical (*ταύτης νῦν τις ἀνὴρ ἀρετῆς εἰς ἄκρον ἰκέσθαι πειράσθω*, 12.43–4). Elsewhere in Tyrtaeus, death is presented, not as a road to immortality, but as preferable to a shameful exile (10.1–14).<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere, Tyrtaeus is most forthcoming about the true nature of warfare. War is ‘a source of many tears’ (11.6, *πολυδάκρυτος*), ‘bitter’ (20.15, *ὄξύς*), ‘a bane to mortals’ (19.4, *βροτολογίος*), and ‘painful’ (11.8, *ἀργάλεος*). There is no sense of this in 12: the warfare described there sounds profitable, perhaps even enjoyable. Elsewhere in the corpus, defeat is envisioned as a very real possibility, even an accepted fact (*μετὰ φευγόντων . . . ἐγένεσθε*, 11.9), but in 12, it is merely something shameful that the hero is counselled to dismiss from his mind (*αἰσχρῆς δὲ φυγῆς ἐπὶ πάγχυ λάθηται*, 12.17), mentioned only as a foil to accentuate the hero’s worth.

The attacks on 12’s authenticity seem the more justified, therefore, given the degree to which its focus upon the myth of individual glory runs counter not only to Tyrtaeus’ other poems, but also to what we might expect to be issuing forth from Sparta at this time (especially in the midst of a long and bloody war that would have easily given the lie to this myth). If we are nevertheless to accept 12 as authentic, then it behoves us to explain these not insignificant discrepancies. For while the encouragement given in the other war poems sounds like frank talk to men who have ‘been there’ (from someone who has as well), 12 resembles more a recruiting jingle, designed to stir the blood of the naïve and uninitiated. Those with personal experience of the realities of war are less likely to be swayed by mythical offers of the sort contained in Tyrtaeus 12 of eternal glory falling to the lot not only of the hero, but also to that of his progeny. Such propaganda is doubtless more effective before the fact.

These shifts in focus evident in 12—from an emphasis on avoiding shame to seeking fame, from supporting the group to standing out as an individual, from appreciating the bitter realities of war to romanticizing both war and the glory to be gained therein—may be evidence of a change of purpose on Tyrtaeus’ part, or, possibly a change of audience. Viewed as an encouragement to blooded veterans on a losing streak, the poem would sound a discordant note indeed. On the other hand, if we take 12 as a recruiting device directed toward those whose military experience was slim or non-existent, then it is possible to attribute a greater potential effectiveness to the mythical exaggerations embodied in the poem. The question then becomes not one of 12’s authenticity, but of its particular circumstances.

If the above analysis be accepted, it takes no great leap to see 12 as a response to some manpower crisis in the Spartan army, as a call to arms in the form of a first-class recruiting jingle that still resonates today: ‘Come join the Spartan army’. The precise nature, circumstances, occasion, and ultimate solution to this putative crisis are, admittedly, not to be derived from the poem itself. Weaving this new evidence into the

<sup>49</sup> The reference is to 9.32, which C. Fuqua in ‘Tyrtaeus and the cult of heroes’, *GRBS* 22 (1981), 215–26, takes in a rather literal sense, seeing in the verse a reference to a Spartan hero cult, as his title suggests.

complex and controversial early history of Sparta will likely be no easy task. What we can say here, however, is that 12, when viewed in this light, does have a contribution to make in illuminating that history.

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