

THE TRANSPORT OF SICK AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS IN CLASSICAL GREECE

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THE TRANSPORT OF SICK AND WOUNDED WARRIORS in classical Greece has received little attention in modern studies of Greek warfare.¹ Pritchett, in his authoritative five-volume work, *The Greek State at War* (1971–91), does not discuss it. Hanson, in *The Western Way of War* (1989), devotes a chapter to the wounded without considering the problem of long-distance transport. Compared to weaponry, tactics, command structures, and other aspects of warfare that contribute to victory or defeat on the field of battle, the handling of incapacitated soldiers is strictly a side issue. But another side issue, burial of the dead, has been much studied,² and obviously in the aftermath of battle there were not only corpses to be retrieved but also wounded men who required transport. We have ample indirect evidence that many wounds were survivable, so the wounded could not automatically be considered as good as dead.³ Some managed to reach home in safety.⁴ The question is how. Although ancient historians rarely discuss the fate of the wounded other than commanding officers,⁵ a search of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Aeneas Tacticus, Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, Arrian, Pausanias, and the canon of ten Attic orators⁶ turns up little more than a dozen direct references (see Appendix) to the carrying of sick

¹The problem has been overlooked by historians, including Pritchett 1971–91; Hanson 1989; Anderson 1970; Adcock 1957; Tarn 1930; Kromayer and Veith 1928; Delbrück 1990; and Bauer 1893.

²See Clairmont 1983; Pritchett 1971–91: 4.235–241; Loraux 1986; Vaughn 1991. For further bibliography, see Sage 1996: 232.

³Hippocratic treatises, at least some of which date to the fifth and fourth centuries, reflect considerable medical expertise in war wounds. Severe blows to the head or vital organs were generally fatal, but slighter blows, or blows to the limbs that did not lead to profuse bleeding, offered a chance of recovery. Many warriors survived to fight another day, or at least survived. See in general Majno 1975: 141–206; cf. Hanson 1989: 215–218.

⁴An Athenian named Polystratus, for example, came home wounded from Eretria in 411 (Lys. 20.14); Xenophon has Nicomachides show off his battle scars (*Mem.* 3.4.1).

⁵The removal of heroic generals from the battlefield is a common theme. See, for example, the removal of Brasidas (Thuc. 4.12.1; 5.10.8, 11; Diod. 12.62), Epaminondas (Diod. 15.87.5–6; Paus. 8.11.6–7), Agesilaus (Xen. *Ages.* 2.13; *Hell.* 4.3.20; 5.3.19; Diod. 14.84.2; Paus. 3.9.13), and Alexander the Great (Diod. 17.20.2; Curt. 4.6.20; 6.1.5; 7.6.4, 8; 7.25.3; 9.5.15; Arr. *Anab.* 4.4.9; 6.11.1; 7.25.3).

⁶Several overlapping methods were employed in the search. First, I perused all extant works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Aeneas Tacticus, Curtius, Arrian, and the Attic orators. I then conducted English word searches, via Perseus, with key words such as “wounded,” “sick,” “retreat,” “wagons,” and so forth, to pick up references in later authors—Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and Pausanias—in addition to those of the classical period. Greek word searches in Perseus, with key words such as κλίνη or πλίσσιον, were also helpful.

and wounded soldiers over extended distances, that is to say, over any distance beyond the short span between the battlefield and the nearest camp or resting spot. To fill out the picture, one must rely on indirect or circumstantial evidence. Alexander the Great, for example, settled soldiers who were unfit for fighting in garrisons and cities along his route of conquest.⁷ Presumably many had been brought along with the army up to that point, though we are not told how, nor are we told what proportion of these soldiers, if any, were non-ambulatory and therefore needed to be carried. This paper addresses two aspects of long-distance transport. First, it reviews evidence for the various modes of transportation available to Greek armies. Second, it attempts to pinpoint who was actually responsible for the evacuation of live casualties through a close reading of two passages that arguably provide our best evidence for attitudes toward the issue in the classical Greek period: the Athenian abandonment of their sick and wounded at Syracuse in 413 B.C. (Thuc. 7.75.2–5) and Xenophon's attempted rescue of a half-dead soldier on the march of the Ten Thousand in 401 (*An.* 5.8.6–11).

I

Some casualties could have limped along by themselves, but others probably needed the support of one or two able-bodied men. This humble and obvious fact wins little mention in our sources. Alexander is said twice to support soldiers weakened by cold (Curt. 7.3.17; 8.4.9), though it is unclear how even Alexander, for all his prowess, could have helped more than one person at a time. In fact, carrying a man on one's own shoulders is so exhausting a form of transport that it seems better suited to short than to long distances. During the march of the Ten Thousand, troops from the vanguard sent to check on the rear carried incapacitated soldiers into camp (Xen. *An.* 4.5.22). During fighting on Siphnos, ca 394, a loyal friend and his attendant carried the wounded Sopolis to port on their shoulders (Isoc. 19.39). Curtius implies, in his account of Alexander's advance across the Gedrosian Desert in 325, that men were left by the wayside partly because the able-bodied could not carry them.⁸ There were, however, other and easier ways to transport the sick and wounded: they could be borne in a litter, slung over pack animals, carried by cart or wagon, or (when appropriate) placed aboard a ship.

