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Foucault and ancient polizei: a genealogy of the military pastorate

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While Foucault claimed that biopower, as a form of political pastorate, did not exist in ancient Greece, he did take the view, following Hegel, that the ancient ‘ethical community’ [sittlichkeit] constituted a kind of ‘political technology of the individual’, an ancient form of ‘police’. In this paper, I trace Foucault’s conception of ‘police’ in his Tanner Lectures to Hegel’s analysis of politeia as the origin of the modern polizei. Through an examination of politeia in ancient political and military literature, I uncover a military–pastoral technology, founded on the relation not between shepherd–flock, but between leader [hegemon] and follower [epistatae]. I suggest two forms that a military–pastoral technology has taken shape, both in the politeia of the Spartans and in the early American Republic. This line of inquiry, I conclude, would not only suggest that a political pastorate existed in ancient Greece, but would also force us to re-consider modern forms of ‘police’ through the lens of a military–pastoral technology.

**Keywords**: Foucault; police; biopower; pastoral power; politeia

The paper is divided into three sections. In the first section, I clarify Foucault’s claims that a form of political pastorate, including modes of biopower, did not exist in ancient Greece. In doing so, I raise the tensions these claims produce in light of his suggestion that the ‘ethical community’ constituted a kind of ‘political technology of the individual’, or a technology of ‘police’. In the second section, I trace Foucault’s conception of ‘police’ to Hegel’s analysis of politeia as the origin of polizei. In the third section, I trace politeia through political and military literature of ancient Greece and uncover what I call a military–pastoral technology. I conclude by suggesting two directions that a genealogy of military–pastoral technologies might take, one directed to the Spartan politeia and another to the early American Republic.

1. **Political pastorship and Ancient Greece**

In 1982, Foucault delivered a lecture at the University of Vermont that was to become part of a new book he wished to develop on the ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault 1988). This seminar lecture, titled ‘The Political Technology of Individuals’, is a more thorough investigation of modern political reason through an analysis of ‘police’ rationality. Distinguishing a study of the ‘technologies of the self’
which constitute identities through ethical techniques applied to the self, Foucault (2000a) announces that:

There now is another field of questions I would like to study: the way by which, through some political technology of individuals, we have been led to recognize ourselves as a society, as a part of a social entity, as a part of a nation or of a state. (Foucault 2000a, p. 404)

In this project then Foucault was primarily concerned with a specific technique of power developed in Western societies whose function is the integration of the conduct of individuals into the mechanisms of the city and/or nation-state. This would be a genealogy of ‘police’ technologies, understood as ‘the specific techniques by which a government in the framework of the state was able to govern people as individuals significantly useful for the world’ (Foucault 2000a, p. 410).

This genealogy of ‘police technologies’ would be a continuation of his analysis of the history of governmentality that began with his lectures at the College de France in 1977–1978 on Security, Territory Population and the Tanner lectures delivered at Stanford in 1979. In the latter, Foucault traces the ‘political technologies of the individual’ to the Hebraic shepherd-ruler, the Christian pastorship, and finally the modern ‘secular’ pastorate of ‘police’. For Foucault, the techniques of Christian pastorate became slowly integrated into the political apparatus of the modern state of the sixteenth century, giving birth to modern ‘police government’ whose task will be ‘integrating the individual into the utility of the state’ (Foucault 2000a, p. 409) by improving the lives of and ensuring the happiness and health of citizens (Foucault 2000b, pp. 322–323). Foucault (2000a) traces the emergence of modern ‘political rationality’, which he defines as the fusion of the modern theories of raison d’État and police. Speaking of the role of the individual within this emerging ‘political rationality’, Foucault remarks that:

the individual becomes pertinent for the state insofar as he can do something for the strength of the state ... what is in question here is only political utility. From the state’s point of view, the individual exists only insofar as what he does is to introduce even a minimal change in the strength of the state, either in a positive or in a negative direction. It is only insofar as an individual is able to introduce this change that the state has to do with him. And sometimes what he has to do for the state is to live, to work, to produce, to consume; and sometimes what he has to do is die. (Foucault 2000a, p. 409)

Just before going on to analyze the modern political technology of ‘police’ [polizei/la police] Foucault states that ‘(A)pparently, those ideas are similar to a lot of ideas we can find in Greek philosophy. And, indeed, reference to Greek cities is very current in this political literature of the beginning of the seventeenth century’ (ibid.). Foucault, by way of contrast, then remarks that in the Greek city-state the individual was also integrated in the state’s utility but through ‘the form of the ethical community’ (ibid.). In contrast to this ancient form of political technology, Foucault claims, modern political rationality obtains the integration of individuals into the state’s utility ‘by a certain specific technique called then, and at this moment, “police”’ (ibid.).

Thus, Foucault (2000a) claims that there existed in the Greek city-state a form of political technology of the individual, but that this was exercised through the form of the ‘ethical community’ and not in the pastoral form of the
shepherd-ruler’. For Foucault, Plato’s *Statesman* shows how Plato entertained and rejected the notion of the ruler as shepherd of a population or flock. Plato’s *Statesman*, for Foucault, is the definitive articulation of the Greek separation of the ethical shepherding of the community and the political ordering of the city. For Foucault, the idea of the shepherd was restricted to the ethical community in the form of the physician, the farmer, the gymnasiarch, and the pedagogue (Foucault 2000b, p. 306). In the Greek city-state, then, Foucault says that Plato maintained that ‘the men who hold political power are not to be shepherds. Their task doesn’t consist in fostering the life of a group of individuals. In consists in forming and assuring the city’s unity … the pastoral problem concerns the lives of individuals’ (2000b, p. 307). Indeed, according to Foucault, nowhere in the Greek political literature does there appear the idea of the politician or statesman as someone who is or ought to be concerned with leading or guiding the daily lives and habits of individuals. The politician–statesman in Greek society, for Foucault, is concerned not with the ‘everyday life and habits’ of citizens that Christian pastorship and ‘police’ rationality would become obsessed with; rather, Foucault argues that ‘the idea of the deity, or the king, or the leader, as a shepherd followed by a flock of sheep was not familiar to the Greeks and Romans.’ Pastoral power, according to Foucault, did not exist in Greek political thought. Greek political life centered on the ‘city-citizen’ game, while the ‘shepherd–flock’ game was restricted to ethical life. The politician–statesman in Greek political life, Foucault claims, was not concerned with the everyday life and habits of its citizens. In short: there was no political pastorate such as biopower or ‘police’ in ancient Greece.

