

In this paper, I argue that inscribed dedications for military victories indicate that the Greek *poleis* did not adopt state-controlled armies until *c.* 575-550 BCE, as opposed to the usually accepted date of the end of the eighth century. Scholars have assumed that the earliest versions of the hoplite phalanx, which first appear at the end of the eighth century, were composed of citizen soldiers. Since the presence of a phalanx has been equated with the presence of a *polis* army, no one has seriously questioned the idea that the adoption of the phalanx coincided with the adoption of citizen armies. However, evidence from inscribed dedications belies this interpretation and shows that the introduction of the phalanx and advent of *polis* armies did not take place at the same time. Rather, inscribed dedications point to the later period of *c.* 575-550 for the important change to state-controlled armies. Before this time, phalanxes were for the most part the retinues of aristocratic warlords rather than armies of citizen soldiers.

In the archaic period, both on the mainland and on Crete, dedications to celebrate military victories made by individuals or aristocratic factions appear in the material record before dedications made by *poleis*. Important early mainland dedications include the “Mantiklos Apollo” (*LSAG*² 94, no. 1; *c.* 700-675) and a golden bowl from Olympia dedicated by the Kypselidai (*LSAG*² 131, no. 13; *c.* 625-550). The dedication from Olympia was made not by a *polis* army, but by members of the Kypselid dynasty, who likely operated as warlords commanding their own private army. As for the Cretan evidence, the inscriptions on a well-known group of arms and armor from Afrati (*c.* 630-580) suggest that the warriors who made the dedication emphasized personal martial prowess in emulation of the Homeric heroes. Although the equipment dedicated makes it clear that these warriors fought in the new phalanx, the old “Homeric” tendencies toward the recognition of individual exploits clearly had not yet given way to the communal ethos of the *polis* army. Both the mainland and the Cretan examples indicate that in the seventh century, individuals or factions, rather than *poleis*, offered votives for military victories. Evidence such as the inscription on a Corinthian helmet recording a victory of the Orkhomenians over the Koroneians (*LSAG*² 95, no. 11) shows that the earliest dedications made by *poleis* appear only *c.* 575-550, which suggests that only then had *polis* armies been adopted on a widespread basis.

State-controlled armies of citizen soldiers thus post-date the first appearances of the hoplite phalanx by more than a century. By demonstrating that there was a significant lag between the institution of the phalanx and the adoption of *polis* armies, I propose that the questions of the rise of the phalanx and the rise of the *polis* should be separated. It has often been assumed that because of their participation in a newly implemented phalanx formation, members of the archaic *dēmos* were encouraged to make demands in the realm of politics, and thus participated in a kind of “hoplite revolution.” The epigraphic evidence reviewed here strongly suggests that while there may have been a hoplite revolution at the end of the eighth century, it was a purely military revolution, without the political effects often attributed to it.