Curtius indicates that the Macedonian infantry routinely used litters to carry the sick and wounded with them as they marched (7.6.8–9):

Then camp was broken and [Alexander] was carried in a soldier's litter (*lectica militari*). Each cavalryman and foot-soldier vied to carry it; the cavalry, with whom the king had been accustomed to enter battle, thought it was a part of their privilege; the infantry, on the

⁷ Arr. *Anab.* 3.9.1; 4.21.5; 5.1.5; 5.8.3; 5.27.5–6; 5.29.3; cf. Curt. 9.4.8.

⁸ Curt. 9.10.15: *et miles vix arma portabat*. Arrian (*Anab.* 6.25.3) says there were no men to carry them and no men to stay behind and take care of them. For a recent analysis of the Gedrosian episode, see Bosworth 1996: 166–185.

other hand, *since they themselves were used to carrying their wounded comrades*, complained that their proper duty was being taken from them just when the king had to be carried (emphasis added).

Since Curtius was writing no earlier than the Augustan principate, and in any case hundreds of years after the death of Alexander, the inclusion of Roman-era details is always a possibility. Most scholars agree, however, that he drew heavily on the lost history of Clitarchus, a near contemporary of Alexander.⁹ Clitarchus is considered prone to romantic embellishment,¹⁰ but even if his story about the rivalry to carry Alexander was fiction, he would have been unlikely to fabricate background information about the use of litters.

In the classical period, references to litters fall into two categories.¹¹ One category consists of litters for the well-to-do, which afforded their riders a pleasant and, for them at least, effortless means of transportation. The other category consists of litters that were used to carry the injured, like Andocides, who claimed to have suffered a fractured skull and collar-bone when thrown from a horse and so had to be taken home on a litter (Andoc. 1.61), or like the victim of a street assault (Dem. 54.20), or an unnamed litigant in a Lysianic speech, who supposedly had himself carried by litter so that he could feign serious injuries though he had suffered only a black eye (Lys. 4.9). One hint that litters were used in Greek armies before Alexander the Great is found in Xenophon (*Hell.* 4.3.20): the wounded Agesilaus was carried around to his troops (προσενήνεκτο) after their victory at Coronea in 394.¹² Moreover, the fact that litters were routinely employed to carry injured civilians argues that their use on fifth-century military campaigns cannot be ruled out.¹³

Mules and other pack animals—mainly donkeys but also camels in the desert reaches of Alexander's campaign—were used to carry provisions for the army,¹⁴ but could, on occasion, be rededicated to the purpose of carrying sick or wounded men. Casualties, in that case, might have joined the baggage train. Both Curtius and Arrian cite the lack of pack animals as another reason for the abandonment of weakened soldiers in the Gedrosian Desert. In Armenia, during the crossing of the Ten Thousand, we shall see that a half-dead soldier is placed on a mule

⁹Jacoby 1922: 630; Pearson 1960: 217; Hornblower 1994: 20; Atkinson 1980: 64–67; Hammond 1983b: 142.

¹⁰Brown 1950: 152; Pearson 1960: 153.

¹¹Lamer 1925; cf. Girard 1904.

¹²Plutarch employs the more explicit term φοράδην (*Ages.* 19). He also depicts the very ill Eumenes of Cardia borne in a litter with curtains in 317 (*Eum.* 14–15).

¹³I found no references in fifth- and fourth-century historiography and oratory to the use of one's shield as a makeshift litter, though Curtius (6.1.5; 9.5.15) and Arrian (*Anab.* 6.11.1) show the wounded Alexander on his shield. The second alternative in a Spartan mother's maxim, ἢ τὸν ἄσπιδα ἢ ἐνὶ τῷ (Plut. *Mor.* 241f = *Lacainon Apophthegmata* 16), perhaps meant that her son might return on the shield either dead or wounded; a passage in Plutarch's *Apophthegmata Laconica* (51 = *Mor.* 234f–235a) supports the usual interpretation that he would be dead.

¹⁴Hammond 1983a: 27–31; Engels 1978: 14–18.

that was, moments before, being used for soldiers' personal belongings (*Anab.* 5.8.6–11).

