

# Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks

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## CHAPTER SIX

### *Socrates in Combat: Trauma and Resilience in Plato's Political Theory*

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Socrates was a combat soldier during the Peloponnesian War. This aspect of his biography is rarely placed at the center of an account of the enduring interest of the life of this celebrated philosopher. When it is the effect is striking. This is especially clear in the interpretation of Socrates by the Italian master of neoclassical sculpture Antonio Canova. In a series of four large bas-reliefs completed between 1789 and 1796 and now in the collection of the *Museo Canoviano* in Passagno, Canova addresses Socrates' trial and death.<sup>1</sup> In the first panel he depicts Socrates raising his arm and addressing the jurors while Meletus and Anytus, the historical accusers, hover in the background. Standing by Socrates is the boundary-crossing god Hermes ready to see him through dangerous circumstances and to the underworld (visually modeled on Alcibiades wearing a helmet<sup>2</sup>). The next three panels continue the story and bring out its psychological complexity. Canova shows us Socrates sending his family away and draws attention to his parting from his eldest child. The scene suggests Socrates' capacity for tenderness. It also presents Socrates' seated philosophical friends composed and unshaken. Following that Canova displays Socrates' calm and constancy under extreme stress. In this scene Socrates holds the cup of hemlock nearly to his lips with his left hand and, recalling the composition of the first relief, gestures upward with his right arm as he speaks to his friends. His philosophical partners now appear upset (they weep and hang their heads at the prospect of his imminent death). In the last relief of this series Socrates lies dead with friends in varying states of composure gathered around. At the center we see Crito leaning over to close Socrates' eyes.

The group is brilliantly conceived and executed yet Canova apparently believed it failed to capture fully the meaning of this figure. Within the year, and on the occasion of his election to the *Accademia di San Luca* in 1797, Canova added a fifth relief to the set. This extraordinary piece shows Socrates standing by a wounded Alcibiades during a hoplite engagement at

Potidaea 33 years before his trial (Figure 6.1). There is nothing hesitant about Canova's composition. Socrates is an uncompromising warrior. His muscular arms and legs are fully extended. He has a strong grip on his shield and projects his chin forward. Canova places both the wounded Alcibiades and the viewer of this work of art behind the protection of Socrates' shield. He is a powerful defender, ready to strike. The positioning of Socrates features "dynamic diagonals" modeled on ancient battle reliefs and expresses martial prowess.<sup>3</sup> The depiction of Alcibiades wounded is also defiant. Though an arrow is fixed in his thigh and his helmet and sword lie on the ground, he sports a fierce gaze and retains his shield. Furthermore, the arrangement of Socrates and Alcibiades as a pair conveys the camaraderie and fortitude of these men. Alcibiades' left leg nearly obscures our view of Socrates' left leg, suggesting their cooperation. Three sides of a triangle are made by Socrates' arm, Socrates' sword, and then the combination of the head and shield of Alcibiades; another triangle is formed by Socrates' extended right leg, Alcibiades' right arm, and Alcibiades' sword on the ground. The fully extended legs of Socrates and Alcibiades also combine with the ground to form a stable triangle (while their opponent has a narrow stance and his right leg bows to form a compromised triangle one side of which is formed by a dead soldier).<sup>4</sup>

Canova's portrait of Socrates, so unfamiliar to us today for its inclusion of a vigorous combat soldier in action, is exquisitely faithful to Plato's account of Socrates' distinctive excellence. In this chapter, I assemble the elements

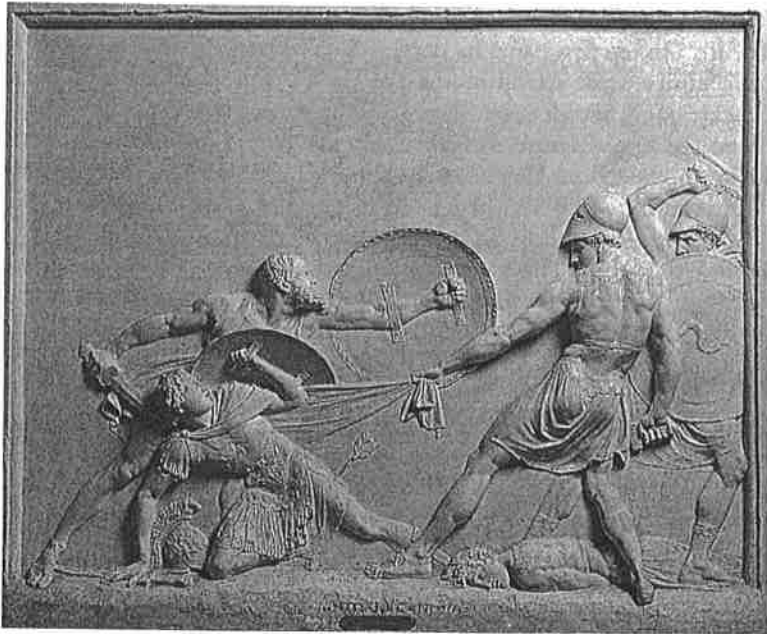


Figure 6.1 Socrates saving Alcibiades at Potidaea. Image courtesy of Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome.

of Plato's account of Socrates' military service at Potidaea and elsewhere, develop that portrait in light of evidence from Thucydides' account of these campaigns in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and consider the place of Socrates' conduct as a soldier in Plato's understanding of this philosopher's peculiar excellence. I propose, in particular, that Plato identifies Socrates' endurance of calamitous war experiences that could produce what today we call "war trauma" (with its attendant debilitating psychological symptoms) as constitutive of his excellence. Plato highlights Socrates' ability to remain himself under shifting and trying conditions, especially when moving between combat and home. Overall, Plato treats the conduct of Socrates in his capacity as a soldier as a visible sign of his achievement of an uncommon measure of "psychological health." This aspect of the portrait of Socrates engages myth (chiefly the figure of Ajax but also Achilles and Odysseus) and, in so doing, creates an archetype of resilience and "enlarges the significance of the philosopher's life."<sup>5</sup> I conclude by showing that the psychologically rich theory of justice elaborated in the *Republic* mobilizes the vantage point of a combat veteran.

#### **Preliminary Methodological Considerations: The Historical vs. Literary Socrates and the Suitability of the Term "Veteran"**

This essay examines Plato's portrait of Socrates the soldier on campaign, in combat and upon return home. I will not examine the evidence for Plato's own service.<sup>6</sup> Nor will I address the "historical Socrates" in relation to Plato's Socrates. All our evidence for Socrates' military service appears in Plato's dialogues. This is not a reason to question the veracity of its basic elements. I am satisfied that the fact of his service would have been impossible for Plato to fabricate and still maintain a credible portrait. In addition, the chronology assumed in Plato fits Thucydides' account of the relevant battles and scholarship does not cast doubt on the fact of his service. In order to address Plato's portrait of his military service in the least speculative way possible, I will restrict myself to the references in the dialogues to Socrates' own military experiences. I will not try to account for things such as how Socrates might have acquired his hoplite panoply.<sup>7</sup>

I am not examining a literary representation of an idealized soldier for its own sake. The figure of Socrates has exercised moral imaginations across the globe for centuries. In this essay I want to call attention to the very rarely noted fact that Plato places a capacity to endure with moderation harrowing military experiences and an array of linked psychological stresses at the very center of his account of what it means to struggle to sustain a "just soul." I also want to call attention to the fact that Plato's political theory draws on the inner life of a warrior to develop a portrait of Socratic practice. Moreover, Plato assumes that an adequate understanding of "justice in the city" must address the likelihood that, however usual and honorable, military service can expose a person to strains that can devolve into disabling

distress and that a just society must recognize this, take steps to prevent and mitigate its occurrence, equip its members and communities to bear up under the stress, and craft civic practices that promote healing from any injurious consequences.

I will also use the term “veteran” with care in order to avoid suggesting a false parallel between ancient Athens and today. War was a permanent condition of life in the ancient city during Socrates’ lifetime.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, “the Athenians perceived themselves as tough, courageous and bellicose, and were proud of it: military virtue was taken seriously by the population at large.”<sup>9</sup> All able-bodied citizen men served episodically, regularly moving between campaigns, combat and home throughout their adult lives, or had to evade service one way or another.<sup>10</sup> It might seem to make sense to speak of Athenians who survived a particular campaign as “veterans” of that specific campaign (and notable for it), but it was not the way they referred to themselves. On the other hand, our sources attest to exceptional groups of fallen warriors sometimes gaining a laudable intermediary group identity (e.g., *Marathonomachoi* and *Plataiomachoi*<sup>11</sup>). It seems unlikely that the more general appellation, “veteran,” that we use today to refer to someone formerly in the armed forces and now living as a civilian sensibly describes a condition of Athenian life. This is especially true as veterans today make up an ever-smaller slice of our population and the gap between soldiers and society has widened.<sup>12</sup> For the Athenians, in contrast, “there was no separation between civilian and soldier.”<sup>13</sup>

#### **“War Trauma” Can Provide a Frame of Reference for Examination of Plato’s Portrait of Socrates**

“War trauma” refers to catastrophic war experiences that can produce severe, persistent, and disabling anxiety commonly known as “posttraumatic stress disorder” (PTSD). The war experiences include exposure to extreme violence, gruesome physical injuries and bloodshed, intense suffering, brutality, extreme physical strain, and deprivations (hunger, filth), as well as prolonged separations from family and friends. In addition to these difficult experiences, clinicians today urge that grievous *moral* wounds must be added to this list of potentially upending experiences. Indeed, they emphasize that moral injuries often cause the most undermining and persistent symptoms. Moral injuries would include betrayal (e.g., incompetent or abusive commanding officers, disloyalty of a comrade, malfunctioning of a weapon, problems recovering bodies, and false representation of the cause for which warriors rally and kill), profound grief (especially the loss of someone close), terrible moral luck (a friendly fire episode, close call that kills a nearby comrade or being the proximate cause of collateral damage), and exposure to the suffering of civilians. The disabling symptoms range from consuming guilt, depression, social isolation and suicidal feelings, the persistence into civilian life of adaptations necessary to survive battle (e.g., hyper-vigilance), reduced

mental function (lack of confidence in one’s judgment and failing memory), addictive behaviors, and loss of one’s capacity for social trust (and thus ability to sustain relationships), to outbursts of rage and episodes of going berserk. One prominent psychiatrist summarizes the symptoms of combat trauma worsened by moral injuries this way: “good character comes undone.”<sup>14</sup>