Foucault (2007) reiterates his claim about the absence of a political pastorate in ancient Greece in his 1978 lectures at the College de France. In those lectures, Foucault distinguishes ‘the art of politics’ and the politician from the technology of pastoral power and the shepherd. According to Foucault, the art of politics in Greek thought ‘is not concerned with everything overall, as the shepherd is supposed to be concerned with the whole flock’ (Foucault 2007, p. 145). For Foucault, the art of the Greek politician–statesman is entirely distinct and separate from the technology of the pastorate and the shepherd. Foucault claims that for the ancient Greeks, the pastoral technology of the shepherd is distinct and separate from the art of the politician in that:

> the essence of the political, or the politician’ will be ‘to join together’, to ‘bind the elements together, the good elements formed by education; he will bind together the virtues in their different forms … he will weave and bind together different contrasting temperaments, such as, for example, spirited and moderate men; and he will weave them together thanks to the shuttle of a common opinion. (Foucault 2007, p. 146)

In Foucault’s account, the politician–statesman concerns himself not with an individual care for the everyday health, happiness, and conduct of citizens; he is not concerned with the small, ‘trifling’ things of individuals’ lives and their conduct. For Foucault, these ‘minor activities’ that concern the life, habits and conduct of individuals are the province not of the politician–statesman but rather the concern of the various pastoral figures of the shepherd. Indeed,
if there is a pastorship, according to him [Plato] it can only be in minor activities that are no doubt necessary for the city-state, but that are subordinate with respect to the political order, such as the activities of, for example, the doctor, the farmer, the gymnast, and the teacher. All of these may in fact be likened to a shepherd, but the politician, with his particular and specific activities, is not a shepherd. (Foucault 2007, p. 146)

Foucault (2007) sums up his argument in the 15 Feb lecture by saying that a specifically political form of pastoral power does not exist in the form of the ancient Greek city-state (Foucault 2007, p. 147), and ‘really only begins with Christianity’ (Foucault 2007, pp. 147–148). However, this ‘intertwining’ of pastoral and political power in the Christian pastorate will not constitute a complete fusion of the art of politics and pastorship, but rather only the beginning of a process whereby the two forms of rationality begin to become intertwined. Thus, Foucault claims, pastoral power, ‘its form, type of functioning, and internal technology, remains absolutely specific and different from political power, at least until the eighteenth century’ (Foucault 2007, p. 154). Indeed, it will not be until the emergence of police and biopower in the eighteenth century that pastoral power will be fully inserted into the political apparatus as the secular instruments of the modern state. Police power and biopower, as forms of secular pastoral power, therefore represent for Foucault the culmination of a process whereby a specifically political pastorate begins to emerge in the Christian pastorate that concerns itself with the everyday life and conduct of individuals.

Foucault’s denial of the existence of a political pastorate in ancient Greece is also intimately related to his insistence that biopower did not exist in ancient Greece. In The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1 Foucault (1984) distinguishes the sovereign right of the patria potestas from the biopolitical right to foster life and disallow it. According to Foucault, sovereign power has both a modern and an ancient form, the former residing in the juridical notion of the Sovereign and his subjects and the latter residing in the right of the paterfamilias to dispose of the life of his children and his slaves (Foucault 1984, p. 258). For Foucault, the ancient form of sovereign power is ‘absolute’ and ‘unlimited’ in its right over life, whereas the modern form of sovereign power is ‘relative and limited’ by the natural rights of the individual and the right of self-defense of the Commonwealth (ibid.). However, these forms of power are both sovereign forms of power because

In any case, in its modern form - relative and limited - as in its ancient and absolute form, the right of life and death is a dissymmetrical one. The sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as the ‘power of life and death’ was in reality the right to take life or let live. (Foucault 1984, p. 259)

For Foucault (1984), the essence of sovereign forms of power lies in the manner in which it is exercised ‘deductively’ (prelevement) as ‘a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, foods and services, labor and blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself’ (ibid.). Whether exercised through the juridical being of the paterfamilias or the Sovereign, sovereign power’s relation to life was essentially a negative. In contrast, Foucault claims that a new form of power
emerged in the seventeenth century which is no longer negative or deductive but rather exerts ‘a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations’ (ibid.). This new form of modern power, Foucault maintains, is not the mobilization of the negative, sovereign ‘ancient right to kill’ but rather the invention of a positive, productive power that is exercised ‘at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population’ (Foucault 1984, p. 260). Thus the sovereign form of power that began with the ancient patria potestas was eventually replaced ‘by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death’ (ibid.). This was to be the emergence of biopower.