Wagons, like pack animals, were an ordinary accoutrement in both Greek and Persian baggage trains although not well-suited to every terrain. They had multiple uses. They could carry food, water, armor, arms, military machines, unspecified supplies, cauldrons, or implements.¹⁵ The number of wagons could be very large. Anderson (1970: 52) notes that Cyrus the Younger had 400 wagon-loads of flour and wine.¹⁶ Once emptied of provisions, the wagons could carry loot, prisoners, corpses, the bones of the dead—or the wounded.¹⁶ We are told of one Ariaeus, a wounded Persian, who traveled long-distance by wagon accompanied by his attendants (*Xen. An.* 2.2.14). Arrian, in the Gedrosian Desert episode (*Anab.* 6.25.2), says that the men kept breaking up wagons because it was impossible to drag them through the sand and cites this as yet another reason for the abandonment of weakened men.¹⁷

On board ship, where possible, must have been the least troublesome way to transport the sick and wounded. Before the naval retreat from Miletus to Samos in 411, Phrynichus ordered his Athenian sailors to take the wounded on board (*Thuc.* 8.27.4). When the Ten Thousand removed from Trapezus to Cerasus, the wounded were boarded on ships while the able-bodied marched overland (*Xen. An.* 5.3.1). And the same Sopolis who was carried to port on two men's shoulders was next carried by ship from Siphnos to Lycia (*Isoc.* 19.39).

It is easy, then, to identify the possible means of conveyance: able-bodied men, litters, pack animals, wagons, and ships. It is more difficult to determine who, if anyone, was responsible for the transport of incapacitated soldiers. The following section argues that Greek generals were by custom not accountable for individual sick and wounded soldiers down through the time of the Peloponnesian War; combatants, when wounded, expected their attendants and comrades to carry them. Furthermore, some evidence (admittedly indirect) suggests that the evacuation of the sick and wounded became more centrally organized perhaps as early as the fourth century.

II

It is clear that Greek generals were broadly accountable for the safety of their land or naval forces, a fact attested to by numerous passages in Thucydides and

¹⁵Food (*Xen. An.* 1.10.18 and *Diod.* 17.81.1), water (*Hdt.* 1.188), armor (*Diod.* 16.9.5), arms (*Xen. An.* 1.7.20), military machines (*Thuc.* 4.100.3), unspecified supplies (*Hdt.* 9.39.2), cauldrons (*Hdt.* 9.80.2), or implements (*Xen. Lac.* 11.12).

¹⁶The use of vehicles in ancient military campaigns was treated at some length by Sheffer (1671: 280–286, still useful), though he does not mention transport of the wounded.

¹⁶Loot (*Xen. Cyr.* 7.3.1), prisoners (*Xen. Hell.* 6.5.9), corpses (*Hdt.* 9.25; *Thuc.* 4.48.4), the bones of the dead (*Diod.* 13.75.2–3), the wounded (*Aen. Tact.* 16.14–16).

¹⁷The use of wagons in the Macedonian army is disputed. Frontinus (*Str.* 4.1.6) says Philip II prohibited them in 359 and Engels (1978: 15) assumes that Alexander did the same. Others disagree. See Cawkwell 1980: 245 and Devine 1979: 273.

Xenophon where Greek commanding officers plan for a safe retreat.¹⁸ By the late fifth century, a general guilty of any large-scale failure to rescue the living could expect to go on trial for his life back home in Athens. This is exactly what happened after the Battle of Arginusae in 406, when eight victorious generals were condemned, and six actually executed, for their failure to pick up shipwrecked warriors.¹⁹ The Arginusae case, however, proves nothing about the accountability of generals toward individual combatants because the scale of the disaster was very large: as many as 2,000 men perished for want of a timely rescue.²⁰ There is no evidence that generals were accountable for smaller numbers of men drowned at sea, or for the loss of sick and wounded soldiers. In some seventy trials of *hegemones* reviewed by Pritchett (1971–91: 2.5–10), not one contains a charge of this nature. When Xenophon, for example, was tried at an assembly of the Ten Thousand, he stood accused merely of *hubris* (for example, for striking a man), not of leaving behind the sick and wounded, as he was sometimes forced to do (*An.* 4.5.4, 4.5.11).

Especially in hasty or dangerous retreats, it is hard to see how generals could have been held responsible for incapacitated men. We know that pack animals and baggage were often left behind (Thuc. 4.128.4). Armies could also lose significant numbers of fighting men during a retreat, as did the Corinthians ca 458 after fighting at Megara (Thuc. 1.106.1); the Athenian allies in Sicily in 426/5 (Thuc. 3.103.2); and the Messenians defeated in 425 by the Naxians (Thuc. 4.25.9): “Those who survived retreated home with difficulty, since the natives kept up their attacks on the roads and killed most of them.”

