If it were possible to poll the residents of classical Greece, to determine what they considered to be the most important activities in which they engaged during the course of an average year, war and farming would surely rank very high. The study of warfare has traditionally enjoyed an active following among ancient historians, and the traditional subjects of military history — battle strategy and tactics, and battlefield topography — are well represented in recent scholarly literature. Within the last twenty years or so historians interested in ancient warfare have expanded the range of the field of military history by treating other, seemingly more mundane, topics. French scholars, influenced by the seminal studies of André Aymard, have led the way. In 1968 a collection of essays edited by J.-P. Vernant, *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne*, presented a variety of approaches to the general question of the social context of warfare. Subsequently, books by Y. Garlan on poliorcetics (1974), E. Lévy on the psychic impact of the Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War (1976), and R. Lonis on religion and war (1979) have deepened our understanding of Greek warfare. Notable contributions by English-speaking scholars include W. K. Pritchett’s three volumes on *The Greek State at War* and D. Engels’ insightful analysis of Macedonian logistics.

In contrast to war, Greek agriculture has only recently come into its own as a subject of scholarly attention. Pioneering work by L. Gernet (1909) and A. Jardé (1925) was not adequately followed up and consequently K. D. White’s books on Roman farming have no Greek parallels. This lacuna is now, however, on its way to being filled. In 1973 M. I. Finley edited a volume of essays on *Problèmes de la terre en Grèce ancienne*, which helped to define some of the social aspects of Greek agriculture. In the next year seminal articles by G. Audring and A. Andreyev cleared up long-standing problems in Athenian agriculture. These
studies can now be supplemented by detailed analyses of modern Greek peasant farming. Archaeologists are employing the techniques of surface survey to define the changing patterns of land use. The time is right for studying the interrelationships between Greek agriculture and warfare. Victor Hanson’s excellent study, the first book entirely devoted to the subject, demonstrates the great importance of an accurate assessment of these interrelationships to our understanding of the social realities of ancient Greek life, as well as to the political history of (for example) the Peloponnesian War.

The book is divided into three main parts. Part One deals with attacks upon agricultural resources. Chapter 2 looks at the vocabulary of agricultural devastation, delineating the shades of meaning of various terms which are often translated simply as “to ravage.” Hanson emphasizes the important distinction between ravaging and plundering, a distinction sometimes blurred by students of Greek war. Next comes a brief, but very sound chapter on military organization, which stresses that the actual ravagers would, in most cases, be neither hoplites nor slaves, but light-armed troops. Part One concludes with a detailed consideration of the actual means employed by Greek armies in destroying grain, vines, and fruit (especially olive) trees. The great difficulties involved in permanently destroying vines and trees are clearly demonstrated.

In Part Two Hanson turns to the means by which agricultural populations responded to invasion as they attempted to lessen the impact of ravaging. Chapter 5 considers the generally ineffective use of field walls and the establishment of garrisons and border fortresses. Next Hanson studies evacuation of rural populaces, arguing that evacuation in the face of the advancing enemy was the most common recourse of the invaded state. A short chapter on defensive sorties, a tactic which could often seriously limit the effectiveness of ravaging, completes this section.

Part Three is a case study of ravaging in the Peloponnesian War, applying the results of the previous chapters to a particularly well-known and well-documented
case of agricultural devastation. Hanson concludes that the detrimental effects of Peloponnesian ravaging, especially in the long term, have been overstated by scholars who uncritically accepted comments by Thucydides and Aristophanes regarding the devastation of Attica. Hanson's conclusion (Chapter 9) is that the strategy of agricultural ravaging usually failed to severely impair the economic resources of the defenders, but nonetheless strategies based upon ravaging remained common throughout the classical period and into the Hellenistic era.

Hanson's book is not only timely, it is a definitive study of the topic he has set himself. The effect of war on agriculture and hence upon the economy of the Greek state has been briefly and superficially treated in a variety of contexts; Hanson's findings will require a thorough reevaluation of theories on the origin of inter- and intrastate conflict and will necessitate the reworking of descriptions of the social and economic conditions of Greek states (especially Athens) in the aftermath of major wars. Hanson's care to separate the specific problem of agricultural destruction from other, related, problems (e.g. the general poverty of rural dwellers, 118) makes his work particularly valuable to scholars interested in agricultural devastation as a factor in socioeconomic change.