War-related posttraumatic stress is today a formal diagnosis recognized by the medical establishment and veterans’ affairs professionals. This is a recent development. It has long been known that war often subjects soldiers (and civilians) to traumatic experiences that can wreak havoc on their psyches as well as scar or destroy their bodies. We can find examples in antiquity and can point to accounts of “exhaustion” and “soldier’s heart” among American Civil War soldiers as well as “shell shock” and “battle fatigue” in the World Wars.<sup>15</sup> But it was clinicians working with veterans of more recent conflicts, especially the Vietnam War, who identified a formal symptomatology.<sup>16</sup> We should observe, of course, that dreadful war experiences such as those detailed above do not necessarily produce trauma and debilitating posttraumatic stress. Some servicemen and women do come through it stable and capable. Precisely how and why they are so able when others suffer grievously is the subject of considerable study. What variables—personal and situational—can account for this? How is it possible to effectively and swiftly treat incipient and persistent posttraumatic stress? Can military practices and policies help protect soldiers from developing it?<sup>17</sup> How does the prevalence of trauma among veterans impact the public expression of morally justifiable outrage and political critique? These are, of course, urgent questions today as we recognize the high incidence of combat-related trauma among veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the heartrending consequences of such injuries for the individual soldiers, their loved ones, and their communities. Using the conceptual framework I refer to as war trauma to approach Plato, I do *not* mean to suggest that this ancient philosopher anticipated the modern psychiatric diagnosis. Instead, I mean to keep contemporary understandings of war trauma and posttraumatic stress front and center so as to alert us to features of Plato’s depiction of Socrates’ experiences on deployment, in battle, and upon return to Athens that have gone largely unnoticed for some time, thus enabling the recovery of a dimension of his work that resonates in important ways today. We do not need to assume that Greek culture constructed something akin to a modern medical diagnosis to find something familiar in its literature’s attention to the physically and emotionally demanding aspects of military service and the sometimes debilitating psychological effects this can have on good people.

#### **Plato Portrays Socrates Facing Severe Physical and Psychological Strains Common in War, Including Catastrophic Ordeals**

Alcibiades’ eyewitness account of Socrates on deployment to Potidaea and Delium in his encomium to him in the *Symposium* makes up the bulk of

Plato's explicit account of Socrates' behavior on campaign and in battle (219e–221d). Plato offers only brief supplements in other dialogues. At *Charmides* 153a–154b, the opening of that dialogue, we find Socrates in the act of arriving home from the Potidaean expedition. At *Charmides* 156d Socrates mentions having encountered foreign learning while on campaign "there" (Potidaea). At *Laches* 181b Socrates' behavior during the retreat at Delium is recounted by Laches, a general present on that campaign. At *Apology* 28e Socrates proudly reminds the jury that he served in the Athenian military on three campaigns, Potidaea, Amphipolis, and Delium. And at *Crito* 52b Socrates (impersonating the *Laws*) recalls that he has never left the city except with the army on campaign.

The basic outline of Socrates' military service drawn in these sources can be stated simply. He was an Athenian hoplite during three significant campaigns of the Peloponnesian War: the extended siege of Potidaea on the distant isthmus of Chalcidice in northern Greece which started when he was in his mid-30s (in 432), the strategic attack on Delium in very nearby Boeotia about six years later (in 424), and the expedition north again to defend Amphipolis just two years after that (in 423/2). All three were disasters for the Athenians. The campaign to Potidaea was an enormous drain on resources and the Athenian forces suffered greatly—all for uncertain military gains. Delium was an utter defeat on the battlefield for Athenian hoplites with a large number of fatalities. Amphipolis was lost owing to a tactical blunder. But Socrates' own personal behavior on campaign was conspicuously exemplary. In particular, at both Potidaea and Delium he remained steadfast at his post, holding his ground and bravely leading vulnerable—and also notable—fellow citizens (a young Alcibiades at Potidaea and General Laches at Delium) through the bloody ordeal of close hoplite combat and the chaos of retreat in the midst of collapsing Athenian lines and fleeing, panicky troops.

Looking at these specific passages in Plato more closely, we find more details of the combat experiences Socrates lived through. On the expedition north to Potidaea the entire force confronted hardships that included serious deprivations (they were cut off from their supplies and suffered an acute lack of food), prolonged periods of severe discomfort (including long periods of intense cold), and the stress of a protracted deployment (*Symposium* 220a–b). The expedition to and home from Potidaea included especially fierce battles in which many personal friends of Socrates perished though none are specifically named (*Charmides* 153b). Socrates witnessed his close companion Alcibiades sustain a bad wound. He refused to leave Alcibiades' side and rescued him from the battlefield, managing not only to extricate Alcibiades but his armor as well (*Symposium* 220e). In addition, Plato reports details that allow us to infer that twice Socrates suffered moral insults by his own compatriots while on the Potidaean campaign. First, fellow soldiers mocked Socrates' endurance of hardships (especially the cold) thinking it an affront to them (*Symposium* 220d). Second, the commanders deliberately ignored Socrates' act of valor in rescuing Alcibiades. Instead, they gave the

decoration to the one rescued, the ward of Pericles and well-connected young beauty, Alcibiades. In so doing they betrayed that their foremost concern was to curry favor with those who shared Alcibiades' social status, not fairly to recognize battlefield acts of valor (*Symposium* 220e). Furthermore, in the *Charmides* Socrates says that while on the Potidaean campaign a Thracian physician prompted him to question usual Athenian practices of healing (156d–157a). Turning to the account of Delium in the *Symposium* and *Laches*, we learn that Socrates' war experiences included additional challenges. On foot in hoplite armor he was caught in the middle of a lethal and disgracefully panicky Athenian retreat. Plato has the former general Laches report in his own voice that Socrates got him through the melee (*Laches* 181b). Plato also has Alcibiades report having witnessed Socrates' refusal to leave Laches' side during this horrible retreat (*Symposium* 220e–221a). Regarding Amphipolis, Plato places him there but provides no particulars (*Apology* 28e).

To fill out this picture we can consider what we might reasonably assume Plato's readers to have known about these campaigns. Looking at the evidence from Plato in the context of depictions of these specific campaigns in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* can give us some idea.<sup>18</sup> The Athenian action against the rebellious tribute-paying ally Potidaea is among the conflicts that initiate the Peloponnesian War. The Athenians first fight a fierce battle (during which Callias, one of the four Athenian generals on site, perishes) and the Potidaeans retreat behind their walls. The Athenians lay siege. And so Socrates likely had to participate not only in hoplite combat but also in the backbreaking work of building fortifications for a siege.<sup>19</sup> The Potidaeans held out for three years and so Socrates was likely away from home and living in severe conditions, possibly without leave, for a protracted length of time.<sup>20</sup> Among the things he had to endure was an outbreak of plague among the troops besieging Potidaea (2.58). And as if all this was not enough, we must also recall that Thucydides mentions that the Potidaeans became so desperate for food that they resorted to cannibalism (2.70.1). Seeing this, and surviving on barely adequate rations themselves, the Athenians finally agreed to terms of capitulation. On the way home, the forces fought a few smaller engagements.

Thucydides' accounts of the Athenians' debacles at Delium and Amphipolis provide more reason to believe that Plato's readers understood that Socrates' service would have surely exposed him to harrowing experiences. Delium was the first full-scale and certainly the bloodiest hoplite battle of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>21</sup> In this case the Athenians aggressively sought a stronghold in the heart of hostile Boeotia, just a day's march from central Athens, by fortifying the sanctuary of Apollo at Delium. Their tactical errors, humiliations, and gruesome suffering made this campaign infamous. Delium was the "only pitched battle of the Peloponnesian War fought in close proximity to Athens." Moreover, the "disaster of this Athenian 'home guard' must have quickly taken on mythic proportions and been recounted constantly throughout Athens."<sup>22</sup> Four details reported by Thucydides stand

out. First, there was a “friendly fire” episode. In the midst of a hoplite battle in which the Athenians had gained a temporary upper hand, Thucydides reports, “some of the Athenians fell into confusion in surrounding the enemy and mistook and so killed each other”<sup>23</sup> (4.96.3). In the confusion they likely speared and hacked away and dozens of men “must have been impaled by their own brothers, fathers, friends.”<sup>24</sup> Plato acknowledges that Socrates was caught right in the middle of this; Alcibiades says at Delium Socrates was remarkable for the way he was “looking out for friendly and enemy troops” (*Symposium* 221b)<sup>25</sup>. Second, Thucydides indicates that the disastrous retreat at Delium was initiated by Athenian errors, not Boeotian superior strength. Athenian forces were far larger but they were routed and fled in a chaotic fashion. Specifically, in the confusion of the friendly fire episode, Thucydides tells us that a smart tactical move on the part of the Theban General Pagondas “struck panic into the victorious wing of the Athenians ... [and that] the whole Athenian army took to flight” (4.96.6), some to the ships and some over land. Third, Athenian losses remained on the battleground for 17 days. Because Athenians had violated a sanctuary by making it into a garrison and some Athenian troops had retreated into that space and therefore now still remained in Boeotian territory, the Boeotians refused to allow the Athenians to collect their dead until they abandoned the fortified temple (4.97.1–100.5). In effect, they held Athenian corpses hostage. The stalemate ended only after the Boeotians used a novel weapon on the holed-up Athenians in the offending garrison. This new weapon is the fourth special horror associated with Delium by Thucydides (4.100.1–5). The Thebans used a “flame-blowing contraption”<sup>26</sup> that allowed the enemy to set the wooden walls of the garrison ablaze from a relatively safe distance, incinerating some, driving out the rest, and striking terror in all.<sup>27</sup> After this, the Boeotians let the Athenians recover their dead, including the decomposing corpses from the earlier engagement. Thucydides reports that, at the end of the day, at Delium “not quite five hundred Boeotians fell in the battle, and nearly one thousand Athenians, including Hippocrates the general” (4.101.1–2). And so we can observe that Delium adds to Socrates’ war experiences a grisly friendly fire episode, the sight of the rotting corpses of comrades, the deployment by the enemy of a fearsome new weapons technology, the combat death of another commanding general, and another episode of hand-to-hand combat in the middle of a disreputable retreat.