During the fifth century, commanding officers intent on a safe retreat could try to maintain a fighting formation, like the Mantineans at Olpae in 426/5 (Thuc. 3.108.3) or the Spartans in Lyncus in 423 (Thuc. 4.125.2). Brasidas, in the latter instance, formed the hoplites into a square (τετράγωνον τάξιν) with light-armed troops in the center: the hoplites were prepared to fight on any side. In the Sicilian expedition of 415–413, two other Thucydidean hollow squares, each called a *πλαίσιον*, contained unarmed baggage-carriers (6.67.1 and 7.78.2). Xenophon, in 401, proposed forming a *plaision* with the baggage-train and the general multitude inside (*An.* 3.2.36; 3.3.6); another of his *plaisia* contained the

¹⁸The Ambraciots send for reinforcements in part to ensure a safe retreat (Thuc. 3.105.4). The Spartans at Sphacteria see a fort that might be useful in retreat (Thuc. 4.31.2). Lamachus recommends the Sicilian port of Megara as a place of retreat for the Athenian fleet (Thuc. 6.49.4). At Syracuse, Nicias and Demosthenes both seek a place of retreat for the fleet (Thuc. 7.36.6, 38.3, 49.2). Xenophon plans for an easy retreat in the land of the Taochians (*Xen. An.* 4.7.7).

¹⁹The verdict was considered scandalous both because of extenuating weather after the battle of Arginusae and because of unjust legal proceedings. For a recent discussion, see Bauman 1990: 69–76. Bonner and Smith (1930: 266) discuss the technical shortcomings of the trial. Cf. Bonner 1933: 78–79.

²⁰Euryptolemus, in his defense speech, says there were twelve disabled ships (*Xen. Hell.* 1.7.30). If each had started with a crew of 200 sailors, then 2,400 men were aboard them. Assuming that twenty percent were slain, drowned, or brought safely to shore during the actual engagement, nearly 2,000 men still needed to be rescued.

booty from a raid: cattle, sheep, and slaves (*An.* 7.8.16). According to Xenophon, Agesilaus marched through hostile Thessalian territory with a *plaision* in 394 (*Hell.* 4.3.4). Clearly, the hollow square was a marching formation that placed heavily armed soldiers on the outside, affording protection to those within.²¹ But we have no contemporary evidence that fifth-century generals placed incapacitated soldiers inside a hollow square, or indeed, that they organized any kind of overland transport for the sick and wounded.

All available information suggests, to the contrary, that wounded casualties looked for help from personal attendants and from comrades. We know that Greek hoplites normally were accompanied by at least one attendant, whether a slave, servant, or young relative. Pritchett (1971–91: 1.49–51) presents evidence for this practice drawn from Thucydides, Xenophon, Isaeus, Antiphanes, Demosthenes, and Theophrastus.²² The attendants were expected to carry weapons or provisions, and they could also carry the wounded (*Xen. Hell.* 4.5.14). The use of attendants apparently remained standard as the fourth century progressed, for Philip II of Macedon is said to have restricted their number to one for every ten infantrymen (*Frontin. Str.* 4.1.6). One can reasonably conjecture that in the classical period a Greek hoplite's personal attendant was supposed to see to his safety if he were incapacitated in any way.

The best evidence for the responsibility of comrades comes from Thucydides' account of the departure from Syracuse (7.75.2–5). In 413, after two years in Sicily, the Athenians had just met with final defeat in the Great Harbor. The fleet was lost, and Nicias belatedly initiated an overland retreat. It is worth looking closely at this narrative because its poetic language happens to reflect considerable prosaic knowledge. The historian, himself an ex-general, understood contemporary Greek military practice, and, though he did not witness the retreat with his own eyes, he probably interviewed survivors.

Every aspect of the business was terrible, for not only were they, having lost their ships, retreating, and instead of their great hope now found themselves and the whole state of Athens in danger, but also in the deserting of the camp there were painful things for each man to perceive with his eye and his mind. The dead were unburied, and when any man saw one of his friends lying among them he was brought to distress mixed with fear; and the wounded or ill who were being left behind alive were more distressing to the living than were the dead, and more wretched than those who had perished. For turning to entreaty and lamentation they brought [the departing soldiers] to a sense of helplessness, begging them to take them and crying out to every single friend or relative they saw; as they clung

²¹ See Kromayer and Veith 1928: 82 and Vollbrecht 1872: s.v. *πλαίσιον*. The hollow square is discussed by Roman-era military writers: the first century B.C. Asclepiodotus (11.6); the first-century A.D. Onasander (6.6); and the first/second century A.D. Aelianus (48.1–4). Asclepiodotus (11.8) adds that the baggage train can go inside a square.

²² Cf. Gabrielli 1995: 115; Kromayer and Veith 1928: 111; and Delbrück 1990: 56, noting that a Greek hoplite "could hardly get along without a helper to act as porter, forager, cook, and in case of their being wounded, nurse."

to those who had shared tents with them and were on the point of leaving, following after them as far as they could, and, when their strength and bodies failed them, were being left behind not without a few appeals to the gods and lamentations. So the whole army was filled with tears and a sense of helplessness such that it was not easy to decamp, even from the land of the enemy and even though they had already suffered things too great for tears and feared lest they suffer others in the unseen future. They also had a great sense of despair together with self-blame.