For Foucault (1984), biopower emerged ‘(I)n concrete terms, starting in the seventeenth century’ in two distinct forms: an anatomo-politics of the body focused on discipline, utility, and economization and a bio-politics of the population focused on the calculated management of life (Foucault 1984, p. 261). For Foucault, these forms of power were ‘indispensable elements’ for the development of capitalism in the eighteenth century, ensuring that the ‘accumulation of men’ and the explosion of population would become compatible with the accumulation of capital. The exercise of biopower in both of these forms, Foucault claims, allowed the expansion of capitalist modes of production and the differential accumulation of profit. However, referencing Weber’s thesis on the role of The Protestant Work Ethic, Foucault claims that the emergence of biopower in its various forms should not be confused with the ‘new morality’ of the capitalist work ethic. Foucault writes:

what occurred in the eighteenth century … was a different phenomenon, having perhaps a wider impact than the new morality; this was nothing less than the entry of life into history, that is, the entry of the phenomena peculiar to the life of the species into the order of knowledge and power, into the sphere of political technique. (Foucault 1984, p. 264)

Foucault then claims that this entry of life into political techniques represented the emergence of a new sort of political consciousness about the utility of life itself that did not exist prior to the eighteenth century. Indeed he claims that ‘(F)or the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence’ and that ‘(F)or millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question’ (Foucault 1984, p. 265). With the emergence of biopower, politics will now for the first time in history draw upon political technologies that invest ‘the body, health, modes of subsistence and habitation, living conditions, the whole space of existence’ (ibid.). Thus Foucault is clear: biopower, as a form of power to foster life or disallow it, did not exist in ancient Greece and only developed in the seventeenth century with the development of capitalism and the economic-political problem of ‘population’.

These claims, however – that political forms of pastorship including biopower did not exist in ancient Greece – present Foucault with a problem, since he also claims (2000a, 2007) that a ‘political technology’ of the individual did exist in the Greek city-states ‘in the form of the ethical community’. Because he does not specify exactly how ‘the ethical community’ constituted a form of political technology of the individual, we are left unclear about which elements of the Greek ‘ethical
community’ he means to refer to, or what this could mean exactly. However, we are led to rule out as elements of ancient ‘political technology’ the roles of ethical shepherding that appear in the Statesmen as allegedly ‘non-political’: the physician, the farmer, the gymnasiarch, the pedagogue. If Foucault is consistent here, then these ethical forms of shepherding cannot be thought of as part of a political technology of the individual, since for Foucault the idea of a political shepherding did not exist in Greek political thought and when it was discussed by Plato, it was roundly rejected. Therefore, we are left wondering exactly what elements of ‘the ethical community’ constitute for Foucault an ancient political technology of the individual, if not the daily exercises and practices of Greek social life that shaped the daily life, health, and happiness of individuals.

Thus, we should ask whether Foucault is correct in claiming that Greek politician–statesmen were not concerned with ‘the everyday life and habits’ of individual citizens, the very stuff of pastoral (and police) power. This is an important point for Foucault, because it amounts to the claim that in Greek societies there did not exist any form of political pastorate, such as police power or biopower. Foucault is clear that the aforementioned forms of power could only have developed in societies where the ‘shepherd–flock’ game had become an explicitly political concern of an art of government which has discovered the economic-politico phenomena of ‘population’. Police and biopower, according to Foucault, are therefore strictly modern ‘political technologies’ which depend upon the emergence of certain epistemological objects such as ‘population’, ‘society’, and ‘the market’ which become objects of political calculation for the State. For Foucault, police and biopower signal the emergence of an explicitly political pastorate concerned with the everyday life and habits of individuals as instruments for the utility of the State.

However, if it was discovered that there did in fact exist a kind of political pastorate in ancient Greek society, we would be forced to revisit our notions that police power and biopower are exclusively ‘modern’ phenomena. This would not invalidate Foucault’s observations about the epistemological objects that underwrite the modern political pastorate (‘population’, ‘market’, ‘society’, etc.), but rather it would force us to search for new epistemological objects that underwrite the ancient form of political pastorate. In addition, discovering the ways that a political pastorate is exercised in ancient Greek societies might also help to clarify Foucault’s remark that a ‘political technology’ of the individual did in fact exist in ancient Greece in the form of ‘the ethical community’. However, since Foucault seems to situate ‘political technologies of the individual’ as first and foremost technologies of police, the discovery of an ancient political technology of the individual would allow us to speak of an ancient form of ‘police’. In this way, the historical investigation of the political pastorate in ancient Greece will illuminate Foucault’s unfinished project of analyzing the origins of political rationality, as well as resolve issues regarding his claims about the origins of pastoral and ‘police’ rationality.

2. Police as politeia

If we look carefully at Foucault’s remarks on the nature of ‘political technologies of the individual’, and the possible meaning of the ‘ethical community’ in Greek political thought, we find a striking connection in Hegel’s analysis of polizei and Sittlichkeit. For Hegel (1991), the branch of the public authority he refers to as ‘polizei’ is the ethical power of the State acting upon civil society to provide
oversight and provisions for individual welfare within the system of needs. In *The Philosophy of Right*, ‘polizei’ is thus responsible for preventing crime, providing for the contingencies of the market that produce poverty (public welfare), limiting the encroachment of individual liberty upon the general welfare, as well as for all the unknown contingencies that could potentially harm the security and well-being of individuals. Thus for Hegel, polizei is essentially an ethical power of the State acting upon civil society, but as

an external order and arrangement for the protection and security of the masses of particular ends and interests which have their subsistence [Bestehen] in this universal; as the higher guiding authority, it also provides for those interests which extend beyond the society in question. (Hegel 1991, para 249, pp. 269–270)

As the ‘higher guiding authority’ over civil society, polizei concerns itself with the protection and security of all particular individuals within civil society, ‘with the result that the ethical returns to civil society as an imminent principle’ (Hegel 1991, para 249, p. 270). Thus for Hegel (1991), ‘polizei’ is in fact the ethical power of the State concerning all individuals that derives its authority not from internally to civil society; that is, its authority is not founded or derived from the consent of individuals internal to civil society. Polizei, for Hegel, thus partly derives its authority over individuals in its claim to universality, as an ‘external order’ to the particular society which it supervises. Polizei, therefore, does not derive its authority from the internal order of civil society; rather, for Hegel, it constitutes the supervisory, provisionary, and preventative ethical power of the State whose authority derives externally to civil society, instead from its claim to ‘universality’ as such.