Soon after Delium, Socrates joined an Athenian expedition north to Amphipolis under the command of Cleon. Thucydides’ account of that campaign mentions three things of importance in the current context. First, the Athenian forces were suspicious of Cleon’s command skills and personal courage from the start and lost whatever small measure of confidence they might have had as the engagement progressed (5.7.2, 5.10.9). Second, this campaign ended not only in a decisive defeat of the Athenians but also in another full-blown rout and panic-stricken flight of Athenian forces (5.10.6) and slain commander. Thucydides’ account of the troops’ response to Cleon’s position during the battle suggests a near case of what we might

call “passive fragging” as they refrain from coming to his aid (5.10.9). Third, this is the expedition in which Thucydides (the historian) served as a general. He was in command of troops charged with reinforcing the Athenians on campaign to Amphipolis. He failed to get his forces there in time to make a difference. Judged incompetent by the Athenians, he was sentenced to a 20-year exile as punishment (5.26.5). And so, Amphipolis added to Socrates’ war experiences moral injuries associated with service under the command of a known incompetent and failure to receive reinforcements due to poor leadership.

From the details Plato offers, read in historical context drawn from Thucydides, we can conclude that while Socrates did not himself sustain a bodily injury, his military service indeed exposed him to a whole array of war experiences that would place a person at significant risk of sustaining ruinous psychological wounds.<sup>28</sup>

#### Socrates Displays Uncommon “Resilience” on Deployment, in Combat and When Adjusting to Being Home

The physical affectations of the “historical Socrates” are well known from various sources—walking with a particular swagger, going barefoot, tolerating meager and poor food, wearing a single threadbare cloak in both winter and summer, abiding the privations of near poverty, having extraordinary powers of concentration as well as measure of commitment to philosophical examination that sometimes made him neglect ordinary things and thereby look silly. The sources attest to his display of these “mannerisms” both on the battlefield and in the streets of Athens.<sup>29</sup> Commentators ordinarily view the personal quirks as part of Socrates’ odd (and irritating) asceticism. But their persistence in war and peacetime highlights an additional point: despite repeated exposure to the dreadful stresses of war, Socrates’ character does not come undone. The continuance of his idiosyncrasies into combat zones and their prominent display at the very moment of his return home make this especially clear. This is apparent in Alcibiades’ anecdotes about serving with Socrates at Potidaea and Delium recounted in his speech in the *Symposium*, the dramatic setting of the *Charmides* in which the reader encounters Socrates at the gymnasium only hours after having returned from Potidaea, and in Socrates’ view of his own military service expressed in the *Apology*.

Alcibiades’ account in the *Symposium* of what it was like to serve with Socrates on military expeditions immediately follows his account of Socrates’ ability to resist all his amorous advances over the years. Frustrated, Alcibiades blurts out that his best efforts to “capture” Socrates have failed. Socrates is able to resist all inducements. Alcibiades laments that he cannot even count on offers of money to tempt Socrates because such things have always “meant much less to him than enemy weapons ever meant to Ajax” (219e). Although it is not entirely clear from this fluid translation of the sense of

the passage, Alcibiades' comment refers to Ajax's extraordinary shield and its role in his ability to beat back enemy spears and swords.<sup>30</sup> When Alcibiades recalls Socrates' own military prowess, the reference to Ajax frames his story. In order to track the extent of the parallel, as Alcibiades invites listeners (and Plato's readers) to do, let me recall key details of the story of this Homeric hero.

Ajax is huge physically, very agile, swift, strong, and courageous. He fought in tandem with his bow-wielding brother Teucer, protecting him with the cover of an enormous shield. Moreover, though Ajax kills many, the *Iliad* celebrates Ajax's excellence at defensive maneuvers. He personally fights Hector but nightfall forces their duel to conclude before a victory is won. The exchange of gifts that follows (Ajax receives Hector's sword) is perhaps the strongest expression in Homer of the view that military ability does not require contempt for the enemy.<sup>31</sup> Overall, he obeys commanders and never sustains a physical wound at Troy. But Ajax does experience what we might call trauma exacerbated by moral injury. In the aftermath of Achilles' death, the commanders fail to honor Ajax's heroic actions appropriately by presenting him with Achilles' armor. Instead, Agamemnon requires Ajax to compete with Odysseus for the armor and sets up a contest the design of which—a contest of speeches—wholly favors honey-tongued Odysseus. In the Sophoclean tragedy *Ajax*, we get an account of the debilitating effects the trauma of Achilles' death, compounded by the moral injury of the unfair contest, has on this fine warrior. In this play, this exceptional soldier, the bulwark of the Achaeans, appears in agonizing psychological pain. Broken, Ajax becomes a berserker; in a fit of madness brought on by the moral injury of having been denied the armor outright and instead been made to suffer a humiliating slight at the hands of his own commander, he goes into a violent rage against his own compatriots. Only divine trickery saves him from massacring many of his own comrades (and fragging his commanders). Believing he is killing fellow Greeks, Ajax wildly slaughters livestock. When he regains his senses, his feelings of shame and fear only intensify and he descends into suicidal despair; he uses Hector's gift to end his own life. The story of his madness was well known in Plato's time. It not only was recounted in Sophocles' play but was part of the *Little Iliad*, a now lost part of the epic cycle that was as familiar at the time as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer.<sup>32</sup>

As we imagine ourselves listening to Alcibiades tell stories about Socrates' behavior on lengthy deployments and in battle, the comparison with Ajax can order our thoughts. Like Ajax, in battle Socrates is a bulwark. He fiercely protects his comrades in arms (particularly Alcibiades whom Socrates treats, despite his advances, "like a brother"<sup>33</sup>—language that recalls Teucer), stays calm and determined in the heat of battle, does not himself sustain a physical wound, and obeys commanders. And, like Ajax (though on a vastly smaller scale than that of the Homeric hero), he is dishonored by an unjust decision by commanders (the Athenian commanders at Potidaea award the prize to Alcibiades/Agamemnon awards the armor of Achilles to Odysseus). But,

while Ajax experiences severe psychological pain, rage, shame, and suicidal despair,<sup>34</sup> Socrates appears buoyant in the aftermath of battle (and remain so when he faces trial, imprisonment, and execution by his fellow citizens).

All of Alcibiades' anecdotes regarding Socrates at war stress continuities between home and war zones and his exceptional personal endurance (*καρτερίαν Symposium* 219d7). For example, he explicitly remarks on continuities between Socrates' behavior at war and back at home. He starts by saying that their odd erotic relationship predated their service together and continued on deployment: "All this had already occurred when Athens invaded Potidaea, where we served together and shared the same mess" (219e).<sup>35</sup> Alcibiades also elaborates on Socrates' attitude toward food. When they were cut off from their supplies at Potidaea, Alcibiades says of Socrates, "no one else stood up to hunger as well as he did" (*καρτερεῖν* 220a1). This reminds him of Socrates' attitude toward wine back at home; though he didn't much want to drink, when he had to, he could hold his liquor (220a). Turning to more general conditions, Alcibiades reports that Socrates not only endured the extreme cold at Potidaea (*καρτερήσεις* 220a6) but also did so in his usual bare feet and light cloak. He invokes the endurance of Odysseus to applaud Socrates' odd and marvelous ability to conduct philosophy while on campaign (calling him *καρτερός ἀνὴρ* at 220c2 explicitly citing *Odyssey* IV.242). Alcibiades says that one warm day in Potidaea Socrates started thinking about a problem, and stood outside in the same spot, lost in thought, for a full 24 hours straight. After a few hours his comrades came out to watch him (and mock him), even taking their bedding outside to get a good view of the spectacle (220c).<sup>36</sup> This did not deter him any more than mockery interfered with his philosophical work at home. In addition, Alcibiades tells us that Socrates was wholly untroubled at having been passed over for a deserved prize for bravery in the battle of Potidaea when he rescued the young Alcibiades and his shield. At war, like at home, Socrates lacked interest in conventional honors (220e) and bore personal slights lightly.<sup>37</sup>

The last anecdote Alcibiades tells concerns Socrates' behavior during the retreat at Delium and again stresses healthy continuities between home and war. Alcibiades calls Socrates' constancy in this setting "a spectacle worth seeing" (220e9<sup>38</sup>), implying a comparison to dramatic performances and possibly recalling the praise of celebrated warriors by elegiac poets such as Simonides.<sup>39</sup> Alcibiades says that Socrates moved about in the midst of the battle "exactly as he does around town" and then, in an effort to drive home the substantive point, elaborates by openly quoting from Aristophanes' characterization of Socrates' in the *Clouds* saying that even during the retreat at Delium "you strut around like a grand gander [and] roll your eyes" (*Symposium* 221b citing *Clouds* 362<sup>40</sup>).

