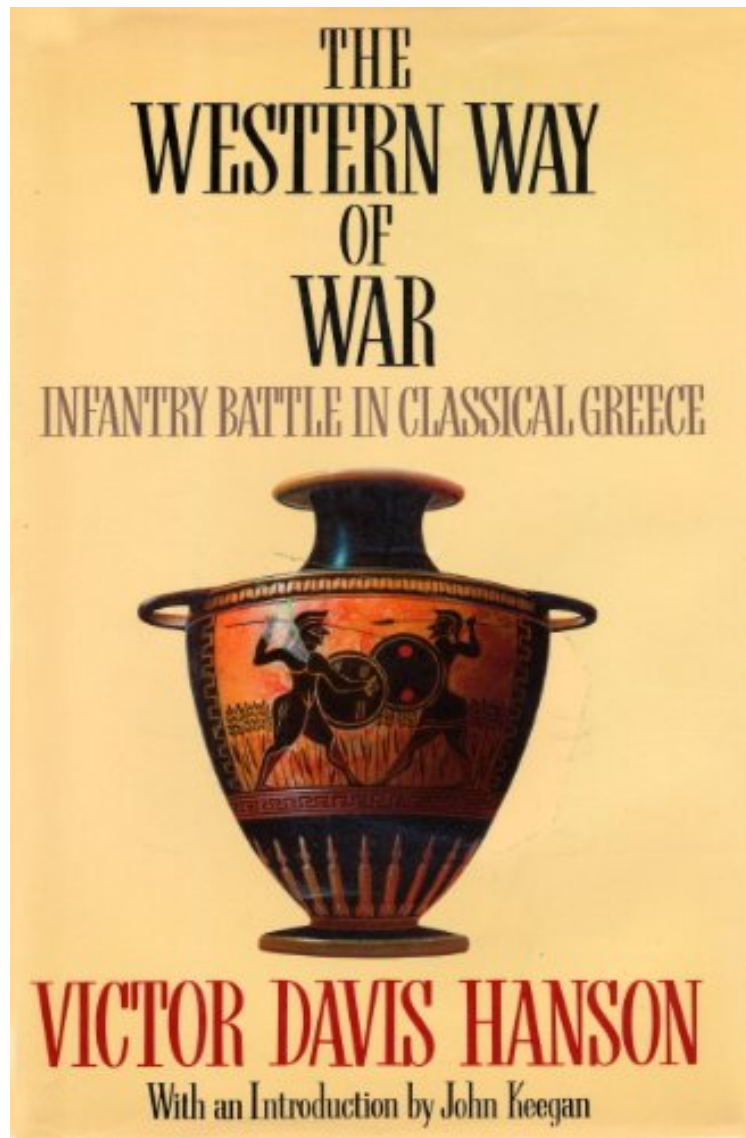


(Mobile book) The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece

## The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece

*Von Victor Davis Hanson*

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**Von Victor Davis Hanson : The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Anything But Modern Warfare!Von Richard RinnVictor Davis Hanson is by trade apparently both a California viniculturist and an academic scholar of classical Greek history. So John Keegan says in his introduction to this new

edition of an established minor classic. The improbable combination of such disparate occupations has shaped his conception of ancient Greek warfare: he argues that the ritualistic hoplite battle formalized during the "golden period" of Greek antiquity was inextricably linked to the nature of Greek agriculture. To avoid devastating loss of food (particularly wine) production and desolation of invaluable land, the seemingly ceaseless wars between Greek city states and their various shifting alliances had to be short, rapidly decisive, and--necessarily as a result--brutally sanguineous. Greeks deliberately fought according to a set of mutually acknowledged rules that limited wartime injury to the participating infantrymen themselves, and kept intact the soil and farms from which they came. In his book Hanson takes us step by step through the violent clash of opposing Greek armies and reveals in remarkably technical detail just what was involved. Perhaps even more important, he recreates the personal experience of individual participants during such a battle. Following in the footsteps of many modern (post-World War II) historians who are more interested in the private soldier than the commanding general, he gives us a gritty sense of what it was like for Greek farmer soldiers to undergo combat in traditional phalanx formation. (Consequently, Steven Pressfield acknowledges that Hanson was one of the sources he referred to when writing his engrossing "Gates of Fire", a fictional treatment of the famous Battle of Thermopylae.) In this sense there is a firm connection between ancient and modern warfare: ultimately it was--and is--fought by men who must deal with their own personal fears of wounding, dismemberment, and death. This has not changed, and so long as there is still a human element to war, will not change. But Hanson takes a step beyond simple individual motivation; and in the closing pages of the book he discusses the implications of modern total warfare, where the ritualized, bloody (but still carefully limited) battle of ancient Greece has given way to the usually uncontrolled, all-destructive (rather than fundamentally conserving) combat of today. It makes for thoughtful, stimulating reading. (Those who find this subject matter interesting might find other Hanson books worth looking at. His more recent "Soul of Battle" devotes its first third to a discussion of war between Thebes and Sparta. "The Wars of the Ancient Greeks" is one volume of a slick series of popular histories which have John Keegan as their editor; aimed at the uninitiated general public, this title nonetheless is a good introduction to warfare in classical Greece.)