Since this ‘higher’ ethical guiding power of the State derives its authority externally to civil society, the scope of polizei then becomes particularly problematic for Hegel. For Hegel (1991), defining the scope of polizei becomes subject to intractable difficulties because, reflecting on the nature of crime, contingency, and the logic of ‘prevention’, it is especially difficult to specify a priori the limits of police authority and control over individuals. Since polizei is concerned with the security of every individual’s particular well-being (Hegel 1991, para 230, p. 259), and potential wrongs or harm done to individuals are by definition indefinable and subject to contingency and the demands of expediency, then it follows that polizei must have authority over events, harms, and wrongs that are indefinable in nature and cannot be specified in advance. Thus, because the nature of potential harm or wrong cannot be specified a priori, then the scope of police power cannot (and indeed ought not) be objectively limited or circumscribed. For Hegel, this problem surrounding polizei is just as ethical a question as an epistemological one. Hegel writes:

The relations of external reality occur within the realm of the infinity created by the understanding, and have accordingly no inherent limit. Hence, as to what is dangerous and what not, what suspicious and what free from suspicion, what is to be forbidden, or kept under inspection, or pardoned with a reprimand, what is to be retained after pardon under police supervision, and what is to be dismissed on suspended sentence, no boundary can be laid down. Custom, the spirit of the constitution as a whole, the condition of the time, the danger of the moment, etc., furnish means for a decision. (Hegel 1896, para 234, p. 226)

Hegel continues in the Addition struggling with the problems of ‘the police power’, calling attention to the tension between its duty of ethical oversight of individuals
and the unlimited power it wields over individuals’ lives as an external order of State power. Indeed, when speaking of polizei, Hegel writes:

No fixed definition can here be given, or absolute boundary drawn. Here everything is personal and influenced by subjective opinion. To the spirit of the constitution or the danger of the times are due any more decisive characteristics. In time of war e.g., many things morally harmless are looked on as harmful. Because of the presence of this aspect of contingency and arbitrary personality the police are viewed with odium. They can by far-fetched conclusions draw every kind of thing within their sphere; for in anything may be found a possibility of harm. Hence the police may go to work in a pedantic spirit, and disturb the moral life of individuals. But great as the nuisance may be, an objective limit to their action cannot be drawn. (Hegel 1896, para 234, p. 226)

Thus for Hegel, polizei refers to the ethical power of the State for the supervision of and provision for individuals, whose scope or limits cannot and should not – because of its very nature – be objectively specified.

Hegel then clearly recognizes the intractable problems with polizei, and his attempts to come to terms with the nature and role of ‘police’ in the ethical life of individuals can be seen in his debate with Fichte. In his Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science, Hegel (2012) criticizes Fichte’s conception of the role of police, according to which ‘no persons can go without having their identity papers with them, and he deems this very important so as to prevent crimes’ (Hegel 2012, p. 212). Such a state, Hegel says, ‘becomes a galley of slaves where each is supposed to keep his fellow under constant supervision’ (Hegel 2012, p. 212). Instead, Hegel writes, ‘police supervision must go no further than is necessary’, adding that ‘though it is for the most part not possible to determine where necessity begins here. However, while rejecting the Fichtean conception of police state as the ever-present visibility of police presence, Hegel writes that ‘[I]n this respect secret police would be best, for people ought not to see that they are exercising supervision even though such supervision is necessary’ (Hegel 2012, p. 212), adding that ‘the purpose of what is hidden is … that public life should be free’ (Hegel 2012, p. 212). Thus, the problem of police for Hegel is one of knowledge and visibility: police supervision should be conducted with the least public knowledge and the least visibility in civil society as possible. Hegel continues in LNR by claiming that, apart from a limit that should be set on police supervision of private property, ‘no limit can be set within which this supervision must be confined’ and that ‘a good police force should not be noticed at all, and since it is not seen doing anything, it gains no praise either’ (Hegel 2012, p. 213). Thus for Hegel, a good polizei will operate surreptitiously, invisible to the public eye, without individuals knowing that they are being supervised and ‘policed’.

It is in this context that Hegel (2012) situates polizei as the third sphere of civil society, alongside political economy (Staatsökonomie) and the legal system (Rechtsverfassung), where polizei is that sphere of ethical life in where ‘the universal emerges as such’ (Hegel 2012, p. 166). Speaking of the role of polizei, Hegel then makes immediate reference to Plato’s Republic, where he writes that:

The Politeia teaches the form of government of the people. With us ‘the police’ may also mean something universal over against the particular citizen, but this universal has as its end the welfare of individuals as individuals, not, as in the Politeia, as a universality. (Hegel 2012, para 92, pp. 166–167)
Thus for Hegel, Plato’s *Politeia* serves as an example of an external public power of universality over against the individual, and because of this *politeia* is linked directly to Hegel’s use of ‘polizei’. The ancient form of ‘police’ referred to as *politeia* is thus for Hegel a kind of ethical power of the State over individuals, whom it treats not as particular individuals with specific interests and needs, but rather as a ‘universality’ of homogenous identities. As Bykova explains, the Greek *polis* embodies ‘police’ rationality on account of the fact that:

People live bonded by an ethical substance (*sittliche Substanz*), a set of shared practices and standards that undergird Greek social life. The rationality in question has no justificatory value, although it has a practical significance, because it is rational to do things in the customary way. (Bykova 2009, p. 282)

