

THE LITTLE GREY HORSE—HENRY V'S SPEECH AT AGINCOURT AND THE BATTLE EXHORTATION IN ANCIENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

Summary: This article is a continuation of M. H. Hansen, 'The Battle Exhortation in Ancient Historiography,' *Historia* 42 (1993) 161-80, hereafter referred to as Hansen, and at the same time a reply to W.K. Pritchett, 'The General's Exhortation in Greek Warfare,' in *Essays in Greek History* (Amsterdam 1994) 27-109, hereafter referred to as Pritchett. In my reply I argue (a) that Pritchett's (repeated) view of how King Henry V addressed his army at Agincourt is (still) unconvincing, and (b) that Pritchett misrepresents my view of battle exhortations while, in his own treatment of the genre, he endorses what is one of the main points of my article, *viz.*, that apophthegms and short addresses to individual men and small contingents shouted to the soldiers as the general passed along the lines were later written up in rhetorical form as if the general had been standing in front of his army and addressed his men with a genuine speech. The article is concluded with a typology of battle exhortations to be developed in future studies.

I. King Henry V's Speech before Agincourt

Speeches by generals to their army are of different kinds. One type is the speech—deliberative or exhortative—delivered at what is often called a *syllogos*, i.e. a meeting of the army held in some convenient place resembling an assembly place where, for example, the men can stand or sit in a horseshoe facing the speaker.¹ Quite a different type is the battle exhortation, allegedly delivered to the army when drawn up in battle formation. In historiography harbingers of this type of speech can be found in Herodotos; the genre is already fully developed in Thucydides' work, and it is known from the majority of later Greek and Roman historians. On the other hand, this type of speech is poorly attested in rhetorical theory and practice, and since classical rhetoric was cut to fit what was actually needed, one begins to suspect that the battle exhortation is essentially a historiographic fiction and not a rhetorical fact.²

¹ J. Christensen & M. H. Hansen, 'What is *Syllogos* at Thuc. 2.22.1?', *ClMed* 34 (1983) 17-31, reprinted with addenda in M. H. Hansen, *The Athenian Ecclesia* II (Copenhagen 1989) 195-211.

² The meagre information about the battle exhortation in rhetoric is discussed in Hansen 163-65. Pritchett 35-6 notes that I overlooked three protreptic speeches by the second-century AD *rhetor* Lesbonax, ed. F. Kiehr, *Lesbonactis sophistae quae supersunt* (Leipzig 1906). I am indebted to Pritchett for pointing out my omission which does not, however,

In any study of the ancient battle exhortations a crucial problem is that in most cases we have just one single source which we have to trust or reject. An evaluation of the source by comparison with other (independent) sources is virtually impossible. Accordingly, it is no wonder that W. K. Pritchett chose to introduce his treatment of a typical Greek pitched battle with a detailed description of the battle of Agincourt in 1415, because ‘it affords striking parallels to many particulars which some modern rationalistic historians have queried in ancient accounts’. The battle exhortation is one of these particulars, and Pritchett’s view is that such speeches known from ancient historians are what they purport to be: an account in direct or indirect speech of what the general actually said to his army standing in front of the army drawn up in battle formation.³ Pritchett does not return to the battle exhortation later in his chapter and leaves his readers with the impression that, by adducing Henry the Fifth’s speech before Agincourt, he has once and for all removed all doubts as to whether battle exhortations were actually delivered in something like the form in which they are transmitted. Historians (now including me) who still dare to discuss the issue are treated with serene contempt in the recent study which he wrote in response to my article in *Historia*.⁴

In principle, Pritchett is right. *If* it can be proved that Henry the Fifth in 1415 was standing before the front and delivered a speech to be heard by the entire English army, then the *a priori* argument—‘it cannot be done’—is disproved, and there is good reason to believe that the Greek and Roman generals may have done the same; and then the battle exhortations found in Greek and Roman historians must be studied, not just as a specific rhetorical genre in historiography, but as a specific type of speech in the physical

affect my basic argument that, from the point of view of literary genre, the battle exhortation belongs in historiography rather than in rhetoric. Pritchett’s study has only confirmed my observation. In his dissertation *Die Παρακλητικοί in der griechischen und römischen Literatur* (Strassburg 1908) 28-36 J. Albertus lists 105 speeches from historians, to which we must add innumerable passages in which a historian refers to an exhortation without reporting it; and Pritchett musters scores of examples from the historians against half a score or so from the rhetorical literature. Admittedly, in the vast rhetorical literature of the Hellenistic and Roman periods there must, of course, be some further references to battle exhortations than those which I found and reported in Hansen 164-5. I never claimed that my study was exhaustive, and I shall be grateful to any colleague who can add to the sources discussed by myself and by Pritchett. The passages adduced by C.T.H. R. Erhardt, ‘Speeches before Battle?’ *Historia* 44 (1995) 120-1 are all from historians.

³ W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* IV (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1985) 1-2 & 4.

⁴ Pritchett 27: ‘Mogens Herman Hansen can be placed in the vanguard of those who believe that our histories contain a pack of lies.’

sense, and as a specific type of historical document as well. But *can* it be proved that Henry the Fifth delivered his famous speech?⁵

King Henry's speech is best known, of course, from Shakespeare's drama,⁶ but the battle of Agincourt happens to be the first well documented battle in world history.⁷ It is described in over a dozen different chronicles of which several were written by people who had either fought in the battle themselves or seen the battle being fought. And among the eyewitnesses were some who fought on the English and some who fought on the French side.

