Marathon without Phalanx? – The development of the hoplite warfare and the early *poleis*. An archaeological analysis.

The reader may well roll his or her eyes at seeing yet another article on Greek warfare. So much ink has been spent on discussing the origins and nature of the hoplite phalanx that the reader may well have come to believe that there is nothing left to write about: The *hoplites* were the main actor of the ancient *poleis*, they fought heavily armoured as *Men of Bronze* (Hdt. 2.152) in a formation called *phalanx*, and they defended the Greek world against the Persians and other intruders. The resulting common sense also led to the development of one of the most important political institutions in the antiquity, the general assembly. However, what if the *phalanx* is a product of a later development, and what if a close formation of *hoplites who* fought shoulder on shoulder did not exist before the classical period?

These questions led to an extraordinary discussion within the historical research in the previous decades. Two scholar-groups known as *orthodoxy* and *heresy* regularly confronted themselves with unprecedented arguments (Kagan – Viggiano 2013). However, this discussion received little attention outside the historical community, despite its axiomatic character. On the other hand, the current historical research rarely reflects the new archaeological data. Thus, the 50-years old (!) study of A. Snodgrass (1967) continues to be the basis for further historical considerations of ancient arms and armour used in the Aegean. Furthermore, the past and present archaeological studies are still based on prevailing historical approaches regarding the sociohistorical development – thus, a perfect example for a circular argument arose, which originate from an insufficient interdisciplinary approach, and is sometimes affected by ideological implications (Hansen 1989).

It is therefore the main aim of this paper to revisit the assumed causality between the development of *phalanx* and the formation of *poleis* with regard to the increased amount of new archaeological data. It will – as a case study – highlight the development in Athens in the archaic period; since the extensive archaeological and historical sources from Athens allow not only a *long durée* study of this subject, but also Athenian *polis* had and has a symbolic character for our perception of antiquity, which is eventually personified in the story of the Battle of Marathon.

**Literature:**