In short, the Greek *polis* for Hegel, according to Bykova (2009), embodies ‘police’ rationality because it embodies ‘a form of social life in which the individual could achieve his fulfillment in public roles’ (Bykova 2009, p. 282). For Hegel, this form of social life in which individuals and the State are reconciled is *sittlichkeit*, or the ancient ethical community. However, the ‘police’ of ancient *sittlichkeit* for Hegel was deficient in that, in its ethical power over individuals, it neglected individuality and the particularity whereas the modern ethical power of ‘polizei’, according to Hegel, takes into account the particular needs and interests of individuals through their mediation of all spheres of civil society. It is in this sense that, for Hegel (2012), Plato’s *Politeia* embodies an ancient form of ‘police’. The Greek *politeia*, therefore, refers both to the ethical power of the State over against individuals, as well as the ethical substance (*sittliche Substanz*) that binds the common form of life and conduct in a community. *Politeia*, as a form of police rationality, thus presupposes an ethical substance that defines a way of life and conduct – indeed, also ‘politeia’.

From this examination of Hegel’s analysis of ‘polizei’ and *politeia*, we can now understand Foucault’s remark regarding the political technology of the individual in the form of the Greek ‘ethical community’. The political technology of individuals that Foucault claims existed in ancient Greece in the form of the ‘ethical community’ can be understood as *politeia*, the form of government Hegel identifies as the origins of modern ‘police’ power and public authority. The Greek *politeia* is therefore an ancient form of ‘polizei’ for Hegel, as much as it constitutes for Foucault an ancient political technology of the individual. However, in order to better understand how *politeia* constitutes the derivative of ‘police’ – and thus the source for an ancient political technology of the individual – I turn to an examination of Greek political and military texts which provide the historical and etymological context for the meaning of *politeia* in ancient Greek thought.

3. *Politeia* and the military pastorate

In an early fragment meant as a commentary on Plato’s *Republic*, Plutarch (1936) focuses on the various meanings of the word *politeia*. In that fragment, titled *De Unius de Republica Dominatione* (sometimes translated simply as ‘Monarchy’), Plutarch gives the following five different meanings to the term *politeia*:
Thus in Plutarch’s *De Unius, politeia* at the same time refers to the qualifications of citizenship, the *bios andros politikon*, actions preserving the public welfare, the order or stability of the regime, and the maintenance of hegemony over that regime. Here, it is clear that the domain of the State and public authority is defined as the life of the *andros politikon*, a term both distinct to *anthropon* (the human opposition to ‘beast’) and opposed to *gune*, or ‘woman’ or wife. Thus, *politeia* refers to the domain of male-dominated political affairs that preserves the public welfare and maintains the order of the regime and their (male heads of households) hegemony over it.

Plutarch (1936) then tells us that the *dominatio* established by the unity of a *politeia* (*de unius de republica dominatione*) is what best ensures that statesmen maintain *hegemonion*, or hegemony over ‘those from whom his strength is derived.’ In order to maintain his hegemony in a democracy, for example – where the many sometimes exert control over the statesman – Plutarch tells us that the statesmen must learn when to loosen the reigns on the people, and when to tighten the reigns. Plutarch writes that the statesmen:

>Will also get on well in a democracy with its many sounds and strings by loosening the strings in some matters of government and tightening them in others, relaxing them at the proper time and then again holding fast mightily, knowing how to resist the masses and to hold his ground against them. (Plutarch 1936, p. 10)

The best way therefore to maintain his place as the *hegemon* – literally the Greek term for the leader of a military formation – is to establish a republican *politeia* like the one Plato constructed in the *Republic*, where a class of guardians rule through the art of male-dominated Statecraft (*bios andros politikon*) and others are ruled. The name Plutarch gives to the kind of ideal form of *politeia* just described is *monarkhia*, or ‘rule by one’. Hegemony therefore is established through the maintenance of a good *politeia*, a regime of conduct modeled on the good military formation, where the *hegemon*, or class of military leaders, rules as sovereign and the flock obeys and follows (*epistatae*). The best way to maintain hegemony in a democratic State, for Plutarch, is thus to establish a republican form of democratic government ruled by male politicians who govern like military commanders, but knowing when to tighten the reigns and when to loosen them.

The term *hegemonion*, on closer inspection, reveals a broader meaning than simply ‘control’ or ‘domination’. In a 2nd-century text on military tactics dedicated to the Roman Emperor Hadrian, *Aelian* (1814) gives an analysis of the ‘most useful’ branch of military art known as ‘tactics’. In this text on ‘The Greek Theory of Tactics’, Aelian begins by asserting the fundamental importance of the ‘science of
tactics’ for governing, placing its utility even as more fundamental than that of law. The science of tactics, according to Aelian,

excels all others in utility, any one may judge; even from what Plato says, in his book de legibus; that the Cretan legislator prescribed laws to men, on the supposition that they were ever prepared for hostilities; for that by nature all cities waged a concealed and unavowed war against each other; - and if this be the case, what science can be deemed more superior to that of Tactics, or what book can be more useful, or more necessary, than a work of this kind?’ (Aelianus 1814, p. 3)

The justification and rationality for good laws, we are told, is therefore a proper understanding of Tactics, a branch of military art that the author traces first to Homer. Thus, by implication, if we are to understand the art of the law-maker or politician – indeed the art of governing a politeia – we must study first the art of Tactics.