The book is thoroughly researched and shows both a familiarity with and sensitivity for major and minor texts alike. Particularly good is Hanson's discussion of the importance of considering the chronology of Aristophanes' plays when adducing those plays as evidence for conditions in Attica (117-20). Hanson notes that all references to agricultural devastation come from plays produced in the period after the devastations of the Archidamian war. Hence, Aristophanes' comments are evidence for the nature of Athenian memories of devastation (a topic interesting in itself), but not for the reality of widespread and crippling destruction.

Hanson tends to take a synchronic view of Greek history from the sixth through third century; this tendency may obscure important changes in strategy and tactics. Hanson
is aware of these changes, but the paucity of evidence leads him to conflate examples from widely divergent periods and from various regions of Greece (in some of which the polis was not the dominant form of political organization) and even from Persia, which had a very different military tradition. Occasionally he employs somewhat dubious sources, for example Pausanias on the Messenian wars (7). Although Hanson quite correctly notes that the actual incident described by Pausanias may not have occurred, he uses Pausanias' account as a "reflection of theoretical Greek attitudes toward ravaging." I would prefer to see it as an example of late second century A.D. idealization of seventh century B.C. Spartans, which may have little to do with conditions of the sixth to fourth centuries B.C. The spurious decree inserted in Demosthenes' *On the Crown*, describing evacuation of property in outlying districts to rural fortresses, is questionable evidence for fourth-century practice. (95). Ps-Demades (cited on p. 97) should probably be avoided as a source for late fourth-century history and seen rather as an example of Hellenistic rhetoric.

Hanson is well read in modern military literature and frequently uses modern parallels to illuminate ancient practice. The use of modern parallels is a fine art; it is all too easy to fall into the trap of basing an argument on modern attitudes or on practices derived from radically different historical circumstances (e.g., the theories, popular earlier in this century, of Greek trade based on eighteenth and nineteenth-century colonial economics). Hanson's citations of modern parallels are a model of the art: always cautious and illustrative, rather than attempting to be probative.

Hanson has an impressive grasp of the physical conditions of ancient agriculture. While never sentimentalizing his subject, Hanson obviously empathizes with the farmer faced with the destruction of his living. Hanson's discussion of the organization of the Greek countryside (37-41) is the best short treatment of the subject I have seen. His own experience in working a family farm in California allows Hanson to speak authoritatively on such subjects as
the effect of burning on vines (57), and has given him an appreciation of various factors that contribute to success and failure in farming. A case in point is his analysis (147) of the importance of intensive labor, as opposed to technology (and hence capital) in most Greek farming. The labor-intensive nature of Greek agriculture tended to render ancient farms less vulnerable to permanent or long-term effects of devastation than is the case in the modern world.

Hanson has a fine sense for the practical aspects of ancient military operations, especially on a tactical level. His treatment of the difficulties faced by soldiers attempting to devastate agriculture is one of the most valuable parts of the book. Hanson suggests (34) that a carefully planned campaign could capture harvested grain which had been collected in unprotected villages. Capture of a year’s harvest was obviously more advantageous to attackers than ravaging the crop or preventing the harvest, since it profited the invaders as well as harmed the defenders, by allowing the invading army to stay in the field longer. Hanson’s point must be taken seriously by those interested in the chronology of campaigns. The tactic would work best against nearby enemies, who could more easily be taken by surprise and whose agricultural calendar (which would vary from year to year according to local weather conditions) would be better known to the attackers.

Although Hanson’s major concerns are, on the one hand, the tactics of ravaging, and on the other, the economic effects of ravaging upon the invaded, the reasons for the popularity of an offensive strategy based on agricultural devastation might have been examined in greater detail. Hanson demonstrates that ravaging was difficult and that permanent economic ruin seldom resulted. It is therefore initially difficult to explain why Greek generals continued to ravage enemy farms. Hanson is, I believe, quite correct to suggest (149) that the end sought by the ravagers was to bring the enemy into the field to fight. But the hypothesis that panic on the part of farmers, each of whom feared that his farm would be badly damaged, does not seem to me to explain adequately the phenomenon of defenders marching
out to stop what they must have known from experience would be minimal harm to agricultural regions.

