

Chapter 3

Beyond the Pale: Spies (*Kataskopoi*, *Otakoustai*)

It is almost as difficult to define a spy as to catch one.

The most common word among the Greeks for spies was *kataskopoi*, but throughout the classical era they did not use this term for spies alone: an author might employ it in one context where we would say “spy,” in another where we would understand “scout,” in a third where we would have difficulty translating it at all.¹ *Otakoustai* were consistently used as covert agents, but they were rarely sent abroad.² Is it then anachronistic to distinguish spies from other agents?

The answer to this problem can perhaps be found in a distinction in the social perception of different types of *kataskopoi* (et al.). Some *kataskopoi* (i.e., spies) were perceived by their victims as treacherous and seem to have been subject to legislation concerning treachery; others (i.e., scouts et al.) were not.³ Whereas spies were normally interrogated under

1. Thucydides, e.g., used *kataskopoi* for spies at 6.45.1 (they were not named but were distinguished from other sources reporting to the Syracusans) and 8.6.4 (the *perioikos* Phrynis, discussed shortly); mounted scouts at 6.63.3; and official investigators at 4.27.3–4 (Cleon and Theagenes, chosen by the Athenians to investigate matters at Pylos) and 8.41.1 (men appointed to oversee the Spartan navarch Astyochus). The word *kataskopos* is not found in Homer—he instead used *episkopos* or *skopos* indiscriminately for spies, scouts, watchers, and overseers.

A confusion of terms also existed in late antiquity (cf. Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, 170–72 for a discussion). A similar parallel can be found in American usage during the Civil War: Luvaas (“The Role of Intelligence in the Chancellorsville Campaign, April–May 1863,” in Handel, *Intelligence and Military Operations*, 102–3) observed that “scout” and “spy” were used interchangeably, although properly a differentiation in technique existed between the two classes.

2. Except, perhaps, in Polyb. 16.37.1 (of Nabis’ “large numbers of <ot>*akoustai* and *kataskopoi*”). Cf. *Suda* s.v. Ὀτακουστῆν: “to wish to learn secrets through certain people.” The noun was not used of agents other than spies, although the verb was on occasion (e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.56, of scouts advancing by night, in the sense of relying on ears rather than eyes).

3. Barkan 6, 9, and nn. 2 and 3. Cf. Eur. *Helen* 1173–76; schol. Theocr. 5.876 (*FGrHist* 115 F357). For perceptions of even allied spies as less than honorable, see [Eur.] *Rhesus* 510–17.

torture before execution, there is no indication that other *kataskopoi* suffered fates different from ordinary captives.⁴ Context also provides a distinction, as scouts were only employed by military forces on campaign, while other types of *kataskopoi* were under no such restriction. Further, there is no historical reference to spies being armed, much less armored; their protection lay in anonymity or disguise. Scouts relied on celerity for protection but augmented their defense with light arms; they did not employ disguise.⁵ While officials often conducted investigations openly, spies gathered their information covertly. Finally, while only men served as scouts and officials, spies were recruited from both genders, at least in Syracuse.

Spies may in turn be categorized according to differentiation in practice and such theory as can be found in Xenophon's *Cavalry Commander*.

It is also necessary to have given thought to spies [*kataskopoi*] before the outbreak of war, so that they may be from states friendly to both warring parties and also from merchants; for all states always receive those importing goods as men well disposed to them. Fake deserters [*pseudautomoloi*] can be useful as well. Do not, however, neglect to be on guard even if you have confidence in your spies; rather it is always essential to make preparations as if they have come reporting the enemy to be at hand. For even if your spies are entirely reliable, it is difficult to provide timely information, since many mishaps occur in war.⁶

4. This is not to say that scouts were never killed (cf., e.g., Front. *Strat.* 2.5.15), but there is no evidence for their being tortured. For torture used on spies or suspected spies, see Hdt. 7.146; Demosth. XVIII (*On the Crown*) 132; Polyb. 15.29.5ff.; Athenaeus 2.73.

5. The distinction is somewhat blurred in the literary world of Homer: to which category does Odysseus belong? His adventures in Troy are a blend between those of historical spies and scouts, together with a large dose of fantasy.

The single exception to the spurning of disguises by scouts is found in Xenophon (*Cyr.* 2.4.15–23), when Cyrus' scouts preceded his army disguised as brigands, lest his foes be alerted to the presence of a military force.

6. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.7–8. The *Cavalry Commander*, and indeed Xenophon's *scripta minora* in general, seem to have been consistently neglected by scholars writing on the subject of intelligence. The only mention the *Cavalry Commander* has received in an associated context is in Pritchett (1.131), in his discussion of scouts. S. Lewis has mentioned it (175 n. 10) but interprets it to mean that spies were not important, since they ought to be supplemented with other agents (*phulakes*).

This neglected passage—of no little relevance to the study of Greek espionage—indicates a distinction between three types of spies: fake deserters, merchants, and neutrals.⁷ Would that this distinction could be corroborated by evidence! Instead, in the ancient sources, we find no historical testimony to the use of merchants as spies, although it is logical and probable that they should be recruited, and the guise would almost certainly have been assumed—a case may be made, for instance, for the *perioikos* Phrynīs being a merchant or operating in the guise of one. Richmond cites Odysseus' henchman in the *Philoctetes* as an example of a spy assuming the guise of a merchant, but, if it is permissible to split hairs, this man is not really a spy: his task is to manipulate Philoctetes through the story he tells, rather than to learn information.⁸ Neutrals cannot be found serving as spies, save only in the *Education of Cyrus*, but that work at least proffers material for a discussion later in this chapter. Fake deserters were perhaps the most common manifestations of a broader class of agent: those recruited from a leader's own populace to infiltrate a target. A fourth class, not mentioned in the *Cavalry Commander*, but well represented in other sources, consisted of those people enlisted from an opponent's populace. In antiquity these were generally perceived to be traitors; today they are referred to as "agents in place" by their employers, as traitors by their victims.

If we subject the preceding passage from Xenophon's *Cavalry Com-*

7. Sun Tzu (perhaps s. VI or s. IV) distinguished five types of covert agents (13.5–20): "native" ("those of the enemy's country people"), "inside" ("enemy officials"), "doubled" ("enemy spies whom we employ"), "expendable" (or "death"; "those of our own spies who are deliberately given fabricated information" with the intent of deceiving the enemy who interrogates them), and "living" ("those who return with information," referring to agents recruited from one's own populace). Cf. Chakraborty 25–28 and 18–44 generally, for a study of ancient Indian classifications and functions of spies (those of Kautiliya [probably fl. between s. III and s. I] are particularly interesting). Frederick the Great (122): "There are several kinds of spies: (1) ordinary people who become involved in this profession; (2) double spies; (3) spies of consequence; and (4) those whom you force into this unpleasant business."

There is no conclusive evidence that the Greeks distinguished according to status between secret agents recruited from the foe. Hyperides (*Against Demosthenes* 12) perhaps indicated a difference in quality rather than nature. There is no explicit report of turned spies. The practice of misinformation does not exactly correspond.

8. Richmond 3, citing Sophocles *Philoctetes* 128 and 542. To split the hair yet again, one makes an assumption (albeit a reasonable one) in calling him a merchant. For while the manuscripts developed role attributions labeling him *Emporos*, or "merchant," he is simply a *naukleros*, or "ship captain," in the text itself.

mander to consideration of his implicit basis for distinction, we may arrive at a reconciliation between what he says and the historical examples we have. The key is access, and the categories are essentially three: outsider, neutral, and insider. The outsider is typified by the fake deserter, who is distinguished in syntax and thought from the neutral and merchant. The outsider seeks to infiltrate another state or social group, to which he or she would be denied access if his or her affiliation and purpose were known. Merchants and neutrals, however, are more likely to be admitted to a target state. Merchants were associated more with their trade than with their state of origin, and since their trade was beneficial, their presence was welcome. So, obviously, was the presence of those people from states known to be friendly. They would be permitted a degree of access based on their relationship. That the third category—that of insider, or agent in place—is not mentioned by Xenophon is by no means evidence for his ignorance of the utility of the type in espionage. It may be absent for a number of reasons. For example, agents in place have always been perceived in the Western tradition as corrupt and corrupting and therefore may have been irreconcilable with Xenophon's personal morality, or at least their use was not to be admitted or advocated in a published document; or perhaps Xenophon hesitated to recommend such politically charged and potentially dangerous agents to the young and inexperienced.

Be that as it may, the theoretical categorization of espionage along the lines of access has merit, for the problems faced by each type of spy differed, as did the methods employed to acquire information. Hence they are treated separately in this chapter.

Infiltration Agents

The basic problem of agents recruited from one's own forces was one of access to information—both physical access to other states (particularly those that took measures to exclude them) and acceptance into groups of their compatriots who wished to exclude supporters of the agents' patrons. All such agents had to present themselves as something they were not, and they did this variously through disguise, dissimulation, and innocuity. These agents were more likely to be selected on the basis of their skills or training than were, for instance, agents in place, who were almost by definition amateurs.