Commenting on the significance of Aelian’s treatise on Greek military tactics for understanding the principles of modern government, Augustus (see Aelian 1814) remarks that the Greeks considered such knowledge essential to ‘the science of political government, the principal feature of which was the perpetuity of the State’ (Aelianus 1814, xxvii). By studying the art of tactics as a part of the science of government, the Greeks saw to it that:

education became a public duty; men were formed for the State rather than for themselves, and its system embraced as much as the exercise of the body as of the mind; and, above all, a spirit of exclusive patriotism, the nurse of every noble spirit … teaching nations to regard themselves as individual families; to live in union at home, that they might act with vigor abroad. (Aelianus 1814, pp. xxvii–xxviii)

The Greeks were able to achieve this, Augustus writes (Aelian 1814), through the dissemination of political knowledge through philosophers and ‘founders’, combined with the discipline of the military art. ‘To the influence of these sages’, Augustus writes, ‘the most finished and elegant personal accomplishments were united with the firmest martial habits’ (Aelianus 1814, pp. xxviii–xxix). The commentary ends by concluding that:

The fall of the Grecian states crushed the most important science which mankind can aspire to obtain – the science of moral government; demonstrated not merely by statistical forms, or peculiar constitutions, which must vary in particular states … but by the habits which are formed, and the relative duties which are practiced by the governors and the governed. After that epoch we scarcely find anything deserving the name of scientific government. (Aelianus 1814, pp. xxix–xxx)

The ‘science of moral government’, we are told, was thus lost with the fall of Greece, and consisted in the habits and duties practiced by governors and governed. These habits and duties between governors and governed, for Augustus, can be learned by a study of the art of military tactics, such as Aelian’s treatise or Augustus’ previous A Commentary on the Military Establishments and Defense of the British Empire (1811).

Aelian’s text, introduced as ‘The Grecian Theory of Tactics’, begins by announcing that he will attempt to detail ‘the entire apparatus of war’. We are referred to the commentary on the use of ‘apparatus’, where we are told that the
‘apparatus’ of war is a term that applies to all ‘wise governments’ for the purposes of maintaining internal peace for nations:

The causes of war can never be wanting; but the peace of nations must ever be liable to be disturbed by hostilities; and therefore all wise governments will ever preserve their states in a condition to repel aggression, and to secure their independence. Modern warfare differs in many circumstances from that of the ancients; it is however substantially the same. (Aelianus 1814, p. 9)

The apparatus of war, we are told by Aelian, is a necessary feature of all independent, peaceful nations. Tactics, therefore, is the art internal to the apparatus of war that is necessary for the preservation of internal peace of a nation. Thus again, tactics become essential and fundamental, not only for an understanding of law and government, but for the very preservation of internal peace and order in a politeia. The ‘apparatus of war’, therefore, should be studied as a necessary part of the larger system of ‘wise government’ which ensures internal peace in any independent nation, ancient, or modern.

Aelian (1814) then gives us an account of the minute details of the military conduct of the Emperor Hadrian, to which the treatise is dedicated, and the individualized care, concern, and discipline he took with each soldier under his command. A good commander, we are told, he concerned himself not only with the physical health, diet and strength of his followers, but also the ‘moral’ and mental qualities of each soldier, taking into account the degree of bravery, courage, virtue each individual possessed. In the notes, we are given the following extraordinary account of the military conduct of Hadrian from a certain ‘Spartian’:

Although desirous of peace, he kept his soldiers in such perfect exercise as if war was immediately expected. He taught them by his own example to endure fatigue and the privation of luxuries. He partook of camp-fare; lard, and cheese, in the room of meat; and vinegar mixed with water for drink … He bestowed rewards upon some, and honours upon others, to induce all to obey his order with cheerfulness. He restored military discipline among the Romans, when it had begun to decline through the remissness of some of his predecessors. He regulated the rank and pay of the army. He suffered no one to be absent without leave. He estimated the character of the officers, not by their popularity, but by their military desert. He stimulated his soldiers to exertion, by his own perseverance in the discharge of military duty; often marching twenty miles on foot, completely armed. In the stationary camps, he put an end to all indulgences; he suffered no banqueting-rooms to stand, nor would he allow spacious galleries, or vaulted grottoes. He wore plain garb … He visited, in person, his soldiers in sick quarters. He himself marked the ground for encampments … he regulated the weight and form of their arms, and apportioned the quantity of baggage. He paid particular attention to the age of his men; not permitting any to serve who were too young to bear the fatigues of war, nor any whose age rendered them objects of humanity. He endeavored to gain a personal knowledge of them all, and to ascertain their actual number. He made himself acquainted with all matters in dispute betwixt man and man; and scrutinized the revenues of the provinces, in order to obtain the requisite supplies; at the same time, above-all, he took care that nothing should be purchased, nor any animals fed for the use of the army, which were not absolutely necessary. When his soldiers were thus trained and inured to service, after the example which he himself set them, he passed into Britain … driving the Romans from the uncivilized people.’ (Aelianus 1814, pp. lv–lvi)

Tactics, for Aelian, thus include not only knowledge of military formations and organization, but also knowledge regarding the physical, biological medical,
and ‘moral power’ that goes into constituting and forming a good rank and file of soldiers in every particular battle situation. In this highly detailed account of military conduct, then, we see that the art of tactics in fact encompasses far more than knowledge of military formations and their organization – indeed, the art of tactics involves a knowledge of and acute concern for the health, well-being, discipline, virtue, frugality, and economy of each and all.