Works such as Lonis’ *Guerre et religion* (cited above), which deal with the ritualistic nature of Greek warfare, might have been fruitfully consulted. If we assume that in earlier Greek warfare (before the Peloponnesian War) the destruction of agriculture was intended as a ritual challenge to battle, an insult that threatened the honor of the invaded state, rather than the grain of a few farmers, we may conclude that the efficiency or inefficiency of ravaging as a mode of economic disruption was immaterial. So long as both sides played the game by the rules, and ritual challenges were met by the appropriate response, there need not have been a rational strategy involved at all.

The situation was rather different after the first years of the Peloponnesian War. When the Athenians refused to fight in the field, the Spartans were forced to develop a genuine strategy to defeat them. Offensive fortification (*epiteichismos*) was one strategic response to the problem of an enemy who refused to “fight fair.” Hence, it does not seem completely accurate to say (28) that *epiteichismos* “did not involve” the traditional strategy of agricultural devastation, rather it was an attempt to make the “ritual” threat of the traditional strategy into an actual threat, a way to make the traditional strategy work. Hanson is no doubt correct to assume that the garrison at Decelea could not ravage all of Attica, but Thucydides (7.27) makes it quite clear that most Athenians no longer had use of their farms, and loss of access was certainly as serious in the short term as ravaged land. And the short run is what the Spartans were interested in; after all they aimed at winning a war, not at permanently ruining an economy.

Hanson’s exclusive emphasis on agricultural destruction, while useful in many ways, may lead one to underestimate the originality of fourth-century generals who used ravaging along with plundering in order to exert economic pressure on the enemy. The combined effect of ravaging and plundering is noted (16 and 31, note 23), but as an accidental concurrence, rather than as part of a concerted
strategy of economic coercion. My assessment of Agesilaus' campaign in Asia Minor differs from Hanson's (150), in that I would argue that Agesilaus used ravaging and plundering to pressure the satraps into joining his side against the Great King. This strategy worked quite well until the Corinthian War forced Agesilaus' recall by the Spartans. Agesilaus may have overlooked the Great King's diplomatic and economic clout, but his failure in Asia was not due to strategic backwardness.\(^5\)

Turning from attack to defense, I am in substantial agreement with Hanson's discussion of the use of fortifications for the defense of agricultural areas. Hanson discusses at some length (75-78) the fifth-century defensive "system" of Attica; however, I do not believe that a coherent system of frontier defense existed in the fifth century. Hence, I would replace Hanson's comment (77) that the forts were "not able" to stop the enemy in the Peloponnesian War with "never intended" to stop the enemy. It was not until the fourth century that a genuine preclusive frontier defense system was established.\(^6\)

Hanson's discussion of the role of forts during the Decelean War (135) is rather speculative. The existence of late fifth-century forts at Rhamnous and Anaphlystos is conjectural, although I agree there probably was one at Rhamnous, at least. But other forts had been lost. Panakton probably was not refortified. Oinoe and Oropos were lost by 410. After that year, the only documented garrisons were at Sounion, Thorikos and Eleusis. The two former garrisons were in demes which were primarily industrial, rather than agricultural (although farms certainly existed in both areas). Eleusis lay on the route taken by the Peloponnesian reinforcements on their way to and from Decelea; the Eleusinian plain was probably the most ravaged part of Attica as a consequence. It seems to me unwise to extrapolate too much about the role of Decelean War forts in protecting agriculture from these three garrisons.