On the English side the best and most detailed source is *Gesta Henrici Quinti* by an anonymous priest who during the battle was stationed with the baggage and wrote his account less than two years after the battle.⁸ Other eyewitnesses are *Jean le Fèvre*, a young pursuivant-at-arms who many years later described the battle in a chronicle written in French,⁹ and a follower of Sir Robert Umfraville, *John Hardyng*, whose chronicle in English verse includes a short account of the battle.¹⁰ Contemporary second-hand accounts of the battle seen from the English side are, the *Liber metricus de Henrico Quinto* by *Thomas of Elmham*, prior of Lenton,¹¹ an anonymous prose chronicle erroneously attributed to Elmham and commonly referred to as *Pseudo-Elmham*,¹² *The St. Albans Chronicle* by *Thomas Walsingham*,¹³ and a work by the Italian *Titus Livius* of Forli, who from ca. 1436 served as court poet and orator for the Duke of Gloucester.¹⁴ Later sources include *The Brut of England*,¹⁵ and Robert Redmann, *Vita Henrici Quinti*.¹⁶

On the French side the best known description by an eyewitness is that of *Jean de Waurin*, who was fifteen in 1415 and served with his father in the

⁵ The following analysis of King Henry's speech at Agincourt is a much elaborated version of Hansen 175-7. However, my treatment of the sources is the same, and my conclusion is the same as in 1993.

⁶ *Henry V*, Act 4, probably based on Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

⁷ Chr. Hibbert, *Agincourt* (3rd edn. Moreton-in-Marsh 1995); J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (1976, Penguin edn. 1978) 78-116.

⁸ F. Taylor & J.S. Roskell (ed.), *Gesta Henrici Quinti* (Oxford 1975), see *infra* n. 22.

⁹ F. Morand (ed.), *Chronique de Jean Le Fèvre de St. Remy I-II* Paris (1876-81).

¹⁰ H. Ellis (ed.), *Chronicle [to 1461]* (London 1812).

¹¹ *Elhami Liber Metricus de Henrico Quinto* in C.A. Cole (ed.), *Memorials of Henry the Fifth* (London 1858) 79-165.

¹² T. Hearne (ed.), *Thomæ de Elmham Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti* (Oxford 1727).

¹³ V.H. Galbraith (ed.), *The St. Albans Chronicle, 1406-20* (Oxford 1937).

¹⁴ T. Hearne (ed.), *Titi Livii Foro-Julienensis Vita Henrici Quinti* (Oxford 1716).

¹⁵ F.W.D. Brie (ed.), *The Brut or The Chronicles of England* (Oxford 1906).

¹⁶ In Cole (*supra* n. 11) 3-59.

French army.¹⁷ Of contemporary second-hand accounts the two most important are a chronicle by *de Monstrelet*, born near Agincourt,¹⁸ and an anonymous chronicle by a monk of *St. Denys*.¹⁹ A chronicle by *Jean Juvénal des Ursins*, on the other hand, is of doubtful value.²⁰ In the following analysis these thirteen sources will be referred to in underlined forms as indicated above.

Not all these sources are independent of each other. *Jean de Waurin*, on the whole, rewrites the chronicle by *Jean le Fèvre*. Again, *Jean le Fèvre* had read *de Monstrelet* before he composed his own version of the battle, but included much more than his compatriot. *Titus Livius*' account is derived from that of *Pseudo-Elmham*.²¹

Two of the most reliable sources, *Gesta* and *St. Denys*, agree that the King made a speech to his troops on the eve of the battle. *St. Denys* says that the speech was made to the entire army, and *Gesta* that it was delivered before the King deployed the army. In continuation of this speech *Gesta* reports the King's reproaching reply to a knight who expressed a wish for reinforcements: He would not have a single man more, but believed that 'the Almighty, with these his humble few, is able to overcome the opposing arrogance of the French.' In *St. Denys*, on the other hand, this reply is made part of King Henry's speech to the army on the eve of the battle, whereas, in *Pseudo-Elmham*, followed by *Titus Livius*, the episode is incorporated in the battle exhortation delivered by Henry the following morning. And that leads up to the main issue to be dealt with in this article: what do we know about the speech allegedly delivered by King Henry the Fifth to the entire army on Friday 25 October 1415, just before the battle was opened?

Neither the *Gesta*²² nor *de Monstrelet* nor *St. Denys* has any information about any speech made by the King before the battle. We must, of course,

¹⁷ W. Hardy (ed.), Jehan de Waurin, *Recueil des croniques et anchiennes istoires de la Grant Bretaigne* I-II (London 1864-8).

¹⁸ L. Douët-d'Arcq (ed.), Enguerran de Monstrelet, *Chronique* I-VI (Paris 1857-62).

¹⁹ L. Bellaguet (ed.), *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys* I-VI (Paris 1939-52).

²⁰ D. Godefroy (ed.), *Jean Juvénal des Ursins, Histoire de Charles VI* (Paris 1653).

²¹ A very good survey of the sources and the relationship between them can be found in the introduction to *Gesta* (*supra* n. 8).

²² Pritchett (32-3) attempts to shed doubt about the quality of the *Gesta* on this particular issue: 'The vantage point of a priest who is praying in the baggage train is not that of a warrior in the ranks'. But Taylor and Roskell (*supra* n. 8) assert that 'the *gesta* ... is by far the best account we possess' (xxxii) and that 'perhaps the best tribute to the *Gesta* is the general agreement as to the exceptional reliability of its account of Agincourt, about which there is so much conflicting information. *Its particular value is the clarity with which the main course of the battle is traced*' (xxxiv, my italics).' Let me add, however, that the editors note too that the *Gesta* 'can, of course, be supplemented on a number of details' (xxxv).

remember that the last two describe the battle from the French point of view and both have a brief remark about exhortations being made on the French side. Nevertheless, *de Monstrelet* also reports the English preparations for battle and writes that an old knight, Thomas Erpingham, had the troops drawn up in battle line and made a speech to the archers, a speech included, too, in *Jean le Fèvre's* account.²³ *Hardyng's* brief account of the battle in English verse has no reference to any exhortation either. *Jean Juvénal* mentions an exhortation before the battle but without any specification of the content. Neither *Hardyng* nor *Jean Juvénal* requires any further comment in this context.