For this reason, we are told that the leader of any singular military troop formation must be the ‘best’, and is referred to as the hegemonion. One of the most basic battle formations, as Aelian describes in the treatise, is called the ‘right induction’, or the ‘epagoge’ (Aelianus 1814, p. 101, 129). At the front is the most brave, courageous and most virtuous, who is called the hegemon, flanked in order by his followers, called the epistatea. The epagoge, the right induction, may only be formed with an arche, a first principle or starting point, who takes a stand as the most virtuous, courageous, and bravest. Induction, the epagoge formation, may only be formed with the constitution of the ideal, virtuous soldier. The formation of an epagoge, therefore – just as the knowledge required to master the art of tactics in the manner of Hadrian – necessarily includes the study of what constitutes the ideal, courageous and virtuous soldier. The epagoge – literally ‘a bringing-together’ in order to defeat an enemy – is therefore a concept for a military formation, a term of war. It applies to the domain of experience known as ‘tactics’ and refers to the physical, moral, biological, economical, spatial, and disciplinary constitution of soldiers for the purposes of bringing them together, organizing them and leading them in order to defeat an enemy in battle. The art of tactics thus depends upon the knowledge required to constitute the formation of leaders [hegemonion] and followers [epistatae]; it refers to the knowledge required to constitute good, healthy, obedient, disciplined, frugal, and strong followers.

The detailed account of the military conduct of Hadrian shows a highly complex form of military pastorship whereby relations of individualized care, discipline, and normalization are combined with the art of collective welfare and economy. As a military leader [hegemon] who sets the example for his followers [epistatae], the figure of Hadrian displays a complex ‘military pastorship’ in which mechanisms of individualization are combined with procedures of totalization. The figure of the epagoge, the military formation led by an exemplary leader of men, then seems to contradict, or at least provide an exception or correction, to Foucault’s claim that ‘The idea of the deity, or the king, or the leader, as a shepherd followed by a flock of sheep wasn’t familiar to the Greeks and Romans’ (Foucault 2000b, p. 301). Indeed, depending upon our interpretation of what the essential elements of the ‘shepherd–flock’ game are that Foucault (2000b, pp. 301–303) specifies in his Tanner lectures, we can determine to what extent we are justified in speaking of a ‘military pastorate’.

In the Tanner lectures, Foucault (2000b) specifies four essential ‘themes’ of what he wants to call ‘the shepherd–flock’ game that characterizes the pastoral power he identifies as coming out of the Hebraic tradition and which he does not find in Greek or Roman culture. First, ‘the shepherd wields power over a flock rather than over a land’, as opposed to the power wielded by Greek gods or deities over land. Secondly, a shepherd ‘gathers together, guides, and leads his flock’ (Foucault 2000b, p. 301), as opposed to the Greek political statesmen who is charged with uniting individuals through written law. Instead, a shepherd ‘gather together dispersed individuals. They gather together on hearing his voice … the
shepherd’s immediate presence and direct action cause the flock to exist’ (Foucault 2000b, p. 302). Thirdly, the shepherd’s role ‘is to ensure salvation of his flock, not in a generalized and universal way, but in a matter of ‘constant, individualized, and final kindness … for the shepherd ensures his flock’s food; every day he attends to their thirst and hunger’ (Foucault 2000b, p. 302). Whereas Greek deities were viewed as providing for general resources of the land like abundant crops, they weren’t asked ‘to foster a flock day by day’ like the shepherd, who ‘sees that all the sheep, each and every one of them, is fed and saved’ (Foucault 2000b, p. 302). Finally, the shepherd’s power, unlike that of the Greek leader, ‘implies individual attention paid to each member of the flock’, keeping watch over each and all at once. Pastoral power in this sense then implies that a leader must ‘know his flock as a whole, and in detail … not only must he know where good pastures are, the seasons’ laws, and the order of things, he must also know each one’s particular needs’ (Foucault 2000b, p. 303).

If we compare the figure of Hadrian as the hegemon of a military unit of followers, we see striking similarities to the figure of the shepherd wielding pastoral power. First, we see that the hegemon wields power first and foremost over men as opposed to land – wherever he goes, his soldiers go. Secondly, not only does a hegemon like Hadrian gather together dispersed individuals, but the very term epagoge, the military formation Aelian refers to as ‘right induction’, means literally ‘a bringing-together’. In fact, before Aristotle’s epistemological appropriation, the term epagoge was used as a military term designating a gathering of forces to defeat an enemy in battle. In his history of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides (1942) uses the verb epagogein [ἐπαγογεῖν] to refer to the ‘bringing-in’ of forces in preparation for battle:

... οὕτως ὡμὴ στάσις προσχώρησε, καὶ ἐδοξε μᾶλλον, διότι ἐν τοῖς πρώτῃ ἐγένετο, ἐπεὶ ὑστερὸν γε καὶ πᾶν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐκκινήθη, διαφορὸν οὐσῶν ἐκασταχοῦ τοῖς τε τῶν δήμων προστάτας τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἐπάγαγατο, καὶ τοῖς ὀλίγοις τοὺς Λακε- δαιμιόνιοις, καὶ ἐν μὲν εἰρήνη οὐκ ἄν ἐχόντων πρόφασιν ἕως ἐποίμοι παράκαλεν αὐτοῖς, πολεμιζόμενον δὲ καὶ ἐφιμαχίας ἀμα ἐκατέρως τῇ τῶν ἐναντίων κακώσει καὶ σφίσαν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ προσποιήσει ῥάδιος αἱ ἐπαγωγαὶ τοῖς νεοτέρεσιν τι βουλομένους ἐπορίζοντο. (Thucydides 1942, Book III, Ch. 82) (‘So bloody was the march of the revolution, and the impression which it made was the greater as it was one of the first to occur. Later on, one may say, the whole Hellenic world was convulsed; struggles being everywhere made by the popular chiefs to bring in the Athenians, and by the oligarchs to introduce the Lacedaemonians. In peace there would have been neither the pretext nor the wish to make such an invitation; but in war, with an alliance always at the command of either faction for the hurt of their adversaries and their own corresponding advantage, opportunities for bringing in the foreigner were never wanting to the revolutionary parties.’) (Thucydides 1910, Book III, Ch. 82)