Plato depicts Alcibiades closing his discussion of Socrates in war by turning once again to myth. There is a parallel for everyone, Alcibiades comments. We might understand Achilles by referring to Brasidas or compare Pericles and Nestor or Antenor (221c). But it is possible, he submits, that

Socrates is so out of the ordinary that “search as you might, you’ll never find anyone else, alive or dead, who’s even remotely like him” (221d). And so Alcibiades himself suggests that his earlier reference to Ajax is most telling not for the ways in which Socrates is like Ajax, though these are revealing, but instead for the single most dramatic way in which the parallel breaks down and Socrates outshines this Homeric hero. Alcibiades’ account of Socrates at war is playful. He delivers it in an inebriated state. And it is part of a larger story of Socrates’ meaningful oddity. It is also a key element of how Plato mythologizes Socrates. Socrates offers a psychologically rich conception of warrior excellence that lauds resilience in the face of catastrophic combat experiences.<sup>41</sup>

The *Charmides* extends Plato’s account of Socrates’ resilience to his reintegration into life in Athens. The dramatic setting of the *Charmides* represents Socrates coming home after the lengthy deployment to Potidaea (153a–154b). The picture of Socrates home from war is one of easy re-entry and return to old pleasures. Socrates narrates this dialogue himself and so in his own voice we learn that he arrived home from the army at Potidaea only last night, has been away for a long period, and that only a short time ago had been in a significant battle (153b7). Without hesitation he adds, “After such a long absence I sought out my accustomed haunts [the palaestra where the youth congregate] with special pleasure.” And he specifically denies feeling ill at ease in any way. As if to stress Socrates’ oddity in this regard, he uses the language of mental instability to describe the unrestrained enthusiasm with which young men confined to the home-front, especially his young friend Chaerophon, greet him and pelt him with inquiries (μανικός 153b3). At first, Socrates answers Chaerophon’s questions with very short, minimally informative lines. The tone and content of Socrates’ responses are a bit strange given his self-described good mood. His initial comments very much resemble the cautious, terse way of speaking that clinical psychologists and contemporary veterans report is indeed characteristic of the way soldiers only recently back from a war-zone typically speak about their war experiences, especially their combat experiences.<sup>42</sup>

*Chaerophon:* How did you survive the battle?

*Socrates:* Exactly as you see me.

*Chaerophon:* The way we heard it here the fighting was very heavy and many of our friends were killed.

*Socrates:* The report is accurate.

*Chaerophon:* Were you actually in the battle?

*Socrates:* I was there.

Chaerophon urges Socrates to sit and give a full account of the battle. Socrates very quickly adjusts to more extensive talking. Socrates says he took a seat, “proceeded to relate the news in answer to whatever questions anyone asked, and they asked plenty of different ones.” “When they had had enough of these things,” he continues, “I, in my turn, began to question

them with respect to affairs at home, about the present state of philosophy and about the young men, whether there were any who had become distinguished for wisdom or beauty or both” (153d). Answering all the questions about the recent battle, about injured and dead friends, and about conditions on the long deployment likely took up some time. Plato does not depict that conversation. Plato shows us a homecoming in which Socrates slips back into his usual life at Athens with little fuss or anxiety on his part. Plato’s literary choices highlight Socrates’ lack of hesitation about relating his war experiences.<sup>43</sup> His literary choices also show that Plato expected his readers to be familiar with returning soldiers indeed having difficulties traversing these spheres of life. He highlights the interlocutors’ wonder at Socrates’ composure and willingness to entertain so many questions. The opening of the *Charmides* is therefore striking in ways unappreciated in the scholarship. It stresses the ease with which Socrates resumes his usual practice of philosophical examination after two distinct kinds of stresses: experiencing combat and recollecting those experiences. The rest of the dialogue suggests how he does it. The substantive philosophical topic of the *Charmides* is the definition of “self-control” (σωφροσύνη), a virtue of considerable practical concern to a returning warrior because it is the virtue that equips an individual to resist temptations to act violently in pursuit of desires. Possessing it, Socrates models how a returning soldier can mentally work to “turn off” combat-honed habits of mind and behavior and, once again, think, argue, and act in ways appropriate to life in the city. What does Socrates do? He talks, forms his memories of the war into narratives, retells stories of combat to others who were not there, engages in dialogic examinations of moral questions—all therapeutically valuable and healing act according to today’s clinical studies.<sup>44</sup>

Attending to the fact that Plato sets the discussion of self-control in the context of a warrior’s homecoming also makes some sense of two other puzzling aspects of the *Charmides*: the account of Charmides’ headache at the start of the text and the scheming conduct of Charmides and Critias that concludes the text. Charmides’ headache comes up in this way. After Socrates completes his account of the Potidaean campaign, he inquires into what’s been happening in his absence. He turns up that the most beautiful youth of the new generation, Charmides, is now of an age to undertake discussion and of course wishes to see him. Charmides’ guardian, Critias, calls him to Socrates’ side in a tricky way. Critias knows Charmides has been suffering from headaches and suggests Socrates is in possession of a cure (φάρμακον 155b2, c10, e8). When Charmides appears, Socrates is overcome by the sight of him (and by a glimpse inside his cloak, 155d) but recovers his wits quickly in response to Charmides’ interest in his cure. Addressing Charmides, he stresses that the treatment he has to offer does not attend to the ailing body part in isolation but, instead, is in connection with the whole body, and also with the soul. Charmides agrees to try this strategy and, relieved, Socrates “regains his courage” (156d1) and begins to describe some healing practices he learned from a Thracian physician when

he was away on campaign. In particular, he learned that treatment of the soul is by means of “charms,” that is, by fine *words* that engender self-control (157a).<sup>45</sup> In this way Socrates directs Charmides’ attention to the important issue of how *discussion* can support the development of self-control and can function as a remedy for ills (157d). Socrates takes self-control and its practical benefits seriously. But he also belittles precious Charmides’ morning headaches. After all, Socrates is just back from war and has seen wounds and death, and he has just recounted at length stories of those horrors for Chaerophon and his friends. Socrates knows that there are kinds of “headaches” that actually need “curing” by means of hearing and telling stories and cultivating self-control. The aporetic ending of this dialogue (i.e., its failure to convince the interlocutors) is thus foreboding and realistic. At the close of the dialogue, Socrates worries that his healing charms have not worked on Charmides (and Critias) and that these two have not developed self-control or even a taste for it (175e). Charmides and Critias suggest they will keep at it (176b–c). But the dialogue does not end there. Instead, tacked on to the end is a seemingly peculiar depiction of Critias and Charmides scheming. Critias issues orders to Charmides, plots with him about secret matters, expresses a lack of interest in taking any counsel at all, and says he shall willingly embrace force to realize his plans (176c–d). It is not at all clear what they are doing. But, once we recall that the Plato and his readers knew that the historical analogs of the two characters depicted here were in reality leading figures in the conspiratorial and tyrannical rule of the Thirty at Athens at the close of the Peloponnesian War, an important layer of meaning in the final scene of the *Charmides* becomes clear. The historical Charmides (only a boy at the time of the dramatic setting of Plato’s account of this conversation) was one of the Ten appointed by the Thirty to govern Piraeus. Critias was one of the Thirty. The closing scene of the *Charmides* asks readers to view the brutal regime of the Thirty in light of an utter failure of self-control. Perhaps we can even say that the *Charmides* proposes that the Thirty represents a moment in Athenian history when attitudes and behaviors appropriate to a warrior facing an enemy combatant marched unchecked into domestic politics.

Plato’s account of Socrates’ speech to the jurors at his trial in the *Apology* also mobilizes his war experiences to illustrate psychological health and its political consequences. In his speech, Socrates mentions his service at Potidaea, Amphipolis, and Delium seemingly in passing (28e).<sup>46</sup> His reference to his service might even be mistaken for a simple rhetorical move on Socrates’ part, that is, a contrivance designed to remind the jurors that he is a commendable veteran and deserves their compassion. After all, he seems to do something similar when he awkwardly engineers recollection of his position as head of a household with small children a little later in the speech (34d). Or the reference might appear a clear, if clumsy, effort to validate philosophy by associating it with a manly, high-status civic activity. But Socrates does not just briefly refer to his service in this *Apology* passage (28b–e).<sup>47</sup> The reference functions to weave together his life-long practice

of philosophy and his repeat performances in battle into a single, integrated life-story. The references to his military service assert that he was not one man at war and another at home.<sup>48</sup>

Socrates in the *Apology* refers to his military service in the course of his response to what he takes to be a commonplace objection to his devotion to philosophy: it is a shameful activity that places one at risk of death (leaves one vulnerable to prosecution and either unable or unwilling to defend oneself in court). Socrates imagines being asked, “Aren’t you ashamed to have engaged in the sort of occupation that has now put you at risk of death?” (28b). He responds by invoking the praiseworthy example of Achilles’ decision to avenge the death of Patroclus in full awareness of the fact that his own death is fated to follow that of Hector. Socrates asks, “Do you really suppose Achilles gave a thought to danger or death?” when he set out to kill Hector (28d)? Socrates refers to a moral code appropriate to a war zone to explain his disposition as a citizen living in Athens. Socrates implicitly denies that different principles should apply to what is just in these two spheres of life (at war toward an enemy and in the city with fellows). His point is that one standard regarding what is shameful should guide men who traverse both of these fields of activity, war and philosophy, battle and disagreement. He stresses the same point in other dialogues as well. For example, in the *Laches* he insists that a single definition of courage must apply to “those who are courageous in warfare but also those who are brave in dangers at sea, and the ones who show courage in illness and poverty and affairs of state...and not only those who are brave in the face of pain and fear but also those who are clever at fighting desire and pleasure” (*Laches* 191d). To drive this point home in the *Apology*, he reminds his listeners that he is not speaking lightly; he has himself faced death on the battlefield during three campaigns—Potidaea, Amphipolis, and Delium. And, as he develops his argument, Socrates continues to refer to military affairs. He argues that being a warrior and doing philosophy *both* require obeying a commander and remaining at one’s “station” (28d) over a period of time and in the face of grave dangers, even threats of death.<sup>49</sup>

Socrates challenges his listeners to see that his life would lack coherence if it were to be the case that, while repeatedly proving himself able to endure the risks associated with taking up weapons and positions in obedience to military commanders elected by the city, he should now prove himself unable to continue to endure the risks associated with taking up argument and examination in obedience to the gods (in obedience to the oracle and his daimon at *Apology* 33c).<sup>50</sup> Socrates does not liken philosophy to military service in the *Apology*. Socrates’ reference to his own military service in the *Apology* does not propose an apt metaphor. Rather, Socrates indicates that his well-lived philosophical life has included exemplary military service. He assimilates the full arc of his life, not the single brave act of refusing to abandon philosophy at this moment, to the praiseworthy military conduct celebrated in elegiac poetry. Socrates also invites listeners to complete the comparison of himself to Achilles. Like Achilles, Socrates



is impressively resolute in the face of his own impending death and, in this instance, displays a laudable understanding of what would be truly shameful behavior (abandon what's right to save one's skin). Like Achilles Socrates chooses to live fully rather than allow fear of death to paralyze him or diminish his ambitions. But, unlike Achilles, Socrates' good character does not come undone by anger and grief in the course of following through on that choice.<sup>51</sup> Socrates remains calm in battle and throughout the action of the *Crito* and *Phaedo*, that is, imprisonment and execution (beautifully rendered by Canova in artwork discussed earlier). Achilles' explosive wrath, in contrast, is of course the central theme of Homer's *Iliad* and culminates with his abuse of Hector's corpse.