Much has been made of the distress and fear that the departing soldiers feel at the sight of the unburied dead,²³ but Thucydides says the sick and wounded had an even greater emotional impact: they are “more distressing to the living than were the dead and more wretched than those who had perished.” As the debilitated men entreat, lament, cry out, cling, and follow as far as they can, they cast the able bodied into ἀπορία, a state of difficulty, helplessness, or impasse that is difficult to bear: μὴ ῥαδίως ἀφορμάσθαι. Thucydides seems to imply that Athenian soldiers felt an obligation to carry their weakened comrades; the failure to fulfill that obligation caused them—along with grief for the dead and fear of their own demise—considerable anguish.

Thucydides also attributes to the men self-blame, κατόμεμψις σφῶν αὐτῶν, accompanied by despair. Now, it is possible that their self-blame, in the larger context, attaches strictly to their military failure and the abandonment of the fleet. But it is also possible that it arises from the immediate context, and follows logically and thematically from the preceding sentence, which depicts the sick and wounded begging to be taken along. Since this was a naval expedition, the Athenians probably possessed fewer wagons or pack animals than a land army would have had; the use of all these, and litters too, in this campaign is debatable because Thucydides never mentions them. Attendants were in short supply by that point (7.75.5) and, without them, the hoplites were burdened with the food and arms they required for their own survival. In this dire situation, all casualties had to be abandoned. Though the Athenians lacked the wherewithal to carry their comrades, even on their shoulders, that fact would not necessarily efface their sense of individual responsibility toward relatives and friends who hoped and perhaps expected to be carried along with the departing army. The singular ἐκάστῳ in the phrase “there were painful things for each man to perceive with his eye and his mind,”²⁴ together with the singular indefinite pronoun τις twice in the phrase ὅποτε τις ἴδοι τινά, individualizes the men’s distress.²⁵ A little later, Thucydides will touch on the impact of communal suffering (7.75.6), but here in 7.75.2 he imagines how each man felt, and, in the phrase “crying out to every single friend or relative they saw,”²⁶ how each man was susceptible to the

²³ Thus commentators Lamberton 1886, Smith 1886, and Marchant 1909–12, *ad loc.*, as well as Pritchett 1971–91: 4.197.

²⁴ 7.75.2: ξυνέβαινε τῇ τε ὧν ἐκάστῳ ἀλγεῖν καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ αἰσθῆσθαι.

²⁵ Classen (1881: 134–136) notes the emphasis on personal experience.

²⁶ 7.54.4: καὶ ἕνα ἕκαστον ἐπιβοῶμενοι, εἴ τινά ποῦ τις ἴδοι ἢ ἐταίρων ἢ οἰκείων . . .

cries of the incapacitated men. Thucydides uses ἑκαστος a total of 227 times in the *Peloponnesian War*, often in the plural. The use of the singular to emphasize the impact of events on individuals, however, finds a significant number of parallels.²⁷ Thucydides sometimes deploys ἑκαστος and τις in tandem to stress individual responsibility (2.87.8; 6.31.4; 7.70.3). Other appeals to conscience use ἕνα ἑκαστος (7.69.2; 7.70.6) or ἑκαστος alone (2.60.2; 3.38.6; 3.45.6; 4.14.2). At a minimum, the use of ἑκαστος twice in 7.75.2–4 achieves a focus on the individual feelings of the departing soldiers, and those feelings likely include pangs of conscience, each man's sense of failed obligation toward his comrades.

Thucydides states that the sick and wounded looked for help from friends, relatives, or tent-mates. These categories correspond to those mentioned by Plato's Socrates (*Alc.* 115b) when he speaks of rescuing a comrade or kinsman in battle, and they make sense in the context of fifth-century citizen armies in which soldiers may have been grouped by tribe, fighting alongside men with whom they shared ties in Athens.²⁸ Although the Sicilian expedition consisted of land and naval forces from far-flung city-states as well as Athens (Thuc. 6.25–26), Thucydides evokes at this point in the narrative a close-knit citizen army. Interestingly, Diodorus contradicts Thucydides when describing the departure from Syracuse (13.18.6):

And the Athenian generals, dividing the soldiers into two parts, putting the pack animals and the sick soldiers in the center and marshalling those who were able to fight in the van and the rear, then set out for Catane, with Demosthenes commanding one group and Nicias the other.

This account resembles Thuc. 7.78.2, where the able-bodied Athenians, having taken leave of the wounded, begin to march away: "The army withdrew, marshalled into a hollow square—first the the troops of Nicias, and then those of Demosthenes in the rear. The hoplites held inside the baggage-carriers and general multitude." But Diodorus, unlike Thucydides, puts sick soldiers in the middle of his marching formation instead of leaving them behind.