Those Operating in an Internal Context

Writers on Greek intelligence have tended to excuse themselves from considering domestic agents in their discussions. Yet while we today distinguish between the CIA and FBI, or MI 6 and MI 5, the distinction was less marked for the Greeks. Admittedly those operating in internal espionage were despised more than their foreign counterparts, but they were still called *kataskopoi* as well as *otakoustai*, and hence they trace their lineage to the same family.

In Syracuse and Cyprus

As Demosthenes pointed out, a monarchic state has a number of advantages over its democratic counterpart with regard to protecting or acting on information. But rulers whose authority rested on the domination of their subjects had peculiar needs of their own: in particular, a need to learn of threats to their power from within as well as without.⁹ Threats of this nature took the form of plots and insurrections, so that the knowledge required by tyrants derived ultimately from information on the fidelity of their subjects, individually and collectively. The tyrant or king was therefore obliged to devote resources to monitor the population. How was this done?

The richest evidence pertains to the tyrants on the western and eastern edges of the Greek world and is derived mainly from Aristotle, Clearchus of Soli (via Athenaeus), and Plutarch.

[The tyrant must] see to it that none of the things his subjects say or do escapes his notice; rather, he must have spies, [*kataskopoi*] like the women called *potagogides* at Syracuse and the spies [*otakoustai*] that Hiero used to send whenever there was any gathering or conference, for when men fear such as these they speak less freely, and if they do speak freely they are less likely to escape notice. (Aristot. *Pol.* 1313b11–16)

Moreover the breed [*genos*] of ears [*ota*] and provocateurs [*prosa-gogides*] make tyrants, who are obliged to know everything, most

9. Thus Plutarch (*de curiositate* 522f–523a), Aelius Aristides (*Eis Basilea* 62), and Dio Cassius (77.17.2) explain the use of spies by kings and tyrants.

detested. Darius Nothus first employed spies [*otakoustai*], since he had no confidence in himself and suspected and feared everyone; and the Dionysii infiltrated provocateurs among the Syracusans. (Plut. *De curiositate* 522f–523a)¹⁰

The monarchs of Cyprus have all accepted the breed [*genos*] of noble parasites [*kolakes*] as useful; for their possession is typical of tyrants. No one knows the number or the appearances of these men (aside from the most conspicuous), as is the case with some Areopagites. The parasites in Salamis—from whom are derived the parasites in the rest of Cyprus—are distinguished according to type [*sungeneia*], one group being called “Gerginoi,” the other “Promalanges.” Of these the Gerginoi hold the position of spies [*kataskopoi*], and eavesdrop while mixing with people throughout the city, in workshops and markets; each day they report back what they hear to those known as “Masters” [*Anaktes*]. The Promalanges, being a type of investigator, conduct inquiries into whatever reported by the Gerginoi seems to be worthy of investigation. And so skillful and plausible is their interaction with all that it seems to me—as they themselves say—that the seed of the noble parasites has been sown by them into foreign lands. (Clearchus frag. 25 in Müller 2:310)¹¹

And a certain noble order in Cyprus, they say, were called “Anaktes.” To these, they say, was referred whatever the spies [*otakoustai*] had heard each day. This was done to keep people throughout the island in order. And such spies are also known as “investigators” [*peuthenes*] as if from the word *investigate* [*peutho*]. (Eustathius 3.515–16)¹²

10. Cf. Synesius *Egyptians* 2.8 on hatred of this sort.

11. From Athen. *Deip.* 255f–256b. Athenaeus notes that some say that their ancestry is to be traced back to captive Trojans whom Teucer led off to settle in Cyprus. Berve (no. 224 [Γεργίθιος]) said that Clearchus’ work was named “Gergithios, or Concerning Flattery” after a certain Gergithius who followed and flattered Alexander. Unfortunately, neither Athenaeus nor Berve recorded their sources.

12. The translation of πευθῆνες and πεύθω is rather forced to show the parallel. According to the LSJ (s.vv.), πεύθην denotes an “inquirer or spy,” while πεύθω means “give notice, lay an information.” Πεύθω is an older form of πυθάνομαι, which signifies learning by questioning.

These four passages point to the existence of organized, permanent, and perhaps professional intelligence networks in the fifth and fourth centuries. Although they apply to various rulers, taken together they give rise to some interesting problems.

Let us begin with the agents themselves. It is immediately striking, given the notable absence of women in the roles of overt agents, that Aristotle specified female agents employed in Syracuse. There have been attempts to emend the text here to masculine forms of the article and participle (αἱ to οἱ and καλούμεναι to καλούμενοι) on the basis of the masculine plural article (τοὺς) used in the passage quoted from Plutarch.¹³ Masculine forms, however, were used by Plutarch (and in Greek generally) to encompass both genders when a mixed group was referred to. Such is probably the case here. Further, when describing the retribution inflicted on the agents of Dionysius II after his overthrow, Plutarch used the term ἀνθρώπους (people) rather than ἄνδρας (restricted to men) for the victims of their wrath.¹⁴

Female *potagogides* were probably recruited from flute girls and prostitutes (*hetairai*), who would have had access to the private gatherings and drinking parties of prominent citizens.¹⁵ Aristotle implies that respectable women (who were denied access to these gatherings) and female servants could also be suborned.¹⁶

Other types of agents—the Gerginoi and the Promalanges—demonstrate a degree of specialization. From Clearchus' passage, one would

13. Cf. Newman 4:455 on Aristotle *Politics* 1313b13.

14. Plut. *Dion* 28.1.

15. *Potagogides* is the Doric form—i.e., the form that the Syracusans themselves would have used—of *prosagogides*. The term might have been a nickname (“jackal”) or euphemism (“one who introduces”); LSJ s.v. I and II.

Polyaenus (5.2.13) told of Dionysius rounding up musicians and *hetairai*. These people were tortured and questioned as to the identity of Dionysius' opponents, in light of what they had heard while entertaining at gatherings. It is possible that the tyrant did this as a cover for recalling his agents for debriefing or instructions, but such a practice could only diminish the ability of his spies to gather information, since people would henceforth be wary of what they said in front of any *hetaira* or musician.

For the use of prostitutes as spies in fifteenth-century Normandy, cf. A. Curry, “Sex and the Soldier in Lancastrian Normandy, 1415–50” *Reading Medieval Studies* 14 (1988): 25–26. Cf. also Chakraborty 25, 27–28, on Kautiliya's use of women as spies: among these were *vrishalis* (identified as prostitutes) and courtesans.

16. Aristotle *Politics* 1313b32–35, in which he suggested that tyrants promote the status of wives, so that they might bring information against their husbands. On the face of it, one might dismiss this statement as cynical or misogynistic, save for Plutarch attesting to just such an appeal made to Dion's wife by Dionysius I (Plut. *Dion* 21.7–8).

expect the Gerginoi to be competent observers and dissimulators, without having to be intellectually gifted or expert in the use of reasoned deduction. Their duty seems to have been simply to gather information, not to evaluate it, except insofar as to filter out irrelevant detail from their reports. The methods of the Promalanges are more difficult to assess, since a clear picture of the process of investigation or inquiry is not forthcoming, and since modes of inquiry are variable. It would appear that they, unlike the Gerginoi, undertook their researches overtly. Such a proposal is made all the more viable by Clearchus' restriction of the term *kataskopoi* to the Gerginoi; investigators (*ereunetai*) possess no such intrinsic quality of secrecy. Further, Clearchus noted that the identities of the more conspicuous were known. This system would afford the Anaktes secret access to information all but impossible for overt agents to discover, through the Gerginoi, yet permits them, through their delegated agents, the Promalanges, to pursue leads with inquiries endowed with official sanction and authority. Such a hypothesis would make the division of the Cypriot organization more rational, but one must acknowledge that rationality is no guarantee of accuracy, as any student of the history of intelligence well knows. Nevertheless, analogies may be found in Persian practice, which would be all too familiar to archaic and classical Cypriots. The Persian kings employed two sorts of agents for monitoring their subjects: these were called the "Eyes" and "Ears" of the King. The "eyes" were not covert agents but rather officials of some stature who undertook investigations at the behest of their sovereign. The nature of the "ears" is less well attested, but they seem to have been drawn from humbler stations and to have acted as spies in a manner similar to that of the Gerginoi.¹⁷ It is

17. A conceptual distinction between the use of ears and eyes exists at least as early as Xenophon and as late as Basilios (*On the Holy Spirit* 1.1). Kroll (1070) also traced the *kolakes* in Clearchus' passage to origins in the "eyes" and "ears" of the Persian kings. He did not, however, draw a distinction between Gerginoi and Promalanges but generally linked the Gerginoi with both "eyes" and "ears." See Hdt. 1.114; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.10–12, 8.6.16 (in which the "eye" is linked with the son or the *adelphos*, of the king); Xen. *Oeconomicus* 4.6–8; Aristotle *Politics* 5.9.2–3; *Suda* s.v. Ὀφθαλμὸς βασιλέως. Cf. Aesch. *Persians* 960; Aristoph. *Acharnians* 92. [Aristotle] (*De Mundo* 398a) and the scholiasts to Aristophanes (schol. vet. on *Acharn.* 92a, 92b—the latter identifying the "eyes" with the satraps, although this does not sit well with Xenophon's account) distinguished the "eyes" and "ears" of the king according to status and function.