2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Flawless Detail--Faulty Analysis  
Von George R Dekle  
Hanson writes a vivid, realistic description of the horror of hoplite combat. He succeeds in giving the reader an in-depth armchair view of agrarian city-state warfare. In the final chapter, however, when he tries to blame the horrors of modern total war on the psychology of the hoplite battle, he goes astray. As bloody and unpleasant as the hoplite battle was, it was really a system designed to limit non-combatant casualties. Only the soldiers on the chosen field of battle were exposed to injury while the city-states themselves suffered little. Hoplite warfare was sort of like settling international disputes by means of a very bloody football game. It wasn't until the Peloponnesian War (when hoplite battles were the exception rather than the rule) that total war methodologies began to be employed by the Greeks. Such methods were not invented by the Greeks. (For example, the Assyrians were quite good at this type of warmaking).

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An excellent book of war -- but without pictures  
Von Ein Kunde  
This is an extraordinarily exacting but readable study of hoplite warfare. The author demonstrates an impressive command of both primary and secondary sources, but his pen is light and his style engaging. His attention to the fate of the "everyman" within the phalanx provides a rich perspective from which to examine, ultimately, the whole of the Greek way of fighting war. This book surely well deserves the praise it has earned. Perhaps the only element lacking in this book is even a modest set of illustrations, such as reproductions of vase paintings or simple diagrams. Too much about the hoplite armor and the array of hoplites within the phalanx is left to the imagination by a book otherwise intended to appeal to non-classicists (or, at least, to amateur classicists). Other than the cover art, there is not a single illustration in the second edition. The next edition would be greatly improved by an attempt to incorporate representative illustrations.

**Kurzbeschreibung**  
The Greeks of the classical age invented not only the central idea of Western politics--that the power of state should be guided by a majority of its citizens--but also the central act of Western warfare, the decisive infantry battle. Instead of ambush, skirmish, maneuver, or combat between individual heroes, the Greeks of the fifth century b.c. devised a ferocious, brief, and destructive head-on clash between armed men of all ages. In this bold, original study, Victor Davis Hanson shows how this brutal enterprise was dedicated to the same outcome as consensual government--an unequivocal, instant resolution to dispute. The Western Way of War draws from an extraordinary range of sources--Greek poetry, drama, and vase painting, as well as historical records--to describe what actually took place on the battlefield. It is the first study to explore the actual mechanics of classical Greek battle from the vantage point of the infantryman--the brutal spear-thrusting, the difficulty of fighting in heavy bronze armor which made it hard to see, hear and move, and the fear. Hanson also discusses the physical condition and age of the men, weaponry, wounds, and morale. This compelling account of what happened on the killing fields of the ancient Greeks ultimately shows that their style of armament and battle was contrived to minimize time and life lost by making the battle experience as decisive and appalling as possible. Linking this new style of fighting to the rise of constitutional government, Hanson

raises new issues and questions old assumptions about the history of war. **Kurzbeschreibung** The Greeks of the classical age invented not only the central idea of Western politics--that the power of state should be guided by a majority of its citizens--but also the central act of Western warfare, the decisive infantry battle. Instead of ambush, skirmish, maneuver, or combat between individual heroes, the Greeks of the fifth century b.c. devised a ferocious, brief, and destructive head-on clash between armed men of all ages. In this bold, original study, Victor Davis Hanson shows how this brutal enterprise was dedicated to the same outcome as consensual government--an unequivocal, instant resolution to dispute. **The Western Way of War** draws from an extraordinary range of sources--Greek poetry, drama, and vase painting, as well as historical records--to describe what actually took place on the battlefield. It is the first study to explore the actual mechanics of classical Greek battle from the vantage point of the infantryman--the brutal spear-thrusting, the difficulty of fighting in heavy bronze armor which made it hard to see, hear and move, and the fear. Hanson also discusses the physical condition and age of the men, weaponry, wounds, and morale. This compelling account of what happened on the killing fields of the ancient Greeks ultimately shows that their style of armament and battle was contrived to minimize time and life lost by making the battle experience as decisive and appalling as possible. Linking this new style of fighting to the rise of constitutional government, Hanson raises new issues and questions old assumptions about the history of war. **Synopsis** The ancient Greeks perfected the art of war, rejecting ambush, crop devastation, ritual conflict, or combat between heroes for a ferocious, brutal and very destructive head-on clash between armed men of all ages and from every part of the polis. This study draws on the evidence of poetry, drama, vases and historical records to reveal the infantryman's views on the armour and weapons he used, the commanders and causes he served, and the horror of the wounds he was likely to receive.