Plato elaborates Socrates' singular resilience further. He additionally distinguishes Socrates from Achilles and invites new comparisons with other heroes. In his speech in the *Apology* Socrates introduces two senses in which he will endure death. First, he is confident that the example of his coherent life and unjust punishment will enter the Athenian collective memory. He expects the episode to linger in the Athenian conscience, allowing him to continue conducting interrogations of the Athenians from beyond the grave and thus enact deathless *kleos*. Second, he is personally confident of the immortality of the soul and conceives of Hades as a place where he can continue his philosophical labors. Impressively, the conversations in Hades he most looks forward to will be those in which he examines the quality of his own resilience. Hades is, he says,

a place where I can converse with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old, who have suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. (41b)

Socrates does not minimize or mock the agonies endured by these heroes. Rather, he expects his own capacity for endurance to compare favorably. He specifically directs the listener to imagine a comparison of their respective "sufferings" and deaths, each brought on by an "unjust judgment" (in Shay's language, drawing on the directness of veterans' own words in clinical settings, brought on by "violations of what's right"<sup>52</sup>). Comparing his sufferings with those of Ajax would recall the similarity of their combat experiences and post-combat incidents of moral injury. In addition to the similarities detailed earlier, we observe now that both have close associates who try to dissuade them from accepting death (compare the pleadings of Ajax's wife Tecmessa and Socrates' friend Crito), both die by their own hands (Ajax buries Hector's sword in his chest, Socrates lifts the cup of hemlock to his lips) and both deaths are set in motion by unjust judgments by recognized authorities (Ajax's commanders, the Athenian jurors). But, in the end, it is their dissimilarities that stand out. Ajax is in despairing anguish. He remains in painful inner turmoil even after death; Ajax's shade in Hades is so broken that he remains furious and cannot even bear to speak with Odysseus when

he visits the underworld (*Odyssey* 11.540). Ajax appears a cautionary tale of a great warrior who comes undone.<sup>53</sup> Socrates, on the other hand, is a model of a warrior who remains himself through it all.

**Socrates's Capacity for Resilience Is Unaffected by  
a Lack of Conviction Regarding the Justice of the "Cause"  
for Which He Deploys, Suffers, and Kills**

Plato never suggests that Socrates entertained the standpoint of what we would call a "conscientious objector" or showed any ambivalence about the moral legitimacy of killing enemy combatants in war. Loyalty to the city demanded service and that was sufficient reason to take up arms. His attitude is in this way thoroughly orthodox for his time and place.<sup>54</sup> Plato portrays Socrates confident that honorable conduct in war is possible regardless of any personal attachment, or not, to a "cause."<sup>55</sup> This is important because Plato's Socrates clearly lacks commitment to what we might call the "cause" behind Athens' embrace of the Peloponnesian War—preservation (and extension) of Athenian hegemony. Socratic moral philosophy questions deeply the material and ideological aims of war policies advanced by Pericles and other leaders. Plato explicitly depicts Socrates objecting to Athenian ambitions to secure glory, reputation, and wealth by developing an "empire" and undertaking the war with Sparta to secure it (e.g., *Gorgias* 515e–517a, 519a–b).<sup>56</sup> The very survival of the city as an independent entity was not the rallying cry for the campaigns in which he fought. Accordingly, we may say that Plato portrays Socrates fighting willingly but not entirely unburdened by doubts about the moral underpinnings of this particular war and the ugly appetites it unleashes.

The closest we come in the dialogues to any talk of Socrates trying to evade or resist military service is a joke at the opening of the *Gorgias*. In Greek, "War and battle" are the first words of the dialogue:

*Callicles*: This is the way they say you ought to join a war and a battle, Socrates.

*Socrates*: You mean we've missed the feast, as they say, and we're too late?

*Callicles*: Yes, and a most elegant feast it was; for Gorgias put on many fine displays for us a little while ago.<sup>57</sup> (447a)

The humor pivots on Callicles' assertion that Socrates' late arrival at the gathering is in keeping with what "they say" about how one *ought* to join a war and a battle. Socrates plays along by making explicit what was implicit in Callicles' comment: Socrates says, "You mean we're too late?" This opening scene is funny and playful in a way that only makes sense if the reader knows Socrates to be no such "reluctant conscript"<sup>58</sup> but instead very much a reliably willing warrior in battle and in argument. As the dialogue progresses,

the extent to which successive interlocutors (Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles) also prove willing to take risks and approach the battlefield of ideas fearlessly becomes an issue.<sup>59</sup>

The easy separation of conduct and cause in the portrait of how Socrates assessed the morality of combat has important consequences for how we understand Plato's portrait of his resilience. In particular, it brings out a difference between this account of Socrates and that of the conditions under which combat soldiers today struggle to cultivate resilience. Recent studies of American veterans indicate that particularly terrible anguish and post-traumatic stress afflict troops and veterans burdened by doubts about the justice of the war's larger cause. For example, one recent study shows that the psychic distress experienced by American servicemen and women over their individual accountability for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan worsens significantly once they become ambivalent about, let alone furiously opposed to, American prosecution of these wars. The study details the "complexity of the inner moral landscape" they traverse, reporting that for these men and women "the moral oversight is internal" and might be best understood "as a soulful struggle with conscience."<sup>60</sup> The moral landscape troops traverse today includes feelings of having been "suckered"<sup>61</sup> by leadership (political and military) into having gone to war on "a pretext that camouflages other, actual causes"<sup>62</sup> as well as thus having become "tainted" as a result.<sup>63</sup> We have no reason to believe that something similar is at play in the story of Socrates' confrontation with questions regarding the morality of combat service. But we can imagine Socrates experiencing an "inner debate" or self-examination regarding his own culpability for his actions in combat (i.e., his own courage or cowardice toward comrades). This mental work is not complicated by worries about the justice of the cause. He disagrees with the war aims but there is no indication in Plato's portrait that he feels misled by leadership regarding what they are, nor that he feels abused. Plato's focus is on Socrates' control of his own conduct toward his compatriots, himself, and the enemy.

I have so far argued that Plato's depiction of Socrates' war experiences directs us to his observation of a layer of complexity in Socrates' extraordinary inner life. This dimension of Plato's portrait of an archetypal philosophical life provokes some questions. How is such resilience possible? What sustains it? What upends it? Does its practice have moral or political consequences? Can we get more precision and clarity regarding what it might mean to remain psychologically intact despite suffering trauma? Does resilience facilitate critique and philosophic labor? These seem very possibly to be among the questions that motivate Plato's moral psychology and theory of justice, especially in the *Republic*.

### Signs That the *Republic* Is Alert to Psychological Challenges Peculiar to Experienced Combat Soldiers

The psychologically rich theory of justice elaborated in the *Republic* mobilizes the Socratic model of "resilience" in the face of war trauma in

several ways. This is evident in the way, the long argument of the *Republic* gets started when Socrates and his dinner companions examine two commonplace definitions of justice. The apparently sensible definitions forwarded by Cephalus and Polemarchus in Book I quickly collapse into muddles as Socrates subjects them to scrutiny. Socrates' clever manipulation of these two interlocutors is the subject of much scholarly discussion. I only want to add that the definitions they offer crumble precisely when they fail to traverse war and peace. Specifically, at 331b–332a, the definition, "speaking the truth and paying debts," disappoints when Socrates asks Cephalus if it can apply to a hard case involving the use of weapons. Isn't it the case, Socrates inquires, that if a sane man gives his weapons to a friend for safe keeping and then asks for them back "when he is out of his mind," the friend "shouldn't return them, and wouldn't be acting justly if he did?" The situation suggests the case of a former soldier now suffering mental distress. Socrates insists that his friends owe him more than the repayment of a debt, that is, the mechanical application of a rule. He therefore objects to Cephalus' definition. Next, at 332e–334b, Socrates exposes as unsatisfactory Polemarchus' suggestion of a revised definition, "helping friends and harming enemies." In this case, the rule fails because its application denigrates "the clever guardian of an army" in the eyes of noncombatants. Socrates asks Polemarchus whether a good guardian of the army should be able to steal the enemy's plans and dispositions. When he sensibly answers, "Yes," Socrates observes that according to his revised definition of justice, "a just person has turned out to be a kind of thief"—an intolerable conclusion. My point is not that Socrates has at this point indeed refuted these traditional views of justice. Rather, I want to call attention to the fact that these passages depict Socrates and his interlocutors demanding that a definition of justice must address the anxieties that reasonably trouble good men moving between war zones and home. A definition that can guide behavior in only one sphere or that neglects the needs of experienced combat soldiers is taken to be patently unacceptable.

The *Republic* is also attentive to the vantage point of an active duty soldier when Socrates begins shaping the institutional structure of the ideal city and proposes a distinct class of "guardians." Socrates implicitly abandons the experienced amateur or citizen-soldier model familiar to Athenians and instead argues for creating a professional class of soldiers on the grounds that war, like other crafts, requires expertise and that "it is of the greatest importance that warfare be practiced well" (374c).<sup>64</sup> He proposes that the requisite expertise includes not only physical strength, courage, and command of the technical skills needed to design strategy and tactics, but also a sort of psychological agility that enables a soldier to enter a war zone with fierce confidence *and* to adjust with ease to being home and handling political and domestic responsibilities with gentleness. Consider this passage from Book II:

*Socrates*: The physical qualities of the guardians are clear.  
*Glaucon*: Yes.