For further mention of the "eye of the king," see Plut. *Artaxerxes* 12.1–3 and the following citations (which are owed to Hirsute): Lucian *De mercede conductis* 29; Lucian *Adversus indoctum* 23; Heliodorus *Aethiopica* 8.17; Ael. Arist. *Oration* 16; Pollux 2.84; Themistius *Oration* 21.225d; Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 1.21; Hesychius s.v. βασιλ. ὄφθ.; Dio Chrysostomus 3.118. See also D. Lewis 19–20 and nn. 97–100; Dvornik 24–27, 31.

entirely possible, even probable, that Cypriot monarchs imitated their Persian overlords in this way.¹⁸

Issues of organization lead naturally into those of supervision and hence to the Anaktes. The word *Anax* means ruler, or lord; in Cyprus, according to Aristotle, the Anaktes were the sons and *adelphoi* (brothers and perhaps cousins) of the monarch.¹⁹ The choice of kin may have been influenced by an optimistic hope that relatives would be more faithful than hirelings, since a traitor working as a director of secret police would be a very real danger to any ruler. Also, the accuracy of a tyrant's perception of his situation would be influenced by the competence and reliability of his intelligence officers. While reliability was fostered by kinship, competence might have been augmented by experience and continuity in office; however, patronage systems do not ensure that the best qualified person holds authority.

Given this testimony, we must posit a group of individuals supervising the intelligence effort on behalf of their relative and sovereign. They are said to have received information from the Gerginoi in an intermediate step before the Promalanges went out to follow up matters deemed important. Clearchus' phrase "whatever reported by the Gerginoi seems to be worthy of investigation" does not specify to whom the information seems worthy. He is probably referring to the Anaktes, since they not the Promalanges, were the recipients of the news. The tasks of the Promalanges, then, would be assigned to them by the Anaktes, who were prob-

Hirsch (101–39) has argued that the "eye of the king" was a fabrication of the Greeks, citing as evidence the absence of such a title in Persian sources. Perhaps the Greek title was a nickname, such as "spook," "cop," or the like? Be that as it may, Persian narrative sources are decidedly scarce and even myths as outrageous as that of Midas' ears may have some reason for existence, however altered from reality. The myth of the donkey's ears possessed by the Phrygian King Midas has been explained in antiquity as derived from the number of "ears" [*ota, otakoustai*] that he employed [schol. vet. on Aristoph. *Wealth* 287; schol. on Plato 408b; *Suda* s.v. *Μίδας*].

18. Aristotle (*Politics* 1313a34–38) noted that tyrants borrowed many of their safeguards from the Persian Empire and from Periander of Corinth as well. Evidence for Persian influence in archaeological remains of the archaic period is limited, but Cyprus became part of the fifth satrapy of the Persian Empire around 525, and according to Diodorus, Persian garrisons were maintained at intervals during the fifth century (cf. Reyes 89–97). Dvornik (15) speaks briefly of an Egyptian high official known as "the eyes and ears of the King" (he does not, however, cite a source). If such an office existed in pre-conquest Egypt, it is conceivable that the Persians borrowed it from there.

19. LSJ s.v. ἄναξ II, III; Harpocration s.v. ἄνακτες καὶ ἀνασσαί: "Isocrates [letter] to Evagoras: it is likely that the rhetor makes mention of some practice in Cyprus. For Aristotle says, in the *Constitution of the Cypriots*: 'the sons and brothers [*adelphoi*] of the king are called "Anaktes," the sisters [*adelpchai*] and wives [*gunaikes*] "Anassai.'" Cf. Isoc. IX (*Evag.*) 72. As noted previously, the "eyes of the king" might also be *adelphoi*.

ably responsible for obtaining intelligence goals from their sovereign and communicating the consequent results to him, perhaps bringing along Gerginoi or Promalanges as eyewitnesses. The Anaktes could therefore be called intelligence officers, as opposed to information gatherers. If this was in fact the case, it may represent another parallel to Persian practice—in at least two instances, Persian kings appointed “control officers” to foreign traitors who were covertly working for them among their enemies.²⁰

Communication between Anaktes, Gerginoi and Promalanges was complicated by the fact that some (the Gerginoi) were secret while others (logically the Anaktes, given that they were the kin of the tyrant) were known. The Gerginoi were therefore faced with the problem of reporting to the Anaktes while at the same time retaining their secrecy. This problem would have been solved most expeditiously by resorting to the forms of covert communication mentioned in chapter 4. I have suggested that the Promalanges conducted investigations openly; if so, they could have met with the Anaktes without any difficulties. If the Promalanges operated covertly, however, they would be subject to the same strictures as the Gerginoi.

The information provided by Clearchus and Eustathius, scant as it is, is the best explicit evidence available for intelligence officers supervising covert agents on behalf of a sovereign in a manner bearing some kinship with twentieth-century control officers. The time limits in which this network operated are not certain, but the passages are associated with the late fifth and early fourth centuries, since Harpocration links the Anaktes with Evagoras (435–374/3).²¹ The present tense of *καλοῦνται* implies that they still existed in Aristotle’s time. Moreover, a letter purporting to be from Nicocles (Evagoras’ son and successor) to his subjects, in which the monarch warned his people that they could not hope to hide anything from him, suggests that the practice did not die with Evagoras.²²

Details on the supervision of the Syracusan *ota*, *otakoustai*, and *potagogides* are less forthcoming. It is not impossible that these agents

20. Thuc. 1.129.1ff.; Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.3.

21. The limits *post* and *ante quem* would technically be the Trojan War and the death of Aristotle. The earlier date is not to be considered seriously, but it is quite possible that the spies remained operative long after their chroniclers.

22. Isoc. III (*Nicocles*) 51–52. Cf. idem 16, 53; II (*to Nicocles*) 23; IX (*Evag.*) 42. Nicocles seemed to rely on the consciences of loyal citizens to keep him informed, but then again it would not be politic to speak of your secret police while lauding your enlightenment, would it?

reported to an officer subordinate to the tyrant: Aristotle, in his *Politics*, recommended a magistracy (*arkhe*) for keeping an eye on potential dissidents.²³ The alternative, that the tyrant oversaw his agents personally, raises difficulties, especially with respect to security (i.e., that of the tyrant's person had to be balanced by that of the agent's cover). But there is always a risk involved in delegating supervision of a secret service. This is indirectly illustrated by the example of Dion, who employed the Athenian Callipus, a companion and fellow student of Plato, as an agent provocateur. Callipus used the opportunity to solicit partners for a plot against Dion, doing so without fear since when he was reported by those who spurned his overtures, his defense was always at hand: he was only doing his job.²⁴ Eventually Dion met a nasty end at Callipus' hands, although the latter had little profit of his treachery. Perhaps fear of such an event dissuaded the Syracusan tyrants from delegating the supervision of their covert agents and they instead faced the risk of personal encounters. Solid evidence is lacking for either alternative, but this last may be preferable, since there is no mention of an individual to whom the Dionysii accorded such authority. Further, surviving anecdotes suggest that the tyrants expected to learn of news firsthand and had adequate security measures for receiving potential assassins. Finally, the identities of at least some of the agents were suspected: when Dion "liberated" Syracuse, the people are said to have seized Dionysius' provocateurs and killed them.²⁵

While the discussion to this point has focused on Cyprus and Syracuse, the preceding passages from Aristotle, Plutarch, and Clearchus lead us to believe that the use of covert agents was typical of Greek tyrannies

23. Aristotle *Politics* 1308b20–22: "Since people also revolt because of their private lives, it is necessary to set up some magistracy [*arkhé*] to inspect those who live in a manner deleterious to the constitution." Aristotle further noted that this practice was necessary in all forms of constitution; he specifically included democracies and oligarchies. Newman (4:392–93) conceived of this office as one instituted to curb extravagance, drawing analogies with the ephorate at Sparta (Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 8.4; but cf. Polyb. 18.53.4–5), the Areopagus in Athens (Isoc. VII [*Areopag.*] 46; cf. Plut. *Solon* 22), and similar bodies in other states. See also Plato *Laws* 945–48.

24. Plut. *Dion* 54.4–5, 56.2. Cf. Macchiavelli *Discorsi* 3.6.

25. Plut. *Dion* 28.1–2: "and they seized many of those called *protagogides*, people who were unholy and hateful to the gods, who stalked the city and mixed with the Syracusans, stirring up trouble and informing the tyrant of the plans and words of each." The fact that their covers were blown (if in fact the targets of the peoples' hate were indeed Dionysius' agents) does not necessitate that no subordinate was employed, but the death of their commander, had he been known, would surely have been mentioned.

in general. Aristotle and Plutarch used Hiero and the Dionysii as examples illustrative of means that *all* tyrants must take for self-preservation. Clearchus described the possession and utility of “noble *kolakes*” as something characteristic of tyrants; he further spoke of the spread of the employment of these agents to lands outside Cyprus, not limiting the attribution to Syracuse.²⁶

In Macedon

The evidence for domestic infiltration agents begins (perhaps not coincidentally) with Alexander the Great’s concern lest tensions in his camp fester and give rise to plots. It is possible that he adopted this practice under the influence of his exposure to Persian practice, but it takes little imagination to conceive of such measures as familiar to the likes of his father and predecessors. The sources do not mention an established network of covert agents; rather, Alexander’s security arrangements seem to have been overt or ad hoc, perhaps in keeping with his character. The one example of his employment of a covert agent—Antigone, Philotas’ mistress—seems to have come about as a result of opportunism rather than precaution. Philotas, who was prominent in the Macedonian army, had complained to his mistress about Alexander’s self-aggrandizement. Antigone was no better than Philotas at holding her tongue and word eventually reached the ears of another officer, Craterus. Even before this there was little love lost between Philotas and Craterus, who competed for recognition and command. Craterus had Antigone brought in secret to Alexander. Plutarch reports that the king instructed her to continue to see Philotas but to inform “him” about all that Philotas said.²⁷ The *him* (αὐτόν) of Plutarch’s text is somewhat vague—it seems to signify Alexander, but it could also denote Craterus.²⁸ Assuming for the moment that

26. Clearchus frag. 25 in Müller 2:310. Dionysius might have been a model for other tyrants in this respect, even as he was to Clearchus of Heracleia with respect to mercenaries (cf. Diod. Sic. 15.81.5; Parke 97).