Thus, the contemporary English sources that convey information about King Henry's speech to his army are: *Jean le Fèvre*, *Elmham*, *Pseudo-Elmham*, *Titus Livius* and *Thomas Walsingham*. Later sources are: *Brut* and *Redmann*. It causes no surprise that only one of the French sources, *viz. Jean de Waurin*, includes an account of the speech delivered by the English king.

In *Thomas Walsingham's* version the speech is an ultra-short collocation of commonplaces which fit any battle fought during the Hundred Years' War. The only detail worth noting is the King's statement that the French army blocks his way, a point which in *Titus Livius* is part of the King's reply to the French heralds before the battle. The *Brut* has an even shorter summons that the men be of good cheer since all England is praying for the army, followed by an invocation of God and St. George and the command to advance. The remaining six sources report a fairly long oration in indirect speech; but they are not mutually independent accounts of what the king is supposed to have said.

Jean le Fèvre and *Jean de Waurin* have almost identical versions of the exhortation. The two sources are obviously interdependent and it seems to be *Jean de Waurin* who often word for word copied the speech reported by *Jean le Fèvre*.

Pseudo-Elmham and *Titus Livius* have similar but not identical summaries of an entirely different speech, and here it is *Titus Livius* who used *Pseudo-Elmham's* text as his model.

Elmham provides us with yet another speech of which some points reappear in *Redmann's* chronicle.

Redmann's speech is the longest, partly because of its extreme verbosity and partly because the author has mixed a number of rather trite commonplaces with some of the specific points already known from the earlier sources, e.g., the king's refusal to wish for reinforcements (taken from *Pseudo-*

²³ *Jean Le Fèvre's* account of Thomas Erpingham's speech is based on that of *de Monstrelet* who was not an eyewitness but published his work before *Jean le Fèvre*. It is perhaps telling that the eyewitness Jean le Fèvre in one part of his account copied the description written by a man who had *not* been present when the battle was fought.

Elmham), and decision to die rather than to be taken prisoner (taken from *Elmham*).

In this context we can safely disregard *Jean de Waurin* and *Titus Livius* because each of them just copied one other source known to us, and we can disregard *Redmann* too since he draws from a number of sources but, apparently, not from any valuable first-hand account which is now lost.

So, the sources provide us with three very different accounts of a battle exhortation delivered by King Henry the Fifth. (1) *Pseudo-Elmham* focuses on the King's confidence that his few men with the help of God shall overcome the supernumerous French army. (2) In *Elmham* one of the key points is that the king prefers to die in battle rather than to be taken prisoner and ransomed. (3) *Jean Le Fèvre* reports a speech in which nothing is said about the small size of the English army and the King's confidence in God. They agree with other chronicles in attributing these remarks to the King's speech on the eve of the battle. The only piece of evidence which is common to all three speeches is the reference to the earlier English victories in France.

1. *Pseudo-Elmham*: *Ipse eciam princeps, nivei coloris manno nobili insidens suis non modicum consolacionis inferens, ad actus Marcios exercitum mirifice invitabat. ... Cumque rex audiret quosdam optantes, ut quicumque proceres regni Angliæ ad hoc benevoli huic negocio nutu deifico interessent, regalis constancia sic respondit: 'Revera ego nollem, ut per unicam tantum personam supervenientem istius populi numerus augetur. Si enim in pugnatorum multitudine essemus pares hostibus, vel forsitan forciores, & ipsi in manus nostras eventu bellico traderentur, victoriam ipsam nostra indiscreta arbitria nostrarum magnitudini virium imputarent, & sic debitæ laudes minime solverentur. Si vero, post Dei propriam castigacionem multiplicem, propter scelera nostra, sic correptos, divina sententia in manus hostiles tradendos decreverit, (cujus oppositum spero firmiter & confido) certe tunc exercitus noster esset nimius, tantæ infelicitatis (quod absit) discrimini exponendus. Quod si modo tantillulo pugnatorum numero divina miseratio (quod firma spe amplectitur fiducia cordis mei) dignetur submittere totidem adversantes, putemus tantam victoriam apud vires nostras non verisimilem a deo collatam, & sibi, non nostræ multitudini, gracias referamus. Ecce! qui armis corporeis satis tutus splendide defenditur & armatur in corpore, multo splendidius spe stabili & fortitudine infrangibili munitur in mente'* (my italics).

2. *Elmham*: Rex dixit reliquis, 'Consortes, arma parate;
Anglica jura quidem sunt referendo Deo;
Edwardi Regis, Edwardi principis isto

jue notant memores prælia plura data.
 Cum paucis Anglis victoria multa notatur;
 hoc nunquam potuit viribus esse suis.
 Anglia non planget me captum sive redemptum;
 præsto paratus ero juris agone mori.
 Sancte Georgi! Sancte Georgi, miles! adesto;
 Anglis in jure, Sancta Maria, fave!
 Hac hora plures pro nobis corde precantur
 Anglorum justi: fraus tua, France, ruet'.