Where did Diodorus, writing in the first century B.C., get this version of the story? An established view, recently reformulated by Pearson (1987: 145–146), holds that Diodorus based Book 13.1–19 on the fourth-century historian Ephorus.²⁹ In that case we must ask why Ephorus "improved" on the

²⁷In the funeral oration of Pericles, it is used to particularize each fallen soldier (2.34.3), each mourner (2.34.2), or both (2.46.2). In the description of the plague, Thucydides particularizes each case of the illness (2.50.1) and each of its victims (2.51.1). In the last speech of Pericles, ἑκαστος is used to particularize each individual Athenian's misfortunes (2.60.4; 2.61.2). When residents of Attica withdraw behind the walls of Athens in 431 (2.16.2), ἑκαστος is used to particularize the impact of the outbreak of war on individuals.

²⁸Hanson (1989: 121–125) argues from literary and epigraphic evidence that soldiers were marshalled according to tribal affiliation. Cf. Pritchett (1971–91: 4.138–243) in his chapter on the burial of the war dead.

²⁹It is generally accepted that Diodorus relied heavily on Ephorus for the narrative portions of Books 11–15. See, for example, Sacks 1990: 13 and Andrewes 1985: 189. According to Barber (1935:

Thucydidean retreat by omitting the abandonment of the sick and wounded. Could his account reflect the standard military practice of his own day? If so, it follows that the evacuation of sick and wounded soldiers from hostile territory was a more highly organized affair in the fourth century than it had been in the fifth.

The writings of Xenophon help bridge the gap between the disorganization reflected in Thucydides and the orderly evacuation described in Diodorus. Xenophon promotes an ideal of leadership that demands considerable care and planning on the part of a commanding officer. Throughout the *Cyropaedia*, for example, Xenophon explores the qualities of the model general through his fictional Cyrus the Great (Higgins 1977: 44), who assiduously watches over his troops. Cyrus hires physicians to attend the rank and file (1.6.15–16), orders supplies for the sick (6.2.32), and even establishes a board of health and a dispensary (8.2.24). After the Cadusians in his army are worsted by the Assyrians, he personally cares for the survivors (*Cyr.* 5.4.18), following the advice of his father Cambyses (1.6.42): "You must know well this too, that all those from whom you expect obedience will expect you to take thought for them."³⁰

In the historical work *Anabasis*, a dominant theme is the saving leadership of Xenophon himself, who in 401 took command of the pan-Hellenic mercenary army of Ten Thousand stranded in Persia and led the difficult retreat to the Black Sea, doing his utmost to preserve the lives of Greek soldiers, especially the sick and wounded. In Book 5, once the army has reached the coastal city of Cotyora, Xenophon must clear himself from charges of *hubris* for striking soldiers. He is tried along with three other generals at an assembly of the army.³¹ His first accuser is a muleteer, whom Xenophon quickly recognizes (5.8.6–11):

Then he recognized him and asked, "Are you the one who carried the sick man?" "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "for you compelled me to, and you scattered my tent-mates' baggage." "But this scattering," said Xenophon, "happened this way: I distributed it among others to carry and ordered them to bring it back to me, and when I got it all back safe I returned it to you when you, in turn, showed me the sick man. But listen, all of you," he said, "for the story is worth hearing:

"A man was being left behind because he was no longer able to keep on going. I was acquainted with the man only so far as to know that he was one of us and I forced you, sir, to carry him in order that he might not perish; for, as I remember, the enemy were following after us." To that the fellow agreed. "Well," Xenophon said, "after I had sent you on ahead, I overtook you again, as I came along with the rearguard, and found you digging a hole to bury the man in, and I stopped and commended you. But when, as we were standing by, the man drew up his leg, all of us cried out, 'The man is alive,' and you

98–99 and Appendix 1), Ephorus used Thucydides as his main source for the Athenian expedition, though he altered certain facts to put Athens in a more favorable light. Pearson (1987: 28) notes that Ephorus may also have borrowed from the Sicilian historian Philistus. Cf. Schwartz 1905: 681. Meister (1970) ascribes portions of the Diodoran narrative to Timaeus, but 13.18 is not among them.

³⁰Cf. Xen. *Eq. mag.* 6.2, where Xenophon says a commander wins loyalty by providing safety in retreat.

³¹He was acquitted. The generals who stood trial at the same time were found guilty on other charges and fined (Xen. *An.* 5.8.1).

said, 'Let him be alive just as much as he pleases. I, for my part, am not going to carry him.' Then I struck you, you speak the truth, for it looked to me as if you knew he was alive." "Well, so what?" he said, "didn't he die all the same after I had shown him to you?" "All of us," said Xenophon, "are going to die; but should we on that account be buried alive?"

As for this fellow, everybody cried out that Xenophon had given him fewer blows than he deserved.

The story illustrates Xenophon's impartial concern for the men under his command: he barely recognizes the sick man and has no special tie to him. The warrior is merely one of the company. Xenophon can either leave him lying on the ground³² or induce the muleteer to carry him. He wants him carried because the enemy is following behind. Xenophon is convinced that if left behind, the sick man will perish, and he clearly hopes his life may yet be saved.