27. Plut. *Alex.* 48.5–49.2; Plut. *Mor.* 339d–f. Cf. Q. Curtius 6.7–11; Diod. Sic. 17.79–80; Arrian *Anab.* 3.26.1–3; Strabo 15.2.10; Justin 12.5.3. See Berve (no. 86) and Wilcken (“Antigone” no. 7, *RE* 1(1894): 2403) for further information on Antigone. Arrian (*Anab.* 3.26.1) referred to earlier charges made during the Egyptian campaign; Bosworth (*Commentary*, 361 ad loc.) suggested that since Antigone had been captured at Damascus, she might have been reporting on Philotas soon after the fall of that city.

28. Badian has argued that the Philotas affair was prompted by a desire on Alexander’s part to get rid of Philotas, rather than the other way around. He further noted (337): “it was he [Craterus] who had initiated the plan to spy on Philotas through the services of his mistress.”

Plutarch himself had a clear and reliable source and that he was referring to Craterus, then there is a possibility that Craterus had the charge of internal security, and the appointment of such a notable man to an office of this kind would accord it no little importance. Should this be the case, Engels may be right to posit an organization existing among Alexander's troops, but more solid foundations are needed for an edifice of any stability.²⁹

One of Alexander's letters to Antipater reputedly contained admonitions to retain guards (*phulakes*) about himself as a precaution against plots.³⁰ An anonymous composition containing a dialogue between two Macedonians suggested that Antipater not only took Alexander's advice but improved on it. When one character complains, the other whispers: "Look out! Look everywhere, Mnesippus, lest some *prosgogos* or some *kataskopos* overhear us. For never was there law or democracy in Macedonia; rather, we have been subjected to tyranny and fear."³¹ Mnesippus then goes on to say that Antipater became hateful after the death of Alexander removed him from all constraint. The writer may here be contrasting a noble king with a base successor in the manner of Aeschylus in the *Persians*—that is, making the contrast more marked than it was. The use of covert agents by Antipater before the death of Alexander (and, indeed, by the kings before him) is not explicitly denied, although the situation is presented as having deteriorated. While a literary composition of the second century A.D. is hardly conclusive evidence, it certainly is possible that the regent employed spies while governing Macedonia.

In Laconia

Hollow Lacedaemon still preserves its secrets, but there are some glimmers of what went on behind the bronze curtain. It appears that the ephors received information, both covert and open, whether originating at home or brought to Lacedaemon from abroad, although before the fifth century or under strong kings like Agesilaus, their prerogative may

29. Engels (336) cited as evidence the detection of Philotas' plot and the censorship of mail. One might conjecture that Alexander's later apprehensions about plots (attested, e.g., in Plut. *Alex.* 55.7) would have led him to take such a measure.

30. Plut. *Alex.* 29.11; the letters to which Plutarch alluded have neither survived nor won universal recognition as authentic.

31. Anon. *Alexandergeschichte* (from P. Freib.) *FGrHist* 153F7.

well have been less than absolute.³² There is also evidence suggesting that they directed information-gathering efforts within its borders as well.

The first indications of their activity in this realm are found in the fragments of the historian Antiochus and are probably fictional. Antiochus related that when the Spartans learned of the plot of the Parthenioi, they secretly sent men to infiltrate the circle of revolutionaries to discover the details of the plot.³³ Somewhat less mythical, but conceivably disinformation on the part of the Lacedaemonians, is the story of the fall of the regent Pausanias. Pausanias entered into a treacherous correspondence with King Xerxes of Persia, which came to light when a courier, an anonymous slave from Argilus, considering that his predecessors had never been seen again, opened the letter he was to carry to Artabazus (Pausanias' Persian control officer). Having found his death written therein and other contents unequivocally treacherous, he delivered the letter to the ephors. They in turn felt that such a grievous charge against so illustrious a personage had to be verified and came up with a scheme to overhear a contrived conversation between the courier and Pausanias, in which the regent's guilt was manifest. For all the care inherent in this process, human frailty once again broke security, and out of friendship one of the ephors gave a covert nod to Pausanias just before his arrest. He fled to sanctuary but found only starvation.³⁴

Xenophon's account of the conspiracy of Cinadon describes a some-

32. A few examples of ephors receiving information: Hdt. 1.67–68; Thuc. 1.131.1, 1.132.5; Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.1. The kings received information when commanding in the field, most of which was provided by military or diplomatic sources (e.g., Hdt. 7.219ff.). Starr (32) proposed that the ephors undertook this duty in the fifth century and that formerly it had been in the hands of the kings, and in this he may be correct.

The link between ephors and intelligence is implicit in their very name: ἔφορος is derived from ἐπι + ὄρω (literally “look” or “watch over”). This sense no doubt became obscured with time and usage, as did ἐπίσκοπος (ἐπι + σκοπέω, also meaning “watch over,” but with an association of evaluation or consideration), which in Homer's poems can denote a spy or overseer, but which eventually came to signify a bishop. Cf. *Suda* s.v. Σκοπός.

33. Antiochus of Syracuse *FGrHist* 555F13, found in Strabo 6.3.2. Phalanthus was supposed to have eventually led the conspirators to found the colony of Taras. The versions of Ephorus (from Strabo 6.3.3), Aeneas Tacticus (11.2), and Polyaeus (2.14.2) differ in that they focused on the initial information given by helot informers, while the man with the hat was not distinguished as a covert agent. An analogous passage in Aeneas Tacticus (11.7) describes the use of covert agents by a leader of the democratic government in Argos against an oligarchic faction preparing a coup.

34. Thuc. 1.128.2–134.4. See also Diod. 11.44–45; Plut. *Arist.* 23; Plut. *Cimon* 6; Paus. 3.17.7–9.

what different type of operation.³⁵ Instead of the infiltration of covert agents among the conspirators, a trap was devised by concealing the assignment of the state's agents until the suspect was in their power. The story begins with an unspecified member of a conspiracy bringing word to the ephors of Cinadon's involvement in a plot to overthrow the government. The ephors questioned this source in detail on the numbers and arms of the conspirators and on the date set for the coup. Finding the plot to be of a serious nature, they were alarmed and did not call an official meeting lest a leak occur or lest this very action suggest to the conspirators that their plans had been revealed.³⁶ For similar reasons, they devised an assignment for Cinadon that necessitated that he leave town. The task the ephors gave to Cinadon was to go to the nearby village of Aulon and arrest some helots and Aulonians (whose names were recorded on a *skutale*), as well as a beautiful woman of that place who was apparently corrupting visiting Spartiates. Curiously, Xenophon noted that Cinadon had done such work before.³⁷ They promised to provide three wagons, as if to bring back these captives, and directed him to go to the most senior (*presbutatos*) of the marshals of the knights (*hippagretai*).³⁸ The ephors had made arrangements with the marshal to enroll as aides a number of those "who happened to be on hand." These "aides" were soon reinforced by a company of knights (*hippeis*). They arrested Cinadon when safely removed from view of the people of Sparta, interrogated him (under torture, according to Polyaeus), and on his confession, sent a list of the names of his conspirators back to the ephors as swiftly as possible. The ephors thereupon arrested the most notable and bid the *hippeis* to return Cinadon for further questioning on his motives for instigating the plot.

This passage demonstrates not only the direction of covert agents by ephors but also the existence of a cadre of men from whom these agents

35. Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.4ff.; Polyaeus 2.14.1.

36. Their caution and arrangements would have been commended by Macchiavelli (cf. *Discorsi* 3.6) and are entirely justified if Thucydides' story of Pausanias is true.

37. Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.9. According to Xenophon (3.3.5), Cinadon was not a Spartiate; hence he would not have been eligible to be a *hippeus*. No comment was made on whether he had passed through the *agoge* (and so the *krupteia*). His participation in the sort of work here associated with the *hippeis* is thus curious.