3. *Jean le Fèvre*: Puis après ce que il (King Henry) fut de tous poins habillé et armé, *monta à cheval, gris petit cheval, sans esperons*; et, sans faire sonner trompettes, fist tirer sa bataille hors des logis, et sur une belle plaine de josne bled et vert ordonna ses batailles. ... Quant le roy d'Angleterre ot ordonné sa bataille et l'ordonnance de son bagaige, *sur le petit cheval gris devant dis, alla au long de sa bataille et leur fist de très belles remonstrances*, en les ennotant de bien faire, disant qu'il estoit venu en France pour son droit heritaige recouvrer, et qu'il avoit bonne et juste cause et querelle de ce faire; en leur disant que sur ceste querelle povoient franchement et seurement combattre, et qu'ils eussent souvenance qu'ilz estoit nez du royaulme d'Angleterre, là où leurs pères et mères, femmes et enffans estoient demourans. Par quoy ilz se devoient efforchier pour y retourner en grant gloire et loenge, et que les roys d'Angleterre, ces prédécesseurs, avoient eu sur les Francois maintes belles besoignes, batailles et desconfitures, et que, cellui jour, chascun aidast à garder son corps et l'honneur de la couronne d'Angleterre. En oultre, leur disoit et remonstroit que les Francois se vantoient que tous les archiers Anglez, qui y seroient pris, ilz leur feroient copper les trois doigts de la main dextre, affin que leur traict jamais homme ne cheval ne tuast.

And later on he writes: Or doncques, comme dessus est touchié, les Englez oyans le roy eulx ainsi admonnester, gectèrent ung grant cry, en disant: Sire, nous pryons Dieu qui vous doint bonne vie et la victoire sur noz ennemis. Alors, après ce que le roy d'Angleterre eult ainsi amonnesté ses gens, *ainsi comme il estoit monté sur ung petit cheval, se mist devant sa banière* ... (my italics).

It is the third speech which Pritchett treats as authentic and brings into the field against historians who dare argue that the battle exhortation delivered to the entire army drawn up in battle line is probably a rhetorical fiction rather than a historical fact. And Pritchett concludes his argumentation with the remark: 'I would like to underscore the fact that Henry is said to have addressed the entire massed formation of about six thousand strong. The speech is not a summary of the random words of a commander travers-

ing the line.²⁴ But here Pritchett contradicts the source which he otherwise accepts unhesitatingly. According to *Jean le Fèvre's* account, King Henry *did* in fact encourage his men while traversing the line mounted on a little grey horse. And this detail is confirmed by other sources of which one describes the little grey horse as a pony, one as a noble steed,²⁵ while one states that the King walked along the front.²⁶ The only source indicating that the King may have delivered his exhortation standing is a line of *Elmham's* versified account of the battle.²⁷

Pritchett believes that the King faced the entire army, delivered his speech and then was saluted by the army's acclamation: 'Henry came before his troops dressed for battle, wearing a helmet encircled by a gold crown, and with his sword in hand addressed the English army in a loud clear voice ...'.²⁸ Pritchett seems even to believe that such a speech could be heard by the entire army!²⁹ Now, if drawn up, e.g., in horseshoe formation and in a convenient place, an army of several thousand men can hear a speech delivered in a clear and loud voice.³⁰ But it is something quite different to address an army drawn up in battle line. The voice of a person who stands some 50 m before the front line can carry no more than ca. 75 m in either direction. And when the speaker turns to one side, those standing on the opposite side can only catch some scattered words of what is shouted. Furthermore these conditions apply in calm weather when the speech is delivered to unarmed men.³¹

At Agincourt the English formation—according to reports admittedly meagre and conflicting—consisted of three main bodies of dismounted men-at-arms, standing four deep, with wedge-shaped groups of archers on either

²⁴ Pritchett (*supra* n. 3) 4, repeated *verbatim* in Pritchett (*supra* n. 4). 30.

²⁵ *Pseudo-Elmham*: nivei coloris manno nobili insidens; *Walsington*: sublimi subvectus equo volat agmina circum.

²⁶ *Jean de Waurin*: Puis ces choses ordonnees, alla le roy au long des rengz ... since Waurin's account is otherwise derived from that of *Jean le Fèvre*, this variant does not inspire confidence.

²⁷ *Elmham* 502: Stat Rex in turmis absque pavore suis.

²⁸ Pritchett (*supra* n. 3) 4, repeated *verbatim* in Pritchett 30.

²⁹ See also Pritchett 83.

³⁰ Hansen 166-7, 169 quoted *infra*.

³¹ The information reported here stems from an experiment I conducted in the meadow behind Copenhagen University. I would like to thank colleagues and students from the Institute of Classics for their cooperation. Let me add that I have a strong voice and that I was really shouting my declamation of a translation into Danish of Thrasy-machos' speech in Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.13-7. At present, I am negotiating with the Queen's Guard and hope in near future to repeat the experiment, this time with one or more battalions as my audience.

side of them. On each wing there were a line of archers with their outward flanks curving in towards the centre.³² The front of the army stretched for some 800 metres³³—over five times the maximum distance a voice can carry under optimal conditions—and the noise from the armaments must considerably have reduced the audibility of any speech made by the King to the entire army. Henry may, of course, have stopped at short intervals and repeated his entire speech over and over again. But that is not what *Jean le Fèvre* says. And if we take his account of the speech to be accurate, we have to believe, too, that the speech was delivered in the way he reports: the King traversed the front mounted on his little grey horse and encouraged his men successively as he passed them. But then he cannot have made a full speech, since, in that case, each unit of the army would have heard only a short part of the speech and no one could have understood the run of the argument. Furthermore, to deliver such a speech from horseback is a further impediment, a fact which Hibbert (and Pritchett) seem instinctively to have felt, since they both omit any reference to the horse in their report of how the speech was delivered.

What King Henry probably did is what many generals have done from classical antiquity right up to, at least, the Napoleonic Wars:³⁴ from horseback he shouted some encouraging remarks to the men as he rode along the front, and he may even have addressed some of the men individually. It is reasonable to assume that some memorable parts of his exhortation were remembered and worked into the formal battle exhortation, which later was

³² C. Hibbert (*supra* n. 7) 77.