*Socrates:* And as far as their souls are concerned, they must be spirited.

*Glaucon:* That too.

*Socrates:* But if they have natures like that, Glaucon, won't they be savage to each other and to the rest of the citizens?

*Glaucon:* By god, it will be hard for them to be anything else.

*Socrates:* Yet surely they must be gentle to their own people and harsh to the enemy. If they aren't, they won't wait around for others to destroy the city but will do it themselves first....(375b–d)

The passage clearly acknowledges that intense psychological challenges characterize soldiering and that a just city must enable its troops to manage these stresses. Specifically, soldiers must be equipped to adjust to shifting contexts with the kind of nimbleness easily observable in a fine guard dog: “he is gentle as can be to those he's used to and knows, but the opposite to those he doesn't know” (375e).

It is important to note that the *Republic* does not rely on silver genetic material to produce such resilience among its guardians, as the myth of the metals might superficially suggest. Specific physical and musical training, education in censored myth and higher math, communal lifestyle, scheme of rewards and punishments for performance in combat (extra kisses and honors for valor as well as demotion to the farmer/artisan class for abandoning one's shield in battle, 468a–c), a confidence-inspiring command structure, and strictly enforced rules of engagement governing conduct on campaigns against other Greeks all work together to make sure that the just city's soldiers are minimally exposed to catastrophic war experiences (especially to moral injuries), thoroughly insulated from the family and economic stresses that accompany long deployments and maximally resilient psychologically in the face of war-related hardships—even calamities.<sup>65</sup> The *kallipolis* or “beautiful city” elaborated in the *Republic* will be able to “pursue war” in a way that reflects “her true character” (*Timaieus* 20b).

Resilience comes up again later in the argument of the *Republic* when Socrates turns to consider how the “philosopher-ruler” should be selected from among the population of the beautiful city. First, he makes it clear that the man or woman capable of being trained to rule and who will rule well must be selected from the guardian class (military), not separately raised. Socrates is also clear that great intellectual accomplishment alone cannot equip a fine member of the guardian class to become a philosopher-ruler. He does not hesitate to stress this in precise terms: “Our guardian must be both a warrior and a philosopher” (525b). To spot a potential philosopher this is what must be done. Once men have reached the highest level of rigorous training in abstract thinking, including mathematics,

*Socrates:* [Y]ou must make them go down again into the cave again, and compel them to take up command in matters of war and occupy the other offices suitable for young people, so that they will not be inferior to the others in experience. But in these too, they must be tested to see

whether they'll remain steadfast when they're pulled this way and that or shift their ground.

*Glaucon:* How much is allowed for that?

*Socrates:* Fifteen years. Then, at the age of fifty, those who have survived (τοὺς διασωθέντας<sup>66</sup>) the tests and have been successful in both practical matters and in the sciences will ...spend most of their time with philosophy, but, when his turn comes, he must labor in politics for the city's sake. (540a–b, my emphasis)

Those ready to serve as philosopher-rulers will be those who, over the course of repeated deployments marked by successively greater burdens of responsibility, excel not only in intellectual tests but in armed conflict as well. The philosopher-rulers will be “those among them [the guardians] who have proved to be best, both in philosophy and in warfare” (543a). In the *Republic*, good at warfare includes being fierce and gentle at appropriate times, enduring the hardships of deployments, remaining steadfast in combat, smartly utilizing math to plan strategy and tactics, observing rules of war between Greeks, and bearing psychological wounds lightly. For Plato, a history of conduct that exhibits what I have called “resilience” is an observable indicator of the condition of one's soul and evidence of a philosophic nature.<sup>67</sup>

War trauma and resilience also figure in Plato's startling suggestion in Book X that the beautiful city must prohibit the performance of dramatic poetry (especially tragedy) a grand and beloved Athenian cultural tradition. By this time in the text Socrates has completed his account of justice and the interlocutors have agreed that it's attractive. Socrates chooses to bring up some complicating issues that they had passed over earlier on. He says, “I think we omitted some things that then that we must now discuss” (603e). He points out that while their ideal city has cultivated an environment that will minimize exposure to trauma and nurture strong and resilient psyches, people will still experience grief and bereavement. This is unavoidable. And so he turns to detail how the institutional structure of the beautiful city can illuminate how to help good people experience measured responses to the pain of loss, especially of a child in war. Socrates explains:

*Socrates:* Grief prevents the very thing we need most in such circumstances from coming into play as quickly as possible.

*Glaucon:* What are you referring to?

*Socrates:* Deliberation. We must accept what has happened as we would the fall of the dice, and then arrange our affairs in whatever way reason determines to be best.<sup>68</sup> (603e–604c)

Socrates goes on to state that deliberation is not what happens in a “crowd gathered together in the theatre” (604e). Accordingly, Socrates affirms the exile of dramatic poetry from the ideal city (605b, 607b) unless or until it can defend itself by demonstrating how it can benefit a grieving person

struggling to sustain a just “constitution within him” (608a). While scholars today view Athenian dramatic festivals as providing rituals that support the psychological well-being of soldiers and the “reintegration of veterans” into civilian life,<sup>69</sup> Plato only sees theater’s capacity to stir emotions and deliver superficial pleasures that, in his view, actually aggravate psychic wounds and worsen potentially debilitating symptoms. Plato’s remedy for war trauma and other forms of psychological strain is the cultivation of resilience through rational self-examination, deliberation, and storytelling, not the “communalization of trauma” through the grand civic ritual of dramatic festivals.<sup>70</sup>

Consideration of the relationship between living well, war trauma, deliberation, and resilience also features in the way Plato brings the long text of the *Republic* to an end. In the closing passage known as “The Myth of Er” (614b–621d<sup>71</sup>), Socrates tells the unnerving story of a foreign warrior’s visit to the underworld. He starts with a brief but vivid account of the treatment of Er’s corpse after he is slain in battle. Er’s compatriots collected his corpse from the battlefield on the tenth day, observing that unlike the others Er’s body had not begun to decay. Nevertheless, two days later they placed it on the funeral pyre with all the others. While on the pyre Er revived. After reviving he told what he had seen. Socrates then goes on to recount Er’s graphic descriptions of the peculiar topography of the other world and, most remarkably, of the process that immortal souls undergo in preparation for rebirth on earth. This process is extensive. It includes being judged based on one’s conduct on earth and awarded spectacular rewards or subjected to severe punishments. Most important for tracking Plato’s observation of war trauma, this process also includes each soul being required to actively choose for himself or herself a new life into which to be born. Among the souls Er witnesses making a selection are five Greek soldiers of various ranks and accomplishment who served in the Trojan War: Ajax, Agamemnon, Thersites, Epeius, and Odysseus (620b–c).

The setting in which these figures must choose is simple. Er reports seeing the gods set a large assortment of possible lives before a sizeable gathering of souls. The gods explain that there are more good options than there are souls gathered and so a good life-choice is within everyone’s grasp. Each option consists in a mixture of aspects of life (e.g., fame, nobility, sickness, poverty, beauty, athletic prowess, etc.), so some deliberation is necessary to choose well. Each soul can draw on his past experiences and skills developed in his immediately prior life to assess the options. After choosing, each is reborn with no memory of the process. Er reports seeing the great warrior Ajax chooses to return a lion, remarking, “He avoided human life because he remembered the judgment about the armor.” Agamemnon chooses to become an eagle. Er explains “His sufferings made him hate the human race.” Without comment Er mentions that Thersites (the frank speaking common soldier assaulted by Odysseus in *Iliad* 2.211–277) opts for the life of a monkey and that Epeius (a poor warrior but a good boxer and a builder who worked on the Trojan Horse, *Odyssey* 8.493) picks the life of a craftsman.<sup>72</sup> Odysseus, last to choose, searches for a long time and selects

the life of a private man. Er reflects, the “memory of sufferings had relieved this soul of its love of honor.” In sum, three are so psychologically wounded that they seek refuge in the animal kingdom, one is moved to be reborn a woman and one is determined to retreat from public affairs. All choose to avoid war at all costs. But we know that in the *Republic* Plato not only accepts that cities will experience war, but proposes that it is indeed possible for war to be practiced well and for combat to be a meaningful, even enriching, part of human experience. The Myth of Er’s attention to these psychologically wounded soldiers of Homeric myth begs renewed attention to how that can be possible. It raises interest in the idea of Socratic resilience and its part in illuminating what it might mean to live well.

### Conclusion

Writers have occasionally tried to conscript Socrates for pacifism. But to do so, these authors must take “extreme liberties” with Plato’s texts.<sup>73</sup> Plato indicates that Socrates served willingly and honorably in the Peloponnesian War. Moreover, I have shown that Plato values combat service highly without romanticizing it and shapes his portrait of Socrates to feature the philosopher’s multiple experiences of deployment, battle, and homecoming. Drawing on recent studies of “war trauma” to frame my inquiry and historical details culled from Thucydides to provide context for Plato’s accounts, I have argued that Plato characterizes Socrates as exceptionally “resilient” in the face of calamitous war experiences and in this respect a wondrous or odd creature in the eyes of his fellow citizen-soldiers. I have stressed that this dimension of Plato’s portrait of Socrates engages myth (Ajax, Achilles, and Odysseus) and in so doing creates an archetype of resilience. In the last section, I demonstrated that attention to the inner life of a combat veteran informs key elements of the psychologically rich theory of justice elaborated in the *Republic*. Together this material suggests that we should conclude, with Canova (Figure 6.1), that Socrates’ conduct as a soldier is as fascinating and important philosophically as the manner in which he faced trial, imprisonment, and execution.