38. While *presbutatos* can mean "eldest," it can also denote high authority—hence the ambiguous translation given. The *hippagretai* enrolled the *hippeis*.

would be recruited.³⁹ Anderson went so far as to maintain, on its basis, that the *hippeis* were employed as “a police and intelligence service.”⁴⁰ He may be on the right track: this is not the only testimony to their activity in this field. Herodotus related a tale of the Spartiate Lichas who discovered the bones of Orestes in Tegea. The merit of the tale as history is dubious, but it contains some interesting information: “The Benefactors [*agathoergoi*] are always the five most senior [*presbutatoi*] of those citizens who retire from the *hippeis* each year; these, for the duration of the year after leaving the *hippeis*, are obliged by the Spartan state to go wherever it bids on active service.”⁴¹ This service, as the story makes clear, has associations with information gathering. But who are the *presbutatoi* of whom Herodotus speaks, and was there a link to the *presbutatos* of the marshals (*hippagretai*) of whom Xenophon spoke? It would be convenient to identify the *presbutatoi* with the marshals, but these numbered three rather than five.⁴² It is not impossible that the lower number could be due to a change in practice between the periods in which Herodotus and Xenophon wrote, but there is no foundation for such a proposal, and the two writers give the same total (three hundred) for the number of *hippeis*. An escape is to take *presbutatos* in its literal meaning of “eldest” or “most senior” and attribute the parallel to coincidence, but such a solution is hardly satisfying.⁴³

39. Cozzoli 96 argued that the “aides” were not *hippeis*, on the grounds that they were Cinadon’s social superiors and therefore would not have been subordinated to his command. But what then would be the purpose of applying to the *hippagretes*? Cozzoli’s explanation that a *hippagretes* was specified because he knew which elements of the population were trustworthy, having supervised the selection of the *hippeis*, is possible but by no means conclusive.

40. Anderson 249 and nn. 105–6.

41. Hdt. 1.67. This is an odd bit of information for Herodotus to have picked up, and one wonders how he did so. A scholiast on Aelius Aristides 172 identified the *agathoergoi* with the commissioners described in Plato’s *Laws*, who traveled with an eye to learning of good laws and measures in other states (cf. Plato *Laws* 951–52). Given the subject matter of Aristides, it is not surprising that a scholar studying him would know enough Plato to draw this parallel, but I question its basis in reality. The duties of the *agathoergoi* are not elsewhere clarified, but cf. Hesychius s.v. ἀγαθοεργοί and *Suda* s.v. οἱ ἐκ τῶν Ἐφόρων.

42. It is conceivable that Γ (three) could have been corrupted into Ε (five) at Herodotus 1.67, but there are no indications of variant readings in the MSS. Each of the three *hippagretai* was selected by the ephors to enroll one hundred *hippeis* (Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 4.3). The role of the ephors in choosing the *hippagretai* does not in itself demand a link between the latter and intelligence, since the ephors had many duties unrelated to this sphere.

43. Οἱ πρεσβύτατοι does not here mean *old* men, as Xenophon specifically referred to the *hippeis* as chosen from those in their prime (*Lac. Pol.* 4.1: ἡβώντων; 4.2: ἡβώντες; cf.

Whatever the status of the *presbutatoi*, the *hippeis* are at least as likely candidates for the domestic covert intelligence operations as the *krupteia*, which has often been perceived as a Spartan secret service. In the classical period, the functions of the *krupteia* reputedly centered on murdering helots rather than gathering information.

The magistrates from time to time sent out into the country at large the most discreet of the young warriors, equipped only with daggers and such supplies as were necessary. In the day time they scattered into obscure and out of the way places, where they hid themselves and lay quiet; but in the night they came down into the highways and killed every Helot whom they caught.⁴⁴

If this is true—and it may well be true, even though it smacks of the enduring influence of Athenian propaganda—we must conclude that the murders either were carried out to enforce a curfew (as they were said to be perpetrated at night) or were random acts of terror. They would have had nothing to do with intelligence. Alternatively, one might review the propaganda posters used by all belligerents in World War II and reconsider the ultimate sources for Spartan history: perhaps the *krupteia* was in fact an institution not unlike that experienced by ephebes in other states (such as Athens and Argos), which amounted to lessons in rough living and campaigning in hill country and included patrolling and observation in its curriculum.⁴⁵ So it would seem from our only classical source, Plato, who mentions the training in the hills but says nothing of a reign of terror.⁴⁶

Another vignette in Plutarch depicts the head of the *krupteia*, Demoteles, being called on by King Cleomenes III at the battle of Sellasia (222). Cleomenes, since he could not see any Illyrian or Acarnanian contingents and wondered what they were up to, asked Demoteles to check the situation on the flanks of the Lacedaemonian line. Demoteles, who had been bribed, deceitfully assured him that the flanks were safe.⁴⁷ Walbank has

Cozzoli 88; Lazenby 10–11 and 182 n. 28, where his explanation of the relation of recruitment to age groups is difficult to reconcile with the preceding passages and *Lac. Pol.* 4.3, which he cited).

44. Plut. *Lyc.* 28.1, Loeb translation.

45. Cf. Jeanmaire *passim*; Mitchell 162; J. Oehler, “Krypteia,” *RE* vol. 11.2, 2031–32.

46. Plato *Laws* 633b and the scholia ad loc. Sinnigen (“The Roman Secret Service,” 65) conceived of the *krupteia* as a sort of secret service; Losada (111), as a “security force.”

47. Plut. *Agis and Cleom.* 28.2–3.

pointed out the absurdity of this story, and one cannot help but agree with him that it is odd.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the passage is worth discussing, though problems of historicity must be kept in mind. Plutarch's account derives from Phylarchus, an Athenian who was alive at the time of the battle.⁴⁹ Phylarchus tended to be dramatic, and Polybius condemns him at some length as a source, perhaps in part legitimately; but no doubt Polybius' tirade owes some of its vigor to the different political views of the two historians—Phylarchus was an admirer of Cleomenes and a detractor of Aratus and Polybius' native city of Megalopolis.⁵⁰

Let us begin with the position of Demoteles (who is otherwise unknown). It is rather vague: he is “the man appointed over the *krupteia*.”⁵¹ Nowhere else is there an allusion to such an office in Sparta, but it is conceivable that one existed by the third century. Given that the battle of Sellasia was a recent memory for Phylarchus' audience, the historian would have had a motive to make his account plausible, even if it was not entirely accurate. Thus the institution to which he refers may have existed, even if the event never occurred. Alternatively, he may have been conflating the *krupteia* with other bodies that collected information, or he may have been using a well-known entity in lieu of a less familiar (in how many movies does one meet the GRU, as opposed to the KGB?). In what manner is Demoteles expected to know about the absence of the Illyrians and Acarnanians? Was he called on to inform Cleomenes whether they had joined Doso's march south to Sellasia or to report their position in the opposing line of battle? While a military intelligence officer may be expected to know the answer to either question (e.g., through scouts, deserters, or prisoners), a chief of a (more strategically oriented) “secret service” employing spies would be much more likely to know the first than the second. The director of an organization encompassing both external and internal intelligence (such as the *hippeis*) might answer both questions, but the chief of a purely domestic institution (as the *krupteia* is described) would not likely know either.

In summary, it seems best to sacrifice assurance to honesty: the *krupteia* may have had a role in intelligence by the third century, or it may not. Before that time, it is not mentioned in connection with intelli-

48. F.W. Walbank 1:285 on Polyb. 2.69.6.

49. *FGrHist* 81F59.

50. Polyb. 2.56.1–64.6.

51. Plut. *Agis and Cleom.* 28.2: τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς κρυπτείας τεταγμένον.

gence, and instead it is probable that in Sparta internal intelligence was directed by the *hippeis*.

In the Athenian Empire

There has been some attention paid to the nature of information gathering within the Athenian Empire. Meiggs proposed that the *proxenoi* served to keep the Athenians apprised of the situation in their subject states; his idea was developed by Gerolymatos into a pervasive system of intelligence and fifth-column activity. Balcer drew parallels between the *episkopoi* and the king's "eyes" and detailed Meiggs' and Losada's association of *episkopos* and *proxenos*.⁵² While it is evident that the *proxenoi* were valuable for gathering intelligence, the likelihood of their doing so covertly is minimal, since the status of individuals accorded *proxenia* was generally known and was in fact published on *stelai*.

Bekker, in the *Anecdota Graeca*, records a reference to an Athenian secret service: "secret: a certain magistracy sent by the Athenians into their subject cities so that they could secretly control what happened outside of Athens. For this reason they [the people who were sent] were called secret <agents>."⁵³ Meiggs dismissed this statement, and Losada's treatment of it was understandably cautious.⁵⁴ In its defense, it can only muster a brief comment in the scholia to Aristophanes, which mentions a secret *arkhe* in Thasos, which might have been instituted by the Athenians after that island revolted in the 460s.⁵⁵ Having no further evidence, I can only point out that this was not likely to be the *proxenos-episkopos* network. If a secret service existed, the Athenians were as effective in concealing its details as they were those of their Eleusinian mysteries.

52. Balcer, "Athenian Episkopos," passim. See also Meiggs, *Athenian Empire*, 215; Gerolymatos, *Espionage*, 93–95, Losada 112.