³³ According to the map printed in Hibbert (*supra* n. 7) 78 the English lines stretched for a mile and a half. Yet, on 76 Hibbert states that ‘the woods were scarcely more than half a mile apart where the clash between the two armies might be expected to occur. The map in Keegan (*supra* n. 7) 82 indicates that the army was drawn up in a more narrow battle formation, and on page 89 he writes: ‘The woods converged slightly on the English and, at the point, where the armies were eventually to meet, stood about 900 to 1,000 yards apart’.

³⁴ It is what Kyros did before Kunaxa in 401 B.C. (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.14, see Hansen 170), Alexander before Issos in 333 B.C. (Arr. *Anab.* 2.10.2, Hansen 170), Gustav II Adolph before Breitenfeld in 1631 (Bogislav Philip von Chemnitz, *Belli Sveco-Germanici Volumen Primum* [1648] 171: rex copias quoque circumvectus, equitemque pariter ac peditem humaniter & exporrectâ fronte compellans, ad prælium animabat), King Charles and, on the opposing side Chaplain Hugh Peters, before Edgehill in 1642 (Ch. Carlton, *Going to the Wars. The Experience of the British Civil Wars 1638-1651* [London 1994] 127), Marshal Villars before Malplaquet in 1709 (C.C. Sturgill, *Marshal Villars* [Lexington 1965] 91), and Napoleon before Waterloo in 1815 (D. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* [London 1966] 1067).—It is worth noting that Gustav II Adolph’s exhortation of his army in a contemporary eyewitness account published in 1632 is written up as a proper speech delivered to the whole army, see Hansen 177-8.

attributed to the King in accordance with the classical historiographic tradition. The speeches reported by *Elmham* and *Jean le Fèvre* can easily be broken down into short apophthegms, whereas the complicated argumentation of the speech printed in *Pseudo-Elmham* cannot in any possible form have been delivered by a general traversing the line. Consequently, some of the remarks attributed to Henry the Fifth in the speeches reported by *Elmham* and *le Fèvre* may well be historical. What has to be fiction is the rhetorical form.

Finally, if King Henry did in fact deliver a full speech, is it not strange that the preserved versions of it have next to nothing in common? Another question: when both *Gesta* and *St. Denys* report a speech held to the army on the eve of the battle, why do they not—and *de Monstrelet* too—include any reference to the much more important ‘speech’ delivered on the following morning? We must not make too much of their silence, but it is easier to explain if the speech is, in fact, a rhetorical version, composed after the battle out of (some of the) exhortations which King Henry shouted to his men, as he traversed the line.

To sum up: if, following Hibbert and Pritchett, we prefer to trust *Jean le Fèvre’s* version of King Henry’s speech, it is inadmissible to reject, or rather to pass over in silence, what this source says about how the King addressed his men: i.e. mounted on a little grey horse while he traversed the front line of the army. *Pace* Pritchett I conclude that King Henry the Fifth’s so-called battle exhortation does *not* provide us with the proof that such a speech can be delivered *in extenso* to the entire army drawn up in battle formation, and thus it cannot be adduced in support of the view that Greek and Roman generals harangued their soldiers with fully-fledged speeches.

2. The Ancient Greek Battle Exhortations

So much for Pritchett’s view of King Henry’s speech. Analysing the ancient battle exhortations, however, he now takes a different line. There is no mention any more of a general standing before the army and delivering a whole speech to his men. On the contrary, in connection with Hippokrates’ speech in Thucydides Book 4, he writes: ‘The speech (4.95) attributed to Hippokrates on the Athenian side illustrates the folly of referring to battlefield exhortations as ‘orations’, a term which might mislead some to conjure up an orator taking position in the *μεταίχμιον*. Hippokrates exhorts his men with short addresses in direct speech as he passes along the front of the line *παρακελευομένου καὶ μέχρι μὲν μέσου τοῦ στρατοπέδου ἐπελθόντος*’ (Pritchett 57). Again, on page 82 Pritchett lists altogether fourteen ‘Exhortations to all the army by one general’, and on page 83 he notes that ‘in some of the above examples, we are told that the general addressed the army as he

passed along the ranks'. One of these examples is Hippokrates' speech at Delion, and on page 42 Pritchett quotes with approval Gomme's reflections on how Thucydides can have made one speech out of the many short addresses delivered by Hippokrates as he traversed the line: 'to take a simple case: suppose that Thucydides had been present at Delion and, as a member of Hippokrates' staff, as his A.D.C. (if I may put it so), had gone round with him and listened to him addressing the troops (iv.94: ἐπιπαρὶὸν τὸ στρατόπεδον τῶν Ἀθηναίων παρεκελεύετο καὶ ἔλεγε τοιάδε); and suppose he had a good memory, and wished to give a single summary of many short addresses in direct speech but not pretending to record the actual words: how, from the point of view of literary style and arrangement, could he have done it, except in the way he has?'

But that is precisely one of the main conclusions of my article, now endorsed by Pritchett.³⁵ Let me quote some of the key passages from my article: I conclude my section about the evidence from rhetorical theory and practice with the following comment on Onasander *Strategikos* 1.13: 'there can be little doubt that a general usually said *something* to his men before a battle. Furthermore, his exhortation is explicitly addressed to the army when deployed, but, on the other hand, Onasander gives us no clue as to length of the general's address or the way it was delivered' (166).³⁶

Again, my analysis of battle exhortations in Thucydides is summed up as follows: 'when a hoplite army was drawn up in battle order the phalanx stretched across several hundred metres,³⁷ and even if the soldiers kept quiet and grounded their shields³⁸ they were wearing armour that could easily rattle.³⁹ Under such circumstances it must have been impossible for a general,

³⁵ Like Pritchett I find myself in agreement with Gomme's judicious remarks in 'The Speeches in Thucydides,' in *Essays in Greek History and Literature* (Oxford 1937) 172-3. I have to confess that I had not read his essay when I wrote my own article.