### Notes

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1. Images of the series can be found in Albrizzi, Cicognara, and Missirini, 1824. Photographs of the pieces are online in various postings. One can be found at: <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/MI001709/crito-closing-the-eyes-of-the-dead>. Art

- historians believe that Canova produced these four reliefs “for himself, rather than for any private patron or public display” (Lapatin 2009, 143). They were on occasion briefly available for inspection (Plant 2003, 18). Not all are finished. Perhaps he made them in personal consideration of the political upheavals of the day. Socrates was a symbolically potent figure during this tumultuous period. He was a hero of revolutionary France. Jacques-Louis David displayed his familiar *Death of Socrates* in the Paris salon of 1787. This painting is now on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. For discussion, see Mainz (2007) and compare Pierre Peyron’s (1787) “The Death of Socrates,” now in *Statens Museum for Kunst*, Copenhagen. Perhaps Canova kept them private to protect his standing as an assiduously nonpartisan artist. Throughout his enormously successful career, Canova was unusual in that he “refused to work for one set of politically cohesive patrons” (Johns 1997, 4).
2. Athenian sculptors modeled their statues of Hermes setting out to escort someone safely through dangerous circumstances on Alcibiades (Clement of Alexandria *Protreptic* 4.53.6). Socrates’ allusion to both *Iliad* 24.348 and *Odyssey* 10.279 at *Protagoras* 309b1–2 also suggests that Alcibiades’ appearance calls Hermes to mind. See Denyer (2008, 66).
  3. It also exhibits a strong reference to the Hellenistic sculpture by Agasias of Ephesus known as the “Borghese Warrior” that was recovered near Rome in 1611 and displayed at the Villa Borghese until 1807 when Napoleon Bonaparte had it, along with much else, removed to Paris where it remains today. See Lapatin (2009, 143). An image can be found at <http://www.louvre.fr/en/mediainages/fighting-warrior-known-borghese-gladiator>
  4. Canova’s depiction of the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades is unlike the treatments of this pair by his contemporaries. Prominent artists familiar to Canova passed over their military camaraderie and focused instead on the story of Socrates’ erotic yet chaste interest in the company of a youthful Alcibiades and of Alcibiades’ struggle with Socrates’ admonishments to care less for physical pleasures (drawing on Plato’s *Symposium* and Plutarch’s *Life of Alcibiades*). They present Socrates attempting to save Alcibiades from the allure of sensual pleasures allegorically; a stern Socrates leads a hesitant Alcibiades away from the embrace of voluptuous, and nearly naked, women. See Pierre Peyron, *Socrate détachant Alcibiade des charmes de la volupté* (1782, now in a private collection) and Baron Jean-Baptiste Regnault’s *Socrate arrachant Alcibiade du sein de la Volupté* (one in 1785 and now in a private collection and another in 1791 which was exhibited in the Paris salon of that year and is now in the Louvre).
  5. Segal (1978, 321).
  6. I have found no explicit reference to Plato’s service in the sources. This is no reason to conclude that he did not serve. It would have been very odd had he not served at least on occasion. But he was too young to have gone on campaign during the Peloponnesian War.
  7. Plato places Socrates on three campaigns of the Peloponnesian War. The evidence breaks down as follows: at Potidaea: *Apology* 28e, *Charmides* 153a–c, 156d; *Symposium* 219–221d; at Delium: *Apology* 28e, *Laches* 181b, *Symposium* 221a–c; and at Amphipolis: *Apology* 28e. Other Platonic dialogues present Socrates as familiar with battle and its consequences (e.g., *Menexenus*, *Republic*, *Laws*). Xenophon reports Socrates’ own service only in general but does represent him conversing with a young Pericles about military issues (*Memorabilia* 4.4.1, 3.5.213) and commenting on Xenophon’s decision to join the campaign with Cyrus (*Anabasis* 3.1). Diogenes Laertius in his *Life of Socrates* reports his part at Potidaea, Delium, and Amphipolis but his presentation of fuller historical details is muddled (see Woodbury 1971). On the historical Socrates’ military service, see Calder (1961); Woodbury (1971); Planeaux (1999); Nails (2002, 264–265); Hanson (2003, 213–27); Anderson (2005); Graham (2008); Hughes (2010, 127–58); and Tritle (2010, 54–5, 233).

8. There is a large literature on Greek warfare. Key recent studies include Hanson (1989, 1991); Hamilton and Krentz (1997); McCann and Strauss (2001); Bekker-Nielson and Hannestad (2001); Chaniotis and Ducrey (2002); Van Wees (2004); Trundle (2004); Hodkinson and Powell (2006); Raaflaub (2007a, 2007b); Sabin, van Wees, and Whitby (2007); Pritchard (2010); and Crowley (2012).
9. Koristan (2010, 184). On the “belligerent *Weltanschauung*” of the Athenians, see Crowley (2012, 80–104).
10. On the evidence for evasion of conscription in ancient Athens, see Christ (2006). Many non-citizen residents, including slaves, were also pressed into service. See Brown and Morgan (2006).
11. Boedecker (2001b, 159).
12. For a recent discussion of the gap, see Wright (2012).
13. Crowley (2012).
14. Shay (1994), also (2002); on “moral injury,” also see Maguen and Litz (2012). On the way “trauma is exacerbated by moral anguish and resentment that...trust was misplaced and abused” see Sherman (2013) (at p. 158).
15. Incidents of war-related post-traumatic stress in Greek sources include the story of Epizelus’ loss of sight at Marathon in Herodotus (6.117) (King 2001), the report of Aristodemus’ survivor guilt and suicidal behavior after Thermopylae in Herodotus (7.229, 9.71–3), the report of battle survivors’ suffering psychological damage in Gorgias’ *Helen* 16–17 (Tritle 2010, 127–8, 159–61) and the case of Clearchus in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*. (Tritle 2004). Less obvious are “hidden” examples reflected in tragedy, such as Heracles’ violence against his own family as presented in Euripides’ *Heracles* (Tritle 2010, 127–8), Ajax’s suicidal despair in Sophocles’ *Ajax*, and the depiction of the suffering of noncombatants in Euripides’ *The Trojan Women*. Arguably, all extant tragedy addresses relevant themes. Recognizing that warfare was thoroughly integrated into every sphere of Athenian life and that the Athenian cultural practices were adept at producing combat ready psyches (see Crowley 2012) does not mean that every Athenian mobilization went well and that experienced killers could not suffer psychological injuries in combat situations. Note that Thucydides’ account of the Peloponnesian War makes it abundantly clear that great upheavals and stresses horribly upset traditional practices and that war experiences could provoke even good character to unravel.
16. The diagnosis entered the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DMS)* published by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980. The criteria have been revised in subsequent editions. Note that war experiences are not the only kind of traumas that can result in PTSD (others include criminal assault, sustaining or witnessing life-threatening injuries and natural disasters). The US Department of Veterans’ Affairs established The National Center for PTSD in 1989. Some contemporary veterans’ advocates raise concerns about the medical profession’s reliance on the language of “disorder” because it obscures the point that the origin of the disability is an injury or wound (as opposed to it arising from an organic problem or personal deficiency). I will try to respect this concern though “PTSD” is entrenched in the literature and civic culture and thus hard to avoid.
17. Cf. discussion of the better design of military practices and institutions as the best prevention of trauma in Shay (1994, 195–209) as well as in the collection of studies presented in a special issue of *American Psychologist* on “Comprehensive Soldier Fitness: A Vision for Psychological Resilience in the U.S. Army,” introduced by George W. Casey Jr., General, US Army Chief of Staff of (January 2011). On recovery, see Herman (1992). See Finkel (2013) for an unsettling account of efforts by US veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to navigate available services.

18. Thucydides on Potidaea (1.56–67, 2.58.1–3, 2.701–4); Delium (4.89–101, 5.14.1); and Amphipolis (4.102–108, 5.6.1–16.1).
19. On the demands of ancient Greek siege warfare for all on campaign, see Kern (1999, 89–193).
20. Planeaux (1999) suggests the dramatic features of Plato's texts are consistent with the possibility that Socrates served without leave for three full years. See chapter 1 for discussion of the rotation of troops.
21. See Hanson (2003) for an account of the Battle of Delium.
22. Hanson (2003, 200, 213).
23. Translations from Thucydides are from Strassler (1996).
24. Hanson (2003, 181).
25. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Plato are from Cooper (1997), modified to clarify who is speaking.
26. Mayor (2009, 219); also Crosby (2002, 89).
27. Thucydides explains the technology at 4.100.2–4. I suspect that the puzzling end of Aristophanes' *Clouds* might be an allusion to this episode of the battle of Delium (Strepsiades sets the Thinkery ablaze) and that Socrates' notable behavior in war might have contributed to playwrights' interest in him that year. The *Clouds* was produced in 423, the year following the disaster at Delium. Another comic play produced at the Dionysia that same year also featured Socrates as a central character (Ameipsias' *Connus*). Other reasons to suspect a link between the *Clouds* and Socrates at Delium include: (1) Alcibiades explicitly quotes *Clouds* line 362 in his account of Socrates' memorable behavior in the retreat at Delium at *Symposium* 221b and (2) similarities between Strepsiades' characterization of the Thinkery's cosmological teaching as "we are the hot coals in an oven" and Thucydides' account of the central role of hot coals in the operation of the Theban flamethrower (ἄνθρακες at both *Clouds* 97 and Thucydides 4.100.4). Another reason for suspecting that Aristophanes mobilizes his audience's knowledge of Socrates' military experience is the similarity of description of the Thinkery's students at *Clouds* 412–20 to Alcibiades' account of Socrates' notable behavior on campaign at Potidaea at *Symposium* 221a–b.
28. *Contra* Crowley (2012) and in this volume. I acknowledge that it is problematic to look for the elements of a culturally constructed modern medical diagnosis (war trauma, PTSD) in the ancient record and classify our sources accordingly. I do, however, remain confident that it makes sense to consider how war experiences, especially when they go catastrophically wrong, can stress the human psyche in ways that are recognizable.
29. Edmunds (2004, 195–6).
30. Translators Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (in Cooper 1997) add a note referring to Ajax's shield. Cf. Bury (1909) on *Symposium* 219e: "referring to the sevenfold shield of Ajax; cf. Pind.I.5.45; Soph. Af. 576." Bury 1909 is available on the *Perseus Digital Library*.
31. Shay (1994, 108–9). See also Kane (1996).
32. On Ajax in the *Little Iliad*, see Holt (1992) and Gregory Nagy's translation of Proclus' account of the *Little Iliad* at <http://news.rapgenius.com/Gregory-nagy-proclus-summary-of-the-little-iliad-lyrics> (produced by the Center for Hellenic Studies).
33. *Symposium* 219d1.
34. On the capacity of Sophocles' *Ajax* to speak to the experience of combat trauma, see the "Theater of War" programming developed by *Outside the Wire*, artistic director Bryan Doerries (<http://www.outsidethewirellc.com/projects/theater-of-war/overview>). They perform on military bases and hospitals as well as in civilian settings and receive funding from the Department of Defense and National Institute of Health as well as