53. Bekker 1:273.

54. Meiggs, *Athenian Empire*, 214; Losada 112 n. 5. Cf. J. Oehler, "Κρυπτεία," *RE* 11.2, 2032.

55. Schol. Aristoph. *Thesm.* 600 (alluding to the women's realization that their meeting has been infiltrated by a spy, that is, Mnesilochus in drag): κρυπτός· ἀντί τοῦ κεκρυμμένος. καλοῦνται μὲν γὰρ καὶ κρύπτοι παρὰ Πλάτωνι τῶ φιλοσόφῳ [= *Laws* 763b, regarding the Spartan *krupteia*] καὶ παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων πολιτείαις. καὶ ἐν Θάσῳ ἀρχὴ τις κρύπται [κρυπτευταί Bernhardt]. κρυπτός· ἀπλῶς ἀντί τοῦ κεκρυμμένος. The debate over the exact date of the revolt of Thasos need not concern us here.

Those Operating in an External Context

Fake Deserters or Fugitives

With respect to intelligence, fake deserters were employed for two different and (for the Greeks) mutually exclusive ends: to give the enemy misinformation or to gather information and return. Xenophon provides the only exception to the division of these roles in the Araspas story, yet even there the provision of (true but misleading) information is directed at establishing trust and is peripheral to the agent's main purpose of learning about the enemy.

Most examples of fake deserters are literary or theoretical rather than historical. Literary examples extend at least as far back as the *Odyssey*, and it seems that the association between the fake deserter and the spy continued to hold the Greek imagination in the fifth and fourth centuries.⁵⁶ Theoretical examples begin and end with Xenophon. He noted in the *Cavalry Commander* that fake deserters (*pseudautomoloi*) were useful as spies. In the *Education of Cyrus*, he attributed to his model Cyrus the practice of sending out spies in the guise of slaves deserting their masters.⁵⁷ The *Education of Cyrus* provides the only (relatively) detailed account of how a Greek might conceive of a mission undertaken by a fake deserter, and thus it is worth some attention.

The story begins with Cyrus wishing to send a spy to learn what his enemies are doing.⁵⁸ He did this well before battle was imminent, while

56. *Od.* 4.244ff.: Odysseus marred himself with blows, put a ragged cloak about his shoulders, like a slave, and went into Troy disguising himself in the likeness of a beggar (or possibly, a man called Dektes ["Beggard"]—ἄλλω δ'αὐτὸν φωτὶ κατακρύπτων ἤικκε, δέκτην). The Trojans were duped, but Helen recognized him, and her ministrations in effect stripped him of disguise. After extracting an oath from her, Odysseus related how matters stood among the Achaeans. He then killed some Trojans and went back with much information. Note Helen's use of the information that she obtained from Odysseus, as told by Menelaus (*Od.* 4.274ff.). Cf. Epicharmus *Odysseus Automolus* (Kaibel 108–10, nos. 99–108); Sophocles *Lakainai* (Nauck frag. 338); Eubulus *Odysseus or the Panoptae* (Edmonds vol. 2, no. 71, from Athenaeus 478c); Plut. *Solon* 30.1; Lycophron *Alexandra* 777–85; Eustathius on *Od.* p. 1494, lines 40ff.; Servius on Vergil *Aen.* 2.166.

Cf. also Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1416b1–4 (referring to Sophocles' lost play *Teucer*): when Odysseus reproached Teucer with being a relative of Priam, Teucer retorted that his father Telamon was an enemy of Priam and that he himself did not denounce the spies. If the scholiast on Aristophanes' *Knights* (schol. vet. on 1056a) was referring to the same tradition, these spies were sent by Nestor to learn of Trojan morale. See also Eur. *Hecuba* 239ff.; [Eur.] *Rhesus* 503–9; Paus. 4.12.2.

57. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.7; *Cyr.* 6.2.11.

58. The story is told in Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1.31–43, 6.3.11, 6.3.13–20; cf. *Suda* s.v. Μείου.

his enemies were far off in Lydia, since he reasoned that he and the Assyrians would collide in the not-too-distant future. He did not have a service from which he could appoint an individual for the mission, so he sent for Araspas, who was known to be in fear of him since he had abused his ward, but who had been a close and true friend otherwise. Cyrus calculated that Araspas, should he go to the enemy under pretense of fleeing a king's wrath, would be admitted and trusted. Araspas agreed to spy for Cyrus, and he spread word of his alleged motive among his friends before leaving—Xenophon was probably thinking that rumors would thus get back to the Assyrians through other sources than Araspas' own mouth.

Both men expected Araspas to gain a position of some stature within the Assyrian force, and their hope was not as far-fetched as it might seem. The Greeks accorded fugitives considerable status—the example of Alcibiades comes easily to mind. Cyrus expected that Araspas would be admitted to his enemies' discussions and councils and that all would be open to him. There was basis for this hope also, since foreign clients were particularly valued as advisors and could not give advice on matters withheld from them.

Araspas was asked to collect full information on the enemy's affairs.⁵⁹ He was not to communicate with Cyrus until his return, and he was to stay with the enemy as long as possible. He was also to give the enemy information about Cyrus' affairs, but interpreted in such a way as to hinder, rather than help, the enemy.⁶⁰ The purpose of giving this information was to establish Araspas' cover yet more solidly—as we have seen, deserters were expected to provide such information. It also enhanced his value to the Assyrians as an advisor. The notion that true information, interpreted to one's own purposes, can harm or manipulate the enemy is not unfamiliar, as the tale of Themistocles at Salamis attests. Evidently he did not go on his mission alone, but took his most trusted attendants. It is not clear just how much these men knew of Araspas' motives or how they could have assisted him—perhaps they were extras to protect him on his way to and from the enemy's camp or to add to his prestige once he arrived there.⁶¹

59. Xen. Cyr. 6.1.40, once again τὰ τῶν πολεμίων.

60. Xen. Cyr. 6.1.42.

61. It is possible they were to know only the false cover, depending on how *συμφέρειν* is construed (Xen. Cyr. 6.1.44: εἰπὼν πρὸς τινὰς ὃ ὄρετο συμφέρειν τῷ πράγματι)—was it more conducive to his purposes to mislead them and risk their enmity (due to loyalty to Cyrus) or to tell them parts of the truth and risk security?

Cyrus and Araspas had arranged a simple recognition signal—a raised right arm—and the king’s troops were told to receive as friends any whom they saw displaying it. This point is not mentioned by Xenophon until he had reached the point in his narrative where the two armies had come into the same region and Araspas returned. He fell in with Persian cavalry and was held by them while the news was passed on to Cyrus. Cyrus at once went to greet him and received him kindly, although all the others were suspicious because of Araspas’ apparent defection. Herein, to be sure, lay a danger for returning agents. Araspas’ welcome might have been very different had a recognition signal not been arranged or not been disseminated among the men.⁶²

A short debriefing followed immediately. Cyrus bade Araspas to tell all, neither saying less than the truth nor underrating the enemy. Araspas prefaced his report with an explanation of why his information should be trusted and how he obtained it: he had been present and in fact served as a marshal. In a question-and-answer dialogue, he gave the numbers, formations, and plans of the enemy, together with the varied opinions of their generals. No mention was made of weaponry, but this is perhaps because Cyrus had already been briefed on that subject by other spies.⁶³ Based on Araspas’ report, Cyrus organized his own forces and devised a plan of battle. His information imparted, Araspas slips from the minds of his king and his storyteller, while they turn their attention to love and war. After a brief mention that he was honored by Cyrus and other Persians, Araspas does not reappear in the rest of the book.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the *Education of Cyrus* was meant as a

62. Dr. P. Levine (in a conversation with the author on 17 June 1993) told of a prisoner of war captured and questioned by an American combat intelligence unit in Europe during World War II. The man answered all queries by saying, “Whiskey.” It was thought that he wanted a drink, and his interrogators responded first with understanding, then with impatience. Finally, frustrated, they sent him back to where the other prisoners were being held. Soon after, one American mentioned the incident as an amusing anecdote while conversing with his superior, who gasped and bade him to recall the captive. The superior rushed over and took the captive back to his headquarters. Apparently the captive was in fact a prisoner who had returned to the German forces to spy, and the word *whiskey* was the recognition signal fixed for his admittance on his return. Those processing prisoners were not told to be on the alert for an individual with this password, and it was only by chance that he was recognized.

For other preparations for a returning spy (Dolon) to be received by pickets, see [Eur.] *Rhesus* 523–26.

63. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.10.

didactic, rather than a historical, text. Consequently it reflects Xenophon's theories on how war ought to be managed rather than what Cyrus actually did. Therefore the story of Araspas, supplemented by remarks on information gathering found in other sources, provides a fourth-century lesson on *how* to carry out information gathering and intelligence.

There are two extant accounts of fake deserters/fugitives that have aspirations to historicity. The claims of the first—the aforementioned story of Lichas (one of the five Benefactors at Sparta) and the bones of Orestes—are rather dubious, and the story itself is probably mythical.⁶⁴ Once again, however, the method is interesting. Lichas' cover is arranged by having the Lacedaemonians make “a pretense of bringing a charge against him and banishing him.”⁶⁵ This cover provided a sympathetic motive for his prolonged stay and need for quarters, while removing the need for disguise.

An anecdote about Pammenes may have more basis in fact (since the Theban is found commanding troops in the mid-fourth century, and since the account lacks the mythical elements of Herodotus), but it is rather vague in detail. He is said to have sent a fake deserter into the camp of his enemies to learn their watchword. The deserter was successful and somehow returned to impart it to Pammenes. The general then launched a night attack and was able to throw his foes into confusion.⁶⁶ The lack of detail may be a result of a perceived lack of need for it on the part of Polyaeus: deserters were so common in military campaigns that no special arrangements needed to be made.