³⁶ Quoting and commenting on the same passage from Onasander Pritchett writes (n. 45 on page 100): 'Mogens Herman Hansen dismisses the passage by writing, 'Onasander gives us no clue as to the length of the general's address or the way it was delivered,' which is irrelevant.' Pritchett does not quote the first half of the period: 'there can be little doubt that a general usually said *something* to his men before a battle. Furthermore, his exhortation is explicitly addressed to the army when deployed'.

³⁷ Cf., e.g., J.K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1970) 145.

³⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.12; Thuc. 8.93.1.

³⁹ Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Hist. Alex.* 4.13.37. —I would now like to add Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 13.9: καὶ παρακελεύονται δὲ τῷ ἐνωμοτάρχῳ. οὐδ' ἀκούεται γὰρ εἰς ἐκάστην πᾶσαν τὴν ἐνωμοτίαν ἀφ' ἐκάστου ἐνωμοτάρχου ἕξω. The subject of παρακελεύονται is the hoplites in an ἐνωμοτία. ἀκούεται is passive and the subject to be understood is ἡ φωνή *vel sim*, cf. e.g. Arist. *De An.* 419b18. ἀφ' ἐκάστου ἐνωμοτάρχου ἕξω goes with the subject to be understood

even if he had had the voice of a Stentor, to deliver a speech that could be heard by all the soldiers simultaneously. If the army was commanded by several generals each may have addressed a small portion of the phalanx, as we are told three times.⁴⁰ But if it fell to one general to exhort the entire phalanx, he had to adopt a different technique: he traversed the line and addressed the soldiers unit by unit. Such a form of exhortation is well attested and must be assumed whenever we hear that an army was addressed by its commander immediately before a battle. ἐπιπαριέναι⁴¹ and ἐπιέναι⁴² are the verbs used by the historians to describe what happened.⁴³ Admittedly, if the general harangued his army on the eve of the battle,⁴⁴ or his crews before they embarked,⁴⁵ it may have been possible for the soldiers to form a gathering that could be addressed as a whole like an army meeting. But when the army was lined up in a phalanx the general must have exhorted the units successively. It is implausible that walking along the ranks, he made one coherent speech so that the left wing heard the *prooimion*, the centre the core of the speech, and the right wing the *epilogos*. It is equally implausible that the general stopped five or six times and delivered his entire speech wherever he stopped. What he did was probably to invent a few apophthegms that, with variations, could be shouted to the soldiers as he walked along the front line of the phalanx' (169). As examples of speeches which are attested as being delivered to units of an army, I refer to Xenophon's speech of 24 words at *Anab.* 4.8.14, and Caesar's speech of 50 words at *B.C.* 3.90 (171).

Finally, on the relation between the rhetorical form and the historical contents of battle exhortations, my view is that 'both Thucydides and Xenophon knew what they were writing about. They were both generals and must have known precisely what kind of message a general could convey to his soldiers immediately before battle. Similarly, their contemporary

with ἀκούεται, e.g., φωνή, cf. Arist. *Prob.* 904b23-4. ἕξω indicates that the enomotarch stands away from his ἐνωμοτία. My rendering of the passage is: the hoplites in an ἐνωμοτία exhort their *enomotarch*, for the voice of each *enomotarch* standing away (from his ἐνωμοτία) cannot be heard by the entire ἐνωμοτία in question. This piece of information is brought in a description of arrangements made before the battle. Pritchett (76) introduces his translation of the passage with the phrase 'After the battle is joined', a conjecture for which there is no basis in Xenophon's text.

⁴⁰ Thuc. 2.86.6; 5.69.1; 7.65.3. On Thuc. 5.69.1 see Appendix I.

⁴¹ Thuc. 6.67.3; 7.76.1.

⁴² Thuc. 7.78.1.

⁴³ See also Thuc. 4.94.2; Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.30; *Anab.* 1.8.14; 4.8.14; *Cyrop.* 3.3.44; Arr. *Anab.* 2.10.2; Polyb. 15.10.1; 15.11.6. For further examples from Polybios, see Pritchett 85.

⁴⁴ Thuc. 8.

⁴⁵ Hdt. 8.83.2; Thuc. 2.86-90; 7.65.1.

readers must have known what happened in the last hours before the clash of two phalanxes. Many of them were hoplites themselves and had actually served in a phalanx. Thus both the historians and their readers must implicitly have accepted the stylized fiction of transforming the general's exhortation into a full speech and, undoubtedly, they did not anticipate that later generations would read the speeches as if they had been delivered. If Brasidas, Demosthenes, Nicias and the other generals in Thucydides' work encouraged their men with a few apophthegms, and if Thucydides then has transformed their brief exhortations into fully-fledged speeches, he has still conformed to his principle to report *τὴν ξύμπασαν γνώμην τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων* (173).

To sum up: Pritchett and I still disagree on the speech before Agincourt, and Pritchett has not yet come up with any explanation of why, in his account of the battle of Agincourt, he refuses to believe what the source of his choice says: that King Henry encouraged his men while riding along the lines mounted on a little grey horse. But, basically, we agree on how the formal battle exhortations in Greek historiography emerged: apophthegms and short addresses to individual men and small contingents uttered, or rather shouted, as the general passed along the lines were later written up in rhetorical form as if the general had been standing in front of his army and addressed his men with a genuine speech.

