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THE BRONZE TRUMPETER AT SPARTA AND THE EARTHQUAKE OF 464 B.C.

AMONG the objects discovered in the excavation of the temple of Athena Chalkioikos at Sparta is a small bronze figure of a trumpeter (illustrated in the *Annual of the British School at Athens*, xiii p. 146). Mr. Dickins, who says that the figure 'can be dated without hesitation in the middle of the fifth century,' regards 'the presence of a trumpeter as a dedication in Sparta as perplexing, because the Spartans marched to battle to the sound of flutes, and made no use of trumpets for martial music.' This is, I think, the view generally held. The purpose of this paper is to suggest a possible reason for the dedication of the trumpeter at the date, which the style of the work suggests.

While there is ample authority for the martial use of flutes by the Spartans, there is no evidence of any value that flutes were used to give signals. The probabilities are against such a theory, and there is evidence that the Spartans, like the rest of the Greeks, did give signals by the trumpet.

The passages relating to the Spartan use of flutes (some are cited by Mr. Dickins, l.c.; others are to be found in Müller's *Dorians* (English Translation, ii pp. 346-7) require examination.

The earliest reference, which I can trace, is in Thucydides (v 70), who, in his description of the advance before the battle of Mantinea, describes the Lacedaemonians as moving 'slowly to the music of many flute players, that they might march evenly in time (μετὰ ῥυθμοῦ) and their ranks might not be broken.' In this passage, which is apparently the source of many later statements, Thucydides refers to the flutes accompanying the march. He does not say that signals were given by the flute, and he uses σημαίνειν and παραγγέλλειν to describe the orders given by Agis at the moment of engagement. Xenophon *de rep. Lac.* (13. 7, 8) describes the flute players as being at the head of the army, and says that before the battle it was the custom for all the flute players to play their flutes: but he uses παραγορεύειν and παρακελεύειν of the orders passed along the ranks.

Of later writers some refer definitely to the marching tunes or times (ἐμβατήριοι ῥυθμοί) being given by the flute (Plutarch *Lyc.* 21; *Inst. Lac.* p. 238 b: *de musica* p. 1140 e: cf. Pollux iv 78: Polyaeus i 10: Val. Max. ii 6. 2): others in vaguer terms talk of 'marching, starting or making war πρὸς αὐλόν or

μετ' αὐλῶν' (Aristotle in Aul. Gell. i 11; Athenaeus xii 517 a; Dio Chrysost. xxxii p. 379; Cic. *Tusc.* ii 16. 37). Lucian *de salt.* 10 in discussing the importance of music associates the flute with time in marching, and adds τὸ πρῶτον σύνθημα Λακεδαιμονίοις πρὸς τὴν μάχην ὁ αὐλὸς ἐνδίδωσι. It is doubtful whether he meant that the flute was used to give a definite signal; even if he did, his authority is not of much weight.

There are passages in which the use of the flute by the Spartans is contrasted with the use of the trumpet elsewhere. Thus Ephorus (quoted by Polybius iv 20. 6) says that the Cretans and Lacedaemonians introduced the flute in the place of the trumpet, but he also is referring to time in marching. Plutarch, in a passage already cited (*de musica* p. 1140), describes the Lacedaemonians as playing the flute to accompany τὸ Καστόρειον μέλος, when advancing against the foe, just as the Cretans used the lyre, and others (in Plutarch's time) still used trumpets. We may assume that trumpets were sometimes used as an accompaniment to the march (as perhaps in Thuc. vi 69), and there is nothing in these passages to imply that the flute was intended to give signals, any more than the lyre of the Cretans. Either instrument would be unsuitable for the purpose.

There is, however, one definite statement that the flute was used to give signals. This is in Aulus Gellius (i 11), but as he attributes this statement to Thucydides, from whom he quotes the passages relating to the battle of Mantinea, it is obvious that he has made a gross blunder and his evidence is worthless.

I proceed to consider how signals were given by the Spartans. Thucydides in his account of the same battle describes the elaborate gradation of officers, by whom the commands were passed along the ranks (παραγγέλλειν v 66: cf. Xen. *de rep. Lac.* 11). While this method might be perfectly suitable for a change of tactical arrangement, it might not be easy in this way to give an immediate signal to the whole of an army, or to a division at some distance from the general.

The regular method of signalling in Greek warfare was by the trumpet (σαλπίζειν, σημαίνειν τῇ σάλπιγγι; in some cases at least, σημαίνειν used absolutely has the same meaning). Pollux (iv 86) gives four different trumpet signals and Xenophon's *Anabasis* shows a frequent use of the trumpet for conveying a variety of signals. We should, unless there were positive evidence against such a theory, assume that the Spartans would not deny themselves the use of the customary signal, especially as their armies often included a large proportion of allies, who would presumably be accustomed to the trumpet.

It is possible that σημαίνειν, which often implies signal by trumpet, may bear this meaning in some cases, where it is used of the Lacedaemonians, but there are two pieces of positive evidence for the Lacedaemonian use of the trumpet. In Xenophon (*Hell.* v 1. 9) the Lacedaemonian admiral orders a night attack at sea by the trumpet, and Plutarch (*Cimon* 16: cf. Polyaeus i 41. 3)

relates how, on an occasion to be further discussed, Archidamus ordered the trumpet to sound the alarm *ὡς πολέμιων ἐπιόντων*.

On the examination of the evidence I think the conclusion is justified that the Spartans did not give signals by the flute, and that there is no reason why, on occasion, they should not have used the same signal as the other Greeks, while there are two instances in which their use of the trumpet is recorded. We need not therefore regard the dedication of a trumpeter as perplexing.

I venture further to suggest an occasion and a reason for the dedication of the actual figure, which, as we have seen, is attributed to the middle of the fifth century. In the passage just cited from the life of Cimon, Plutarch is describing the confusion caused by the earthquake at Sparta in 464 B.C.¹

He says 'Archidamus quickly perceived the danger threatened, and, seeing that the citizens were trying to save their valuables from their houses, he gave orders for the trumpet to signal the attack of the enemy, that the Spartans might rally to his side under arms. And this was the very thing, which, at that crisis, alone saved Sparta. For the Helots had run together in all directions from the country, thinking to make a prey of those Spartans who had escaped. But finding them under arms, in ordered ranks, they retreated to the towns and openly made war.'

If, then, Sparta was delivered from her enemies and the Spartan warriors escaped destruction by the timely act of Archidamus, in which a trumpeter gave the signal; if within a few years a bronze trumpeter was dedicated at the temple of Athena, the guardian of the city, it is a possible, if not a probable, conclusion that the dedication was itself a commemoration of this event, and that the bronze figure represents the pious offering of Archidamus.

LEONARD WHIBLEY.

¹The effects of the earthquake (which is briefly discussed by Thucydides) are described by Plutarch (l.c.), Diodorus xi 63, Pausanias iv 24. 6. Although probably exaggerated by these writers the losses must have been very serious. Diodorus, no doubt following Ephorus who had a taste for large figures, talks of

more than 20,000 Lacedaemonians being killed. Plutarch and others say that all but five houses in the city were overthrown. The overthrow of buildings may explain the destruction of some of the earlier temples at Sparta.