- private foundations. See also the programming developed by the Aquila Theatre of New York, artistic director Peter Meineck, for the National Endowment for the Humanities funded project, "Ancient Greeks/Modern Lives: A National Conversation" (<http://ancientgreekmodernlives.org/>). For discussion, see Meineck (2009) and Lodewyck and Monoson (2015).
35. The friendship was erotically charged but, to Alcibiades' dismay, not physically realized.
36. On the capacity of Socrates' endurance to "convey to others an attitude of superiority" and thus elicit mockery, see Edmunds (2004, 196). He notes that a fragment of the *Connus*, a lost comedy of Amipsias that featured Socrates and was performed in the same competition as the *Clouds* soon after Delium, includes the phrase, καρτερικός γ' εἶ ("you are capable of endurance").
37. Cf. *Apology* 35e–36b where Socrates is not disturbed by his own conviction at trial.
38. Cf. *Republic* 328a7 (re the torch-race that prompts Socrates to stay) and 619e6 (re the sight of souls choosing lives in the myth of Er).
39. Boedecker (2001a, 2001b).
40. Trans. Meineck in Reeve (2002).
41. Plato's lively portraits of Socratic argument often employ allusions to Socrates' behavior in hand-to-hand combat situations at the moment an Athenian phalanx lines collapses, that is, to his "refusal to join the panicky frenzy that overtook most of the Athenian army" (Hanson 2003, 213). For example: *Crito* 51b–cb; *Phaedo* 88c–89a; *Laches* 188b and 191a; *Euthydemus* 307b; *Republic* 473e–474b, 471d. On argument as war see also *Gorgias* 513d and *Phaedo* 106c.
42. I owe this way of reading this passage to a conversation with L. A. Tritle.
43. Cf. Odysseus' reluctance to talk among the Phaeacians.
44. On the importance of converting fragmented memories into narratives, see Herman (1992). An anecdote is apt here. Tammy Duckworth was a helicopter pilot in the Iraq War. She was grievously injured in a crash and lost her legs. She recovered and went on to serve as assistant secretary of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs from 2009 to 2011. In a public setting in 2012, she explained that she does not suffer from PTSD and she thinks that is due to the fact that part of her medical care post-crash involved repeated (nearly daily) efforts to tell her story and create a narrative that she could treat as a chapter in her life. She reported that some of the men on her helicopter who were far less seriously wounded physically on that terrible day still suffer from severe PTSD years later—something she attributes to their lack of similar opportunities to craft narratives about what they suffered. Author's notes from a "Talk-Back Session" following a "Theater of War" performance at the National Veterans' Art Museum, Chicago, January 25, 2012.
45. This visit with the Thracian physician might be the trip to the Isthmus *epi theorian* referred to at *Crito* 52b.
46. At *Apology* 28e Socrates lists the three campaigns out of historical order. On why see Calder (1961).
47. *Contra* Benardete (1963, 174): "he mentions his soldierly duty only to dismiss it."
48. Cf. Shay (1994, 169): "damaging personality changes" frequently follow severe trauma.
49. The language of obedience to commanders calls to mind Simonides' famous epitaph for the Spartans at Thermopylae and the poet's case for their deathlessness. In the Scottish poet Robert Crawford's recent translation: "Stranger, take this message to our masters: we lie here dead. We did as we were told." McBeath and Crawford (2012, xiv).
50. Some peculiar features of the reference to Homer's *Iliad* 18.104 at *Apology* 28d might also confirm the importance Socrates attaches to a capacity to yield to "commanders" on deployment and in moral argument. See Benardete (1963, 174–5).

51. Cf. Metcalf (2009) and Hobbs (2000, 178) on Plato's comparison of Socrates to Achilles. Hobbs observes at *Crito* 44a–b a subtle allusion to Achilles' behavior in *Iliad* 9 that supports my reading: "Socrates emerges from the implied comparison not Achilles' equal but as his superior" (Hobbs 2000, 186).
52. Shay 1994. Also see Sherman (2013, 156–64).
53. How far the story of Palamedes (also noted at *Apology* 41b and quoted above) develops similar themes is hard to assess. Palamedes does not appear in the *Iliad*. Works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides focused on his story survive only in fragments. Orators seem to have used his story to display their rhetorical chops (e.g., Gorgias, *In Defense of Palamedes*). The story of his death as related in later sources (describing accounts of lost early epics, see Apollodorus *Epitome* E.3.7) fits my account of Plato's interest in the figure. Palamedes was a hero at Troy who tangled with Odysseus. Palamedes exposes Odysseus' ruse to avoid conscription in the Trojan War (Odysseus feigned madness). Still furious nine years later, Odysseus maliciously accuses him of treason and manufactures false evidence. Palamedes is thus unjustly convicted and stoned to death.
54. See Crowley (2012) and in this volume. This does not preclude raising objections to specific policy decisions and actions performed during the prosecution of the war. See Socrates' objections to the treatment of the generals who served at Arginousae (*Apology* 32b).
55. Cf. *Protagoras* 359e–360a.
56. Socrates also mocks the postwar veneration of Pericles in the *Menexenus*. See chapters 3 and 7 of Monoson (2000). In *Apology* Plato has Socrates indicate that his moral objections to the appetite for empire were sometimes mistaken for disloyal, oligarchic (i.e., Spartan) sympathizing. Also see Connor 1991 on why some of Socrates' contemporaries might have mistaken his philosophical mannerisms for evidence of Spartan sympathies.
57. Trans. Irwin (1979).
58. I borrow this phrase from Christ (2006).
59. On *parrhesia* (frank speech) and philosophical examination in the *Gorgias*, see Monoson (2000, 161–5); Saxonhouse (2006); and Tarnopolsky (2010).
60. Sherman (2013, 143, 148).
61. Sherman (2013, 156–64).
62. Sherman (2013, 148).
63. Sherman (2013, 148 and *passim*).
64. Plato's discussion betrays a concern to understand how the psyche experiences combat and homecoming, not a partisan political admiration for oligarchic Sparta.
65. Nails (2012) sees a systematic response to the catastrophes of the Peloponnesian War evident in the structure of the *Republic*. Also see Schofield (2006, 203–12) and Saxonhouse (1983). The discussions of military practices across the dialogues betray sensitivity to precisely the kinds of problems, troubles, and mishaps Socrates encountered on campaign and their calamitous consequences for Athens. For example: Socrates' skill escaping the Boeotians at Delium is proof that young men should learn to use weapons (*Laches* 182a–b); Socrates reproaches Euthydemus for treating military service as a diversion from the search for wisdom instead of part of a philosophical life (*Euthydemus* 273c–274a); and Socrates chastises Ion for identifying competent generalship with familiarity with Homer (*Ion*, *passim*). Moreover, the military training outlined in the *Laws* includes learning to endure hardships such as poor food and extreme temperatures (*Laws* 942d–e), easily suggesting Socrates at Potidaea. The *Laws* also provides for extreme care to be taken when evaluating the quality of a soldier's service upon his return in ways that suggest appreciation of the ordeals endured and witnessed by Socrates. Prizes for valor should need the backing not only of commanders but also of

- fellow soldiers, eyewitnesses, and other evidence (943b–c). Assessment of servicemen's behavior in battles that turned out to be calamitous for the army must pay very serious attention to the circumstances so as to distinguish between criminal neglect of duty and simple bad luck (943d–944e). On how far these texts influenced policy debates in Athens, see Allen 2010.
66. Cf. πῶς ἐσώθησθε ἐκ τῆς μάχης; at *Charmides* 153b (Chaerophon's question to Socrates upon his return from Potidaea).
67. Plato's expectation that excellence at war and philosophy will go hand in hand is evident in the opening scene of the *Theaetetus* (142a–c). There, a philosophical conversation conducted by a young Theaetetus is recalled on the occasion of the news that this great, now much older, philosopher has just returned from war grievously wounded. It is also evident in Plato's characterization of Socrates' main interlocutors in the *Republic*, Glaucon and Adeimantus. At *Republic* (368a), Socrates links his confidence in their intellectual sophistication to his knowledge of their honorable conduct in war. Also see Blondell (2002, 261). On the proximity of philosophy and war in Plato's *Republic* also see Nails (2012).
68. Τῷ βουλευέσθαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, περὶ τὸ γεγονός καὶ ὡσπερ ἐν πτώσει κύβων πρός τὰ πεπτωκότα τίθεσθαι τὰ αὐτοῦ πράγματα, ὅπῃ ὁ λόγος αἰρεῖ βέλτιστ' ἂν ἔχειν. *Republic* 604c.
69. Shay (1995) and Meineck (2009).
70. See Shay 1994 on the "communalization of trauma." Plato rejects what Balot calls Athenian-style collective "grief-work" (2013, 187–8).
71. The Myth of Er has puzzled commentators for some time. An exception is Baracchi (2001) who links it to Plato's discussion of war.
72. At *Gorgias* 525d Socrates mentions that Thersites' actions in the *Iliad*, while wrong, do not amount to an incurable offence. And so the point here may be just to note that he is indeed among those who are reborn, not condemned to eternal punishment (as are tyrants, *Republic* 615d).
73. White (2007, 124). Bertolt Brecht, Georg Kaiser, and a little-known American playwright who dramatized Brecht's story (Levinson 1965) conscript Socrates for pacifism. Cf. Monoson (2011) on efforts to enlist Socrates as a symbol of democracy during World War II and the Cold War.

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