There is, however, one further disagreement between me and Pritchett which deserves closer scrutiny. In Pritchett's list of Exhortations to all the army by one general (83) one example should be deleted, *viz.* Themistokles' speech at Salamis, which was delivered to the *epibatai* only, i.e. a total of under 2,000 Athenians, and not to all the crews. On the other hand another exhortation is missing, namely Thrasyboulos' speech to his army before the battle of Mounichia reported by Xenophon at *Hellenika* 2.4.13-7. It is however, mentioned on page 78 and deserves further discussion in this context. It is, I think, the only piece of evidence in classical sources that a general delivered a speech to his men standing in front of the army and facing the soldiers: 2.4.12 'Thrasyboulos ordered his men to ground their shields and having grounded his own but still wearing his armour, he took up a position towards the centre and said ... ' In my account (Hansen 169) I duly reported this important detail, but, I confess, without taking a clear stand on whether I believed it or not. Now, Thrasyboulos' army numbered some 1,000 men (2.4.10) and they were drawn up in ten ranks (2.4.12). If, following Anderson (quoted *supra* n. 37), we allow one yard per man, the phalanx must have stretched across ca. 90 metres. The experiment I conducted since I wrote my first article (*supra* n. 31) indicates that it is just possible to make oneself heard by an army of that size, and consequently I am now prepared to believe that Xenophon is possibly right: Thrasyboulos may have faced the

phalanx and delivered one set speech to his (small) army, just as, on other occasions, we hear that each unit of an army was addressed individually by its own officer, or successively by the general.

Pritchett, however, has no mention at all of this crucial detail. Yet, if we accept it at face value it disproves what he said on page 57; Thrasyboulos must in that case have stood in the *metaichmion* and may have delivered an ‘oration’. It must be remembered, however, that this form of battle exhortation can only be performed to a very small army or to a single unit of a large army.

3. A Typology of Battle Exhortations

Let me round off this article by presenting my conclusions in the form of a typology of battle exhortations, and let me adduce one ancient and one modern example to illustrate each type.

(A) The general convokes and addresses the officers before the army is drawn up in battle line, and subsequently the officers reproduce the general’s speech, each to his own unit. —According to Arr. *Anab.* 3.9.5-8 this is what Alexander did on the eve of the battle of Gaugamela in 331 B.C. (Hansen 170, 179), and it is what Frederick the Great of Prussia did at Parchwitz on 3 December 1757, before the battle of Leuthen which was fought on 5 December. The most authentic version of this so-called ‘Parchwitz Address’ is that of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia.⁴⁶ —The typical ‘modern’ way of performing this type of battle exhortation is the so-called ‘General Order’⁴⁷ or, in French, ‘l’ordre du jour’: the general composes his exhortation in writing and has the text distributed to the officers who then reads it out to the units. A famous example is Napoleon’s proclamation of 1 December 1805, which, on the eve of the Battle of Austerlitz, was read out to the regiments divided into battalions.⁴⁸

(B) The general convokes and addresses the entire army before it is drawn up in battle line, or, in case of naval battles, before embarkation. Such a speech was delivered by Nikias to all the crews before the great naval

⁴⁶ C. Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great* (2nd edn. Chicago 1996) 29 and 268.

⁴⁷ For a description of what a ‘General Order’ is, see H. Rogers (ed.), *Hadden’s Journal and Orderly Books: A Journal Kept in Canada and Upon Burgoyne’s Campaign in 1776 and 1777*, by Lieut. James M. Hadden, Roy. Art. (Boston 1972) xxxviii-xxxix. A famous example is General Burgoyne’s General Order issued on 30 June 1777, before Saratoga (*Ibidem* 81), often misrepresented as a speech, see, e.g., C.E. Bennett, *Advance and Retreat to Saratoga. Burgoyne Campaign*, ed. by G. A. Billias (Boston 1972) 17: ‘General Burgoyne on June 30, 1777, delivered his famous address to the army.’

⁴⁸ G. Blond, *La Grande Armée* (English edn. London 1995) 69.

battle in the harbour of Syracuse (Thuc. 7.60.5-65.1, Hansen 168). A modern example are the speeches delivered by Mountbatten to the 14th Army soon after he took over his command in Burma: ‘Swirling into view in a staff car, with an escort of military police, he would greet the officers with a smile, then, glancing at the rigid lines of troops in the Indian sun, remark ‘Would you ask them to break ranks and gather round?’ As the troops approached, somewhat amused and curious, Mountbatten would perch himself on the ammunition box, ‘which happened to be lying around’, and began his speech. Though the delivery seemed easy and even, it had been learned by heart and rehearsed. The jokes were planted at the right intervals, and carefully timed; and every line was shaped for effect. Staff officers and policemen, forced to hear the speech over and over again, noticed that it was not varied with a single word; it was in fact a complete theatrical performance.’⁴⁹

(C1) The general traverses the line after the army has been drawn up in battle order, and shouts encouraging apophthegms and short addresses to his men as he walks or rides along the front. A Greek example of this very common way of encouraging an army before a battle is Hippokrates’ exhortation of the Athenians before the battle of Delion in 424 B.C. (Thuc. 4.94.2-96.1).⁵⁰ A medieval example is King Henry V’s exhortation of the English army before the battle of Agincourt in 1415, see *supra*.

(D) The general takes up a central position before the entire army drawn up in battle line and delivers a full speech to the entire army. The only explicit attestation of this form of address in classical Greek historiography is Thrasyboulos’ speech to an army of ca. 1,000 democrats before the battle of Mounichia in 403 B.C (Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.12-7). A modern parallel is General William Howe’s address to some 1,100 British soldiers before the battle of Bunker Hill just before the charge on June 17, 1775. Clark, a lieutenant in the marines, has the following report of it: ‘General Howe, just previous to the action, addressed his army in the following manner: ‘Gentlemen, I am very proud in having the honor of commanding so fine a body of men: I do not in the least doubt but that you will behave like Englishmen, and as becometh good soldiers. If the enemy will not come from their intrenchments, we must drive them out, at all events, otherwise the town of Boston will be set on fire by them. I shall not desire one of you to go a step further than where I go myself at your head. Remember, gentlemen, we have no recourse to any resources if we lose Boston, but to go on board our ships, which will be very disagreeable to us all’.⁵¹

⁴⁹ A. Swinson, *Mountbatten* (London 1973) 72.