Nothing in the incident suggests that Xenophon was fulfilling a routine duty incumbent upon him as a general. Indeed, the order appears to come as something of a surprise to the muleteer, who does not understand why he should aid the half-dead soldier. He is, admittedly, portrayed as an exceptionally brutish fellow of low rank and commensurate character. Neither hoplite nor peltast, he is obliged to drive a pack mule even though, he says, he is a free man, ἐλεύθερος, a term that places him one notch above a slave. Xenophon scornfully calls him an ἄνθρωπος.³³ In complaining about Xenophon, the muleteer expresses strong concern for his tent-mates' baggage and none for the sick man. He subsequently defies Xenophon by attempting to bury the man alive.

The anecdote illustrates a problem that must have vexed efforts to organize the evacuation of the sick or wounded: weak discipline. In his capacity as a military commander, Xenophon can verbally constrain his subordinates to obey, as he did in his initial order. But presumably he was not supposed to strike them, for if striking had been a normal and widely acceptable form of military discipline, Xenophon would hardly have been charged with *hubris* on that account. Unfortunately, little is known about discipline in Greek armies. With the exception of Sparta, it appears to have been generally lax.³⁴

A blow in return for disobedience or shirking finds several parallels in the *Anabasis*. Clearchus, a Lacedaemonian general, strikes men who shirk from bridge building (2.3.11), and rank-and-file soldiers strike and revile a shirking

³² See note on καταλείπετο (5.8.8) in Vollbrecht 1870. A more recent commentary (Lendle 1995: *ad loc.*) offers no detailed analysis of this passage.

³³ Vollbrecht (1870: *ad loc.*) also detects contempt: "ὁ ἄνθρωπος steht im verachtlichen Sinne." The use of ἄνθρωπος as a term of contempt, often in reference to a slave, is common in oratory. See, for example, Lys. 1.8.

³⁴ See Kromayer and Veith 1928: 56: "Auch die Disziplinargewalt des Höchstkommmandierenden war selbst im Felder sehr gering." In the context of citizen armies, most Greeks may have placed relatively little emphasis on strict obedience to orders (Carney 1996: 20). Nussbaum (1967: 21–24) views consent and incentive as the usual form of discipline rather than compulsion. Cf. Pritchett 1971–91: 2.244.

comrade, forcing him to take up his shield and march (3.4.47–49). Nonetheless, as Nussbaum (1967: 22) points out, Xenophon's trial "indicates how on both sides, Xenophon's and the public's alike, the use of physical force for disciplinary ends is felt to be unacceptable, except under the legitimate stress of unusual provocation in an emergency."

Elsewhere in the *Anabasis*, Xenophon aids other casualties. He rescues some who start to succumb to hunger-faintness (4.5.7–8) by foraging among the pack animals, distributing food with his own hands, and organizing others to help, although the weakest men, unable to reach shelter that night, die anyway. When he comes upon soldiers suffering from snow-blindness and frostbite who have collapsed beside a spring (4.5.16), he organizes a rearguard action to keep the pursuing enemy at bay. Next morning, he forces the men to struggle on, and relief finally comes when Cheirisophus, the Spartan general in command of the vanguard, sends rested troops to check on the rear (4.5.22): "Xenophon's party was glad to see them, and handed over the sick to them to carry on to the camp while they themselves continued their journey." Throughout his self-flattering narrative, Xenophon emphasizes the good services he performed for his men. Organizing transport for the sick and wounded was among those services.

In a harassed retreat, able-bodied soldiers faced a tough choice: either they could try to carry the sick and wounded, or they could leave them behind. Actually, there was a third option, but it receives only fleeting mention. The soldiers who collapse next to a spring in Armenia beg Xenophon to kill them (*An.* 4.5.16): "They told him to cut their throats for they could not go on." In ancient warfare, death may well have seemed preferable to captivity or a painful execution by the enemy.³⁵ The most remarkable feature of the *Anabasis* anecdote is Xenophon's insistence that a desperately ill soldier be carried at a time when cold and hunger pressed bitterly on the entire expedition. He could have chosen otherwise. He could simply have decided, as Nicias did at Syracuse, to abandon all sick and wounded soldiers so that the rest of the army might escape alive.

III

Warfare throughout the classical period remained brutal and chaotic. Soldiering was always a high-risk occupation. The difficulties of evacuating thousands, or tens of thousands, of troops from hostile territory meant that almost inevitably some who had survived recent wounds but could not walk would be left behind. The greater the overland distance to be traversed, the greater the problem, as the Persians had realized by the second invasion of Greece: Xerxes left his sick behind on the homeward route, charging Thracian cities to care for them

³⁵ Pausanias tells of Greeks, in the early third century B.C., who kill their own wounded rather than leave them to the mercy of the Gauls (10.23.7). In a very thorough discussion of the fate of war captives, Pritchett (1971–91: 5.203–312) notes that they might be killed, sold into slavery, ransomed, or released; there was no fixed convention.