Here the ‘bringing-in’ [epagogein] is specifically associated with both the bringing-in of Athenian forces by military leaders as well as the bringing-in of the foreigner for the purposes of recruiting them for defeating an enemy. In both cases, epagoge is a central and necessary part of what Aristotle calls ‘strategy’ in war, whose final end is ‘victory’. Epagoge here is understood as a strategic accumulation of forces in rational preparation for battle. The same holds true for a text by Procopius (1914–1928) titled ‘De Bello’ describing the Persian invasion of the Romans. In that text, Procopius tells of the Persian general, (Α)nd bringing up [ἐπαγαγόν] the whole army there, he opened the action [τὸ τε στράτευμα ὅλον ἐνταῦθα ἐπαγαγόν]
commanding all to shoot with their bows against the parapet. The Romans, meanwhile, in defending themselves, made use of their engines of war and all their bows. (Procopius 1914–1928, Book II, Ch. 17, Sec. 14). This use of epagoge to mean ‘a bringing-together’, specifically of dispersed individual soldiers for the purposes of fighting and overcoming an enemy, is the same use we find in Aelian’s Tactics. The military leader or hegemon is therefore concerned with ‘bringing-together’ individuals for a battle.

In analyzing the third theme of pastoral power – ensuring individual salvation through providing daily sustenance – we also find connections to the figure of the hegemon or military leader. Besides managing and regulating the importation of food, animals and goods that were consumed and used for his soldiers, we are also told that Hadrian maintained supplies and arms for his troops, and ‘visited, in person, his soldiers in sick quarters’. This provisionary and individualized care, lacking some salvific elements of the theme of Christian salvation, is nonetheless striking as a characteristic of a certain kind of military pastorate. The final theme characteristic of the pastoral power of the shepherd – the individualized attention paid to each and all – is also, we find, an essential feature of the hegemon or military leader. Of the conduct of Hadrian, we are told that he not only ‘bestowed rewards upon some, and honors upon others’ and ‘regulated the rank and pay of the army’, but that he also ‘estimated the character of the officers’, ‘paid particular attention to the age of his men; not permitting any to serve who were too young to bear the fatigues of war, nor any whose age rendered them objects of humanity’, and that ‘He endeavored to gain a personal knowledge of them all, and to ascertain their actual number’, and ‘made himself acquainted with all matters in dispute betwixt man and man’ (Aelianus 1814, pp. lv–lvi). From this analysis of the military leader or hegemon as viewed in the conduct of Hadrian, we can see the striking similarity in themes Foucault outlines as essential to the pastoral power of the shepherd–flock relation. These considerations, I conclude, warrant us to speak of a certain ‘military pastorate’ developed in the idea of the hegemon as leader of men. This form of military pastorate, I want to argue, constitutes an ancient form of pastoral power that easily predates the Christian pastorate and its development into the modern political pastorate of ‘police’.

4. Conclusion

This military–pastoral technology, therefore, should be understood as an art constituted between leaders [hegemonion] and followers [epistatae], one which in ancient Greek context has the additional element of defeating or facing off against an enemy that is far less emphasized in the Christian pastorate. This investigation of this military–pastoral technology allows new avenues of research into the nature, origins, and various forms of pastorate and ‘police’ that originate in ancient Greek notions of military and political leadership. In particular, there are two distinct forms of a military–pastoral technology that might be traced to political forms of government. The first form of military–pastoral technology that might be analyzed in its ancient political form is that of the Spartan Politeia, documented by Xenophon and many other ancient political writers (Xenophon 1983). Modeled on the idea of the perfect and orderly military formation, one might analyze the ways that the Spartan politeia, led by the military–shepherd figure Lycurgus, utilized elements of a political technology of the individual in tandem with the
military–pastoral power of Spartan state officials and military leaders. Indeed, the purpose of the Politeia of the Spartans, as one ancient historian writes, ‘was to produce the best possible military machine’ (Moore 1983, p. 113).

The other form a military–pastoral technology might take is the modern form of republican ideas of military–political leadership in the early American republic. The Spartan politeia, in this context, was in fact a direct inspiration for founders like Benjamin Franklin, who himself was widely referred to as ‘the Lycurgus of the new Sparta’.¹ In this way, one might analyze how the military–pastoral technology of ancient Sparta served as an inspiration for the way that American founders both imagined themselves and the nation, while also incorporating ideas about military discipline and the importance of a republican constitution as a mechanism of social control. In doing so, one might trace out the ways in which ancient notions of republican ‘harmony’, ‘order’, and ‘virtue’ originate in ideas about the orderly military formation, and how these ideas influenced modern conceptions of social order, political obligation, legitimacy, and military–political leadership.

Tracing a military–pastoral technology as a form of political pastorate will thus not only challenge Foucault’s claims about the lack of a political pastorate in ancient Greece, but such a task will also force us to reconsider the relationship between government and ‘police’, ‘biopower’ and ‘discipline’. Conducting a genealogy of a military–pastoral technology will in this way open investigations into the various modes of military–pastoral relations that characterize modern political government. Rather than analyzing the authority and legitimacy of ‘government’ through the lens of the ‘shepherd–flock’ relation, one might analyze relations of political authority, legitimacy, and obligation through the lens of the ‘leader–follower’ relation of a military–pastoral technology. In this way, such a genealogy of the military pastorate seeks to re-conceptualize the nature of ‘police’ in ancient and modern governmentalities, and thereby open up new avenues of critical inquiry into the many ways that we are ‘policed’ by relations of a military–pastoral technology.

Note
1. ‘The Lycurgus of the new Sparta, the oracle of politics as well as physics, would have the influence to assure me success.’ Letter to Benjamin Franklin from Barthélemy-Pélage Georgelin du Cosquer. ALS and American Philosophical Society. Paris, 11 June 1778.

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