⁵⁰ See also Hansen 168, and *supra* and *infra*.

⁵¹ The speech is reported in R. Frothingham, *History of the Siege of Boston and of the Battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill* (New York 1970) 137. See also R. M. Ketchum, *The*

In a future study I will develop this model. Let me conclude this article by inviting all who take interest in Greek historiography to join the battle over the battle exhortation.

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Battle for Bunker Hill (London 1963) 116 with the note on 206. The small size of the British contingent makes it possible that Howe did address all his men simultaneously. See Wellington's remark quoted by J. Keegan in *The Mask of Command* (Harmondsworth 1988) 143: 'as to speeches—what effect on the whole army can be made by a speech, since you cannot conveniently make it heard by more than a thousand men standing about you.'

Appendix I: Thuc. 5.69.1-2.

At Thuc. 5.69.1-2 exhortations (*παραινέσεις*) of the Mantineans, the Argives, and the Athenians before the battle of Mantinea in 418 B.C. are contrasted with the Spartan practice of singing war-songs and their view, ‘that long previous training is more to be relied on than eloquent exhortations uttered just before going into action’. Adducing this passage in *A Commentary on Thucydides 2* (Oxford 1995) 82 S. Hornblower infers ‘that the ‘eloquent exhortations’ despised by the Spartans *were*, to a greater extent than Hansen acknowledges, a recognized historical genre in real life’. Hornblower is right that the implication of the Thucydides passage is that exhortations by generals before battle were regular practice, but it does not follow that these battle exhortations were ‘a recognized rhetorical genre in real life’. The Spartans’ scornful view of eloquent exhortations is, in this context, contrasted with the exhortations of the Mantineans, the Argives and the Athenians mentioned earlier in the chapter. But as reported by Thucydides these seem to have been very short addresses of the kind that could be shouted by the commander of each contingent as he traversed the line (see Hansen 168). What Thucydides says about the regular practice as opposed to the Spartan idiosyncrasy is, in my opinion, compatible with the reconstruction of the battle exhortation suggested by Gomme (*Essays*, quoted above), developed by me (169, quoted above) and now endorsed by Pritchett (Pritchett 57, quoted above).

Appendix II: Thuc. 4.91

Commenting on Pagondas’ speech at Thuc. 4.92, Pritchett (58 with n. 19) emphasises that it was delivered at Tanagra and then complains that ‘Mogens Herman Hansen (p. 168) has the first speech of Pagondas delivered ‘to an army drawn up in battle order’ and is unaware of the second speech’.

Pritchett seems to have overlooked what I write four lines later in connection with Hippokrates’ speech: ‘Thucydides tells us that he has to stop halfway because the Boiotians attack after yet another short exhortation by Pagondas (96.1)’.

Next Pagondas’ first exhortation is delivered to the Boiotian army unit by unit, and Thucydides informs us that each unit was called forward and addressed separately, ‘so that they should not all leave their arms at the same time’ (4.91). This interesting piece of information shows (1) that the army was standing grouped into brigades (*λόχοι*) and (2) that they were in full armour. Now, as stressed by V. D. Hanson, a hoplite’s arms and armour were carried by the servant and passed over to the hoplite ‘only in the very

last seconds before battle'.⁵² So the army must have been drawn up in units, and every hoplite was wearing his arms and armour. Unit after unit the men were ordered to ground their shields, put down their helmets as well, and step forward. Then, having heard Pagondas's exhortation, the men stepped back in line, picking up their shields and helmets, while Pagondas passed on to the next unit. To say that Pagondas delivers his speech to an army already drawn up 'in battle order' is not, in my opinion, a misleading way of summarising what I have here described in more detail.

The reason for this extremely cautious procedure must be that the Athenian army was not far away, and that an Athenian attack might be imminent. Now, in one of his valuable studies of battlefields, Pritchett has proved, to everybody's satisfaction, I think, that the battle was fought south of Dhilesi, some eight kilometres east of Tanagra.⁵³ Thucydides tells us that the Boiotian contingents had assembled ἐς τὴν Τάναγραν exhortation (4.93.1), and that the persecution of the Athenians stopped at night (4.96.8). The battle was fought in the winter of 424/3, according to Gomme (*ad* 4.89.1) in November. Assuming, with Pritchett, that Pagondas delivered his first exhortation at Tanagra, we have to believe that the Boiotian army marched some 8 km before it established contact with the Athenians and then fought a battle before sunset. A solution to this problem is, I suggest, that τὴν Τάναγραν at 4.91 designates not the town of Tanagra, but its territory, as it certainly does at 7.29.2.⁵⁴ Then the Boiotian army may be encamped several kilometres east of Tanagra and deployed not far from Delion, when addressed by Pagondas. On this assumption, it makes good sense to allow only one unit at a time to put down their armour and step forward to hear the exhortation; and we do not have to wonder how the Boiotian army could manage in the remaining part of the day to march from Tanagra to Delion and fight a battle.

⁵² V. D. Hanson, *The Western Way of War* (New York 1989) 62.

⁵³ W. K. Pritchett, 'The Battle of Delion,' in *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography* 2 (1969) 24-36.

⁵⁴ See M. H. Hansen, 'Boiotian Poleis—A Test Case,' in *Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre* 2 (1995) 37; *Idem*, 'Pollachos Polis Legetai,' in *Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre* 3 (1996) 36-9.