(Hdt. 8.115.3). Attempts to quarter sick soldiers in cities were not always successful: the Cotyorites on the south shore of the Black Sea refused to receive enfeebled soldiers from among the Ten Thousand (Xen. *An.* 5.5.6). Sometimes the incapacitated were simply abandoned. In 373, after their siege of Corcyra failed, the Lacedaemonians embarked upon their ships in confusion and sailed off, "leaving behind them much grain, much wine, many slaves, and enfeebled soldiers" (Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.26). The implication in this last example is that casualties would, in less harrowing circumstances, have been taken aboard.

Evidence for ancient logistics is meager. Clearly, however, the wounded were carried a number of different ways: bodily or by litter, pack animal, wagon, or boat. Generals were never, so far as we know, held legally accountable for the sick and wounded. It is possible, of course, that commanding officers actually did direct the transport of casualties throughout the period and that our sources simply pass over the fact. It appears likely, however, that in the fifth century they did not usually assume this responsibility until after the Peloponnesian War; soldiers unable to walk on their own had to look to attendants and comrades for assistance and care. It is generally accepted that that conflict brought about substantial changes in military theory and practice, including the increased use of mercenary soldiers, more systematic military training, and greater professionalism on the part of commanders.³⁶ Amid a fourth-century trend toward the systematic study of warfare, generals may have come to realize, as Xenophon did, that they could improve morale by organizing the rescue of the sick and wounded and arranging their transport home.

The handling of sick and wounded soldiers raises a number of questions that go well beyond the logistical puzzles dealt with in this paper. First, transportation arrangements ought to have some bearing on troop morale: the expectations with which individual warriors entered service would, arguably, affect the cohesion and effectiveness of fighting units.³⁷ Second, the issue tests certain moral attitudes: the value placed on human life, as well as the significance of hardship and labor undertaken for the benefit of another. Such attitudes can be deduced, at least tentatively, through a close reading of relevant passages in ancient historiography. Third and last, the historical development of long-distance transport of live casualties in later periods of classical antiquity is a subject that deserves a separate study.

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³⁶ See Hornblower 1983: 157–166; Garlan 1994: 678–680; Adcock 1957: 88–90.

³⁷ For example, Philon of Byzantium, ca 200 B.C., recommends providing good medical care to foreign mercenaries so that they will face danger willingly (5.3.45–48, 72–73). Quoted in Garlan 1975: 136.

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APPENDIX: LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPORT OF SICK AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS

Date	Identity	Occasion	Source	Description
413	Athenians	Retreat from Syracuse	Thuc. 7.75.2–4 Diod. 13.18.6	Incapacitated soldiers are abandoned as the able-bodied decamp; they beg to be carried. Incapacitated soldiers are placed between the vanguard and the rear for overland march.
411	Athenians	Naval retreat from Miletus to Samos	Thuc. 8.27.4	Phrynichus orders the wounded to be placed aboard ships.
401	Ariaeus, Persian noble	Retreat from Cunaxa	Xen. An.2.2.14	The wounded Ariaeus travels by wagon.

401	Greeks	Retreat along the Tigris	Xen. <i>An.</i> 3.4.32	Greeks cannot both march and fight because so many are <i>hors de combat</i> : the wounded, the soldiers carrying them, and the soldiers in charge of the carriers' arms.
401	Greeks	Retreat through Armenia	Xen. <i>An.</i> 4.5.22	Able-bodied troops carry weakened soldiers to the nearest camp.
401	Greek warrior	Retreat through Armenia	Xen. <i>An.</i> 5.8.6–11	Half-dead soldier is carried by mule.
400	Greeks	Removal from Trapezus to Cerasus	Xen. <i>An.</i> 5.3.1	The wounded are placed aboard ships; the able-bodied march overland.
ca 398	Agis II of Sparta	Removal from Arcadia toward Sparta via Heraea; versions differ slightly	Xen. <i>Hell.</i> 3.3.1; Plut. <i>Lys.</i> 22.4; Paus. 3.8.7	Agis II, sick and near death, is carried through Arcadia; exact mode of transport is unclear.
ca 394	Sopolis	Removal from Siphnos to Lycia	Isoc. 19.39	Servants and a friend, carrying the wounded man on their shoulders, place him aboard a ship.
ca 331	Agis III of Sparta	Removal from Megalopolis toward Sparta	Diod. 17.63.4	The wounded Agis III is carried by soldiers; exact mode of transport is unclear.
328	Alexander the Great	Advance to Maracanda	Curtius 7.6.8	Alexander's infantry soldiers carry him by litter, the way they customarily carry their wounded comrades.
325	Macedonian army	Advance across Gedrosian Desert	Curtius 9.10.15 Arrian 6.25.2–3	Men fall by the wayside because no transport animals are available; able-bodied can barely carry their arms. Men fall by the wayside because there are no transport animals, no wagons, nor anyone to help them forward or stay behind.