A few minor points. From Hanson's list of fourth-century border fortifications of Attica (83) delete Leipsydron and Palaiochora. These sites are not datable and are unlikely to
have been part of the fourth-century defensive system. Hanson's range of suggested dates for the Dema wall (70) might be extended back considerably. S. Dow suggested the late sixth century and L. Chandler the period of Athenian synoecism. Hanson is correct in stating that the Dema wall was not a border defense; I would suggest that it was built after Philip of Macedon's improvements in siegecraft had rendered Athens' relatively small border garrisons vulnerable to attack. The figure 10-14 meters (p. 61) for the original height of farm towers seems too high for buildings with rubble socles and mud-brick superstructures. The 10-14 meter figure is based on a false analogy with well-preserved freestanding towers constructed of massive ashlar masonry (e.g. towers "C" and "F" in the Megarian Vathychoria and the great Mazi tower in northern Attica). I would argue, incidentally, that these massively built towers served military purposes; the current tendency to consider all freestanding towers agricultural is as counterproductive as the previous tendency to see all towers as military. In any event, the original height of rubble towers cannot be projected by analogy to ashlar towers.8

Perhaps Hanson's most controversial arguments concern the degree of damage done to Athenian resources during the Peloponnesian War. This is an important problem, since the condition of Attica after the war, and the rate of recovery (assuming recovery occurred) must be taken into consideration in assessing the problems faced by the Athenians in the fourth century. Clearly, the long-term effects of the damage wrought during the war have often been overestimated. In recent years many scholars have rejected the old argument that in the fourth century most Attic land was concentrated in the hands of capitalistic speculators who bought out ruined farmers and replaced grain with cash crops.9 Hanson's discussion of the limited damage done during the war helps to explain why there need not have been any major postwar change in the organization of the countryside.

Hanson's eagerness to demonstrate lack of long-term damage may have led him on occasion to minimize the
short-term damage done by the war, however. Hanson’s argument (135) that, since the Boeotians took wood from Attic farms (Hell. Oxy. 12.5), removable farmhouse woodwork must have been replaced after 425 and not subsequently reevacuated, and hence that the farmers did not fear the Decelea garrison, is an example. During the Decelean War the Boeotians sent rooftiles taken from Athenian farms back to Boeotia. As Hanson points out (92) this was an exceptional activity, since rooftiles were cheap and heavy. This being the case, there is no need to assume that the wood taken in the Decelean War consisted of the easily removed parts (e.g. doors) that had been evacuated in the face of the first invasion. Rather, we may guess that the Boeotians took the heavy structural timbers: framing members, doorposts, and columns. Although Hanson has quite rightly shown that Thucydides’ comments on “total devastation” during the Archidamian War are overdrawn, one need not dismiss Thucydides’ and the Oxyrhynchus Historian’s statements on the comparatively large amount of damage done during the Decelean War, as long as one keeps in mind that the damage to agricultural areas was not permanent.

The map on page 138 must be used with care. It indicates general areas for which there is literary evidence of some agricultural activity during or shortly after the Decelean War. Thus it simultaneously represents lack of effective prevention of farming and lack of long-term damage to agriculture. The map gives an impressionistic idea of the limits of damage done by agricultural devastation, and should be consulted accordingly.10

In sum, this book should become a standard in the field and will be consulted by all serious students of classical Greek warfare. It makes a major contribution to our understanding of Greek agriculture. The main thesis is important to anyone concerned with postwar Greek economies. Furthermore, Hanson’s vigorous, engaging and straightforward style makes his book a pleasure to read.

Montana State University Josiah Ober
NOTES


10. The map scale, printed as 1:50,000, is incorrect. The scale is actually about 1:500,000.
OHIO CLASSICAL CONFERENCE
CALL FOR PAPERS

The annual meeting of the Ohio Classical Conference will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 30-November 1, 1986. Proposals for papers are invited from teachers of Classics at the college, university, secondary and elementary school level. Proposals may be submitted on all aspects and authors of Classical Antiquity. Specific sessions of the Conference will be devoted to the following areas of inquiry: (1) Cicero and Caesar (2) Latin Pedagogy at all levels (3) The Classical Influence of the American Constitution (4) Classical Art and Archaeology (5) Classical Literature and Myth. Suggestions for panels, colloquia or symposia are warmly encouraged. Abstracts of 300-400 words should be sent to:

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Please submit abstracts (or proposals for panels on special topics) as soon as possible, but no later than May 15th, 1986.