Thus the guise of deserter, probably accompanied by a credible tale of abuse or disaffection, served infiltration agents well. It provided motive for their presence and obviated the necessity for disguise (e.g., a Lacedaemonian would not have to pretend he was a Tegean). And since deserters and traitors were all too common in ancient Greece and were often of considerable intelligence value to those who received them, a foe would be likely to accept the agent.

64. Hdt. 1.67–68 (cf. Paus. 3.3.6, 11.10). The story was set during the Spartan-Tegean wars, but the present tense (i.e., mid-fifth century) is used for such details as the functions of the *agathoergoi*.

65. Loeb translation of οἱ δὲ ἐκ λόγου πλαστοῦ ἐπενείκαντές οἱ αἰτίην ἐδίωξαν.

66. Polyaeus 5.16.5. Pammenes' foes were not specified. Pritchett (2:91–92) showed that he commanded troops against Persian satraps and against the Phocians—it is probable that the Phocians are the enemies mentioned since the Persians may not have used passwords (cf. Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.16).

Diplomatic Covers

Diplomatic activity did, and still does, provide opportunity for espionage. It afforded the advantage of putting the agent in a position to make inquiries about a foreign state while having a recognized office. This reduced risk of exposure and punishment, since such behavior was to some extent expected as part of the ambassador's job.⁶⁷ The corresponding disadvantage was that the other party would be aware that the agent was operating in the interest of another state. Indeed, envoys were sometimes made out to be spies by their opponents.⁶⁸ While the agent would thus gain some degree of access to information that others, such as travelers, might not, people would know that he was a foreigner and would conceal those things that were not in their interest for him to see. But the fact that the agent was known to be a representative of a foreign state was not always a disadvantage. This premise is best illustrated by an example. Suppose a Mytilenaeon who knew that his city intended to revolt from Athens sympathized with the Athenians (perhaps he held office in the democracy and feared an oligarchic coup, or perhaps a personal enemy was involved in the plot). Rather than leaving for Athens and, in doing so, running the risk of being condemned as a traitor should the revolt succeed, he might approach an Athenian official passing through (perhaps an *episkopos*) or residing in (a garrison commander or a *proxenos*) Mytilene.⁶⁹

Several examples of spies in the guise of ambassadors merit notice. One of these is by a neutral party and will be treated in the section on neutrals later in this chapter. The second example concerns Memnon of Rhodes, at the time when he planned to attack Leucon, the tyrant of Bosphorus. Memnon wished to learn the size of the enemy cities and the number of their inhabitants, so he sent Archibiades to Byzantium in a trireme as an envoy as if to open discussions regarding political and personal friendship. With Archibiades he sent Aristonicus of Olynthus, a musician of such renown that all the inhabitants of the various towns in

67. It did not eliminate risk altogether. See, e.g., Thuc. 3.70. A distinction is made here between an ambassador, who might learn information and pass it on to his own people, and a spy, who goes on an embassy not for the sake of a diplomatic end but to use his role as a cover for espionage.

68. Aeschines III (*Against Ctesiphon*) 82: "if Philip does not send *presbeis*, he [Demosthenes] says he [Philip] disdains our city, yet if he does send them, he says they are spies [*kataskopoi*], rather than *presbeis*." Cf. Hdt. 3.134.

69. Cf. Thuc. 3.2.3.

which he performed came to hear him. Thus Archibiades got an idea of the population from the size of the audience.⁷⁰

In the third example, when *presbeis* came to Alexander from the Abian and European Scythians, he sent some of his Companions with them on the journey back to their homeland, ostensibly on a goodwill visit, but in fact to acquire information. He particularly sought details on the nature of the Scythian territory and the numbers, arms, and customs of its populace. All this information was to be collected for the purpose of planning a campaign. In the event, a campaign did not materialize—perhaps in part because of the intelligence gained, since the Scythians were a formidable foe, as Darius’ ancestors had found to their cost.⁷¹

Both missions seem to have been successfully accomplished without arousing suspicion and are not otherwise notable, except as demonstrations that espionage by agents assuming a diplomatic guise was viable. Given the constant flow of envoys from state to state in the Greek world, it would be surprising if it was not undertaken fairly often.⁷²

Other Infiltration Agents

Aside from Xenophon and Polyaeus (and to some extent Aeneas Tacticus), the ancient historians are vague in their descriptions of espionage. The best-known and attested example of infiltration agents—the spies sent by the Greeks to view Xerxes’ armament—provides only limited detail.⁷³ The Greeks, having learned that Xerxes intended to invade and having been informed by unspecified sources that he was at Sardis with his army, resolved (presumably at a council) to send spies to Asia to learn more about the Persian expeditionary force. Three men were entrusted with this task. Herodotus records neither their names nor their native states. He says nothing of how they executed their assignment, but he implies that they operated as a team in Sardis. Perhaps they joined one of the Greek contingents of Xerxes’ army or assumed the guise of mer-

70. Polyaeus 5.44.1. Leucon ruled from 387 to 347; cf. Tod no. 115.

71. Arrian *Anab.* 4.1.1–2; cf. 4.15.1.

72. See Hdt. 3.17ff. of the Ithyphagoi (“Fisheaters”) who purportedly served Cambyses as spies on a “goodwill” embassy to Ethiopia. They were especially sought for their knowledge of the Ethiopian language. See also Xen. *Anab.* 7.4.13 of Bithynians who came down from the mountains and asked Xenophon to help them obtain a truce with Seuthes. He agreed; but they did this κατασκοπήσας ἕνεκα. That night they attacked.

73. Hdt. 7.145–48. See also Polyaeus 7.15.2; Plut. *Sayings of Kings, Xerxes* 3; *Suda* s.v. Ξέρξης.

chants. They had gathered the information they needed when they were arrested, so it is possible that they were seized as suspected deserters as they left. It is also possible that the Persians were alerted to the possibility of their presence, since there were many Greeks who privately collaborated with the Persians.

Once caught, the spies were interrogated (probably under torture) by those whom Herodotus called the *strategoï* of the land forces. The spies would probably have been able to give some information about the sympathies and preparations of the Greek city-states, including such items of interest as the embassy sent to Sicily to seek aid. After they were questioned, the spies were led off to be killed. While they awaited their fate, Xerxes was informed of their capture and interrogation. Then follows the dramatic tale of their deliverance at the king's command, their tour through the ranks of the royal army, and their return home bearing reports of the huge size of the Persian force, which Xerxes calculated would cow the Greeks into surrender. The story is exciting, but the ending, which resembles a *deus ex machina* solution to a tragedy, is obviously not to be taken as typical.⁷⁴ However atypical its end, the account does serve to demonstrate the necessity of gathering preliminary information before sending out spies—in this case, the Greeks had to first realize the need to engage spies and then discover where to send them.

The story of Phillidas, a member of the conspiracy led by Charon, Pelopidas, and Epaminondas against the pro-Spartan government of Thebes, is indicative of another type of infiltration. Phillidas concealed his revolutionary sentiments and contrived to have himself appointed secretary to Archias and Philip, the Theban polemarchs.⁷⁵ During his time in this office, he remained in contact with his fellow conspirators and operated in conjunction with them.⁷⁶ An information flow is implicit in the story, since the conspirators were able to take advantage of a

74. Nevertheless it is said to have been imitated by Scipio Africanus (Polyb. 15.5.4ff.; Front. *Strat.* 4.7.7; Polyanus 8.16.8) and Laevinus (cf. F.W. Walbank 2:450 on Polyb. 15.5.4, citing Dion. Hal. 19.11, Zon. 7.3.6, and Eutrop. 2.11). The parallel is too close, as a group of three spies are again the captives. The idea was picked up by Onasander (10.9).

75. Plut. *Pelop.* 7.3. Xenophon (*Hell.* 5.42) portrayed Phillidas as one of the prime movers of the plot and, before describing how the plot was initiated, mentioned him holding his position. In this instance I prefer Plutarch's version to that of Xenophon (although Plutarch did have a motive to increase the role of Pelopidas at the expense of Phillidas), since Plutarch's account is drawn in more detail, whereas Xenophon had less scope for conveying the sequence of events involved in the plot's planning and probably oversimplified its early stages for the sake of brevity.

76. Plut. *Pelop.* 9.2; the term used is *συνέπραττε*.

drinking party (which Phillidas had proposed) to overthrow the government. It may be noted that while the conspirators accomplished their ambitions, Phillidas was not entirely successful, since he was unable to tip off the conspirators about Archias' first inklings that a plot was afoot.⁷⁷

Mythical anecdotes in Pausanias contain information of some small value to our knowledge of how covert agents gathered information. The first concerns Dorian spies sent into Sparta, who obtained information on how to take the city through informal acquaintances struck up with the indigenous population.⁷⁸ The second is set during the legendary war of Oxylyus against Elis. While they were en route to Elis, Oxylyus' spies agreed among themselves not to utter a sound when they reached their destination. They managed to get into Elis without being noticed, wandered about listening, and then returned to Aetolian lines.⁷⁹ This latter example might well be an illustration of the problems dialect posed to agents in the Greek world. Silence might enable agents to avoid detection—they could even pretend to be deaf and dumb, although that is more difficult than it sounds and could eventually make them conspicuous—but it would leave to chance opportunities to get relevant information. Otherwise, for agents to assume the guise of natives, they must have been able to speak in the appropriate dialect. The alternative was to represent themselves as foreigners speaking a dialect with which they were familiar and was perceived as friendly by the natives.

Strabo's account of Corycaean pirates in the Chersonesus would at first sight seem to be an example of silent spies gathering information with their ears and eyes alone.⁸⁰ These men would scatter themselves among the harbors of the local towns and shadow merchants docked there to overhear what cargoes they carried and whither they were bound.⁸¹ They would later return to their ships and gather to attack the merchants on the seas. The pirates, however, were locals and would

77. Plut. *Pelop.* 10.1.

78. Paus. 3.13.5.

79. Paus. 6.23.8; hence the name of a street found its mythical origin: ἡ ὁδὸς Σιωπηρῆς.

80. Strabo 14.1.32, Loeb translation: "we say in a proverb: 'Well then, the Corycaean was listening to this,' when one thinks that he is doing or saying something in secret, but fails to keep it hidden because of persons who spy on him and are eager to learn what does not concern them." Cf. Stephanus Gram. *Ethnica* (epitome) 402.

81. The agora was another place conducive to eavesdropping: see, e.g., [Demosth.] XI (*In Epist. Phil.*) 17; Clearchus frag. 25; Plut. *Mor.* 519b (which also mentions the *strategeion*—cf. *Iliad* 10.325–27). Cf. also Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, 174–75, 177–78; Anon. Byz. *Peri Strat.* 42; Procopius *Anec.* 16.14.

therefore have no difficulty with the dialect. Strabo probably simply meant that the spies did not actively make inquiries.

Infiltration agents also obtained information through contact with individuals sympathetic to their cause. While such sources might well have been rich in detail, there were at least two dangers attendant on their use. First, the sympathizer might decide to switch allegiance, or turn out to be a provocateur, or be under suspicion, and thereby implicate the agent. Second, the source's sympathies might color his or her information—a problem not unique to people of this sort. The mission of Phrynīs, a *perioikos* sent as a *kataskopos* by the Lacedaemonians to Chios, is probably an example of the successful use of this mode of information gathering.⁸² Since the Athenians were influential on Chios (which was, after all, still a subject state of the Athenian Empire), and since the Chians were officially enemies of Sparta, Phrynīs almost certainly went as a covert agent.⁸³ Phrynīs' task was to verify that the Chians had as many ships as their envoys claimed. It is possible that he might do this on his own, but it is likely that his Chian sympathizers would have taken pains to show him all he needed to see.

Agents in Place

While a semantic difference between an agent in place and a traitor can exist, such a distinction was limited to the *proxenoi*, who inhabited a narrow zone where passing information on to foreigners was not quite espionage and where diplomacy was not quite treachery. Agents in place can be conceived as a subset of traitor. As distinguished from deserters, they did not change residence. As distinguished from other fifth columnists and conspirators, their primary value to their patron was their ability to convey information.⁸⁴ Because such activity was (and is) the object of some very heavy penalties, their role was covert.

82. Thuc. 8.6.4.

83. Perhaps he went as if from Argos or another neutral or pro-Athenian state of Dorian dialect. If I were to hazard a guess, it would be that he went as a merchant, since (1) he would have a plausible reason for being around the docks and (2) *perioikoi* (at least in theory) carried on all commerce in Sparta, and the most effective disguise is one that incorporated as much as the individual's own identity as possible.

84. This is not to say that these others did not have contributions to make. Losada has done an admirable job of treating fifth columns in the Peloponnesian War and has given some attention to their potential for providing information.

Once again, the earliest examples belong to the realm of myth. Not atypical is Pausanias' tale of the Arcadian king Aristocrates, whose loyalty was said to have been bought by the Lacedaemonians. He was present at a council held by Aristomenes, in which the Messenian put forth his plans for invading Laconia while the Spartans were campaigning in his own country. Aristocrates quickly wrote these down and entrusted them to a slave to bear them to the Spartans. The courier accomplished his task but was waylaid by Aristocrates' own men on his return journey, since Aristocrates had stirred their suspicion by his earlier behavior. Thus, the Arcadians and Messenians did not dare to carry out their plans, but they tried and stoned Aristocrates.⁸⁵

The danger arising from the necessity of covert agents to get messages to their patrons quickly is brought home in this story, however fictitious the events may be. The problem is seen again, from another perspective, in Thucydides' account of Hermocrates' deception of Nicias by means of reports allegedly coming from his spies. Nicias fielded a network of agents in place in Syracuse from at least 415 (and probably far earlier than that) until his death in 413.⁸⁶ Gomme proposed that his agents were drawn from the wealthier Leontini who had become Syracusan citizens in 422 and had remained when the other "malcontents" departed.⁸⁷ This is possible, but factions in the Greek cities were common, and the motivation of Nicias' agents might have been ascendancy within Syracuse as easily as a "hankering after an independent Leontini."⁸⁸ It would have been difficult, although by no means impossible, for these people to be recruited after the Athenians had landed. All the same, Nicias' position as *proxenos* of the Syracusans (and possible business interests in Sicily) would have provided him a much better opportunity to establish his relationships with his informers.⁸⁹ Further, these agents reported not to other

85. Paus. 4.22.5–7, set in the seventh century.

86. Thuc. 7.48.2, 73.3; Plut. *Nicias* 18.6, 21.3.

87. Gomme 4:425–26 on Thuc. 7.48.2.

88. *Ibid.*, citing Thuc. 5.4.3, 7.73.3; Diod. Sic. 13.18.5. For the motives and activities of fifth columns, see Losada *passim*.

Athenagoras—at least insofar as Thucydides portrayed him—seems to me to be a potential candidate for inclusion in the group of Nicias' supporters. While he might not have been a covert agent (being visibly pro-Athenian in his politics), his attempt to dissuade the Syracusans from paying attention to reports of imminent attack and his efforts to discredit Hermocrates make one wonder about his loyalties (see, e.g., Thuc. 6.36.2–4).

89. In any case, we see in his debate with Alcibiades (as staged by Thucydides) an example of the ability of *proxenoi* to inform their state of residence about their patron state. For Nicias as *proxenos*, see Diod. Sic. 13.27.2. For possible business interests, see Green 5.

Athenian *stratego*i but to Nicias alone, which suggests that his network was based on personal ties, rather than a result of his official status of *strategos*. This arrangement appears to have been typical of democracies and is addressed at the close of this chapter.

The nature of the information supplied by Nicias' spies was varied—including economic, diplomatic, military and domestic matters—and seems to have been consistently reliable.⁹⁰ That Nicias frequently failed to make good use of excellent intelligence reflects far more on his capability as a general than on the agents themselves. The fate of the spies after the Syracusan victory is nowhere mentioned, although it is noted that they were not immediately compromised.⁹¹

The historicity of other indications of the use of spies of this type must be weighed against their rhetorical context. Throughout his speeches, Demosthenes made allegations against his political adversaries, charging them with acting treacherously on Philip's behalf and with passing information to the Macedonians.⁹² It is hard to distinguish slander from fact when reading Demosthenes, and his charges of maintaining spies—while by no means implausible—cannot be accepted without reservations, even though Isocrates did refer to people who sent news to Macedon of the evil things said about Philip.⁹³ Curiously, Demosthenes was subjected to similar accusations by his enemy Aeschines, who claimed that he attributed to dreams those things he learned from spies.⁹⁴ On another occasion, Demosthenes withheld the name of an informant living in Macedon, stating only that he was a man incapable of falsehood; but his

90. Gomme (4:425–26) had some reservations: “These men, in order to retain the help of a powerful ally, their only hope, would not have hesitated to deceive Nicias, and perhaps themselves too, by an exaggerated picture of Syracusan difficulties . . . , but Thucydides does not deny (49.1) that Syracuse was short of money.” Gomme's admonitions are indeed generally true of traitors and exiles in general, but most items of information supplied by Nicias' agents were corroborated by subsequent events.

91. Thuc. 7.86.4.

92. See, e.g., Demosth. IV (*1 Phil.*) 18.

93. Isoc. *Epist II (1 to Philip)* 14–15; he charged them with exaggerating the calumnies (no doubt based more upon his suspicions of their accuracy than on real knowledge of their activity—with people like Demosthenes around, they would have no need to exaggerate). One might note that in writing to Philip, Isocrates becomes, in effect, his source or agent—it is possible that the men to whom he referred were no different.

94. Aeschines III (*Against Ctesiphon*) 77: “first, having learned through spies—the ones ran by Charidemus—about the death of Philip, he invented a story of a dream sent to him by the gods and pretended that he had heard of the matter not from Charidemus but from Zeus and Athena.”

reticence to name his source might indicate that he was fabricating reports, as easily as it might indicate that he was making an effort to protect the identity of an agent in place.⁹⁵

Neutrals

In the passage from the *Cavalry Commander* quoted in the opening of this chapter, Xenophon recommended giving thought before the outbreak of war to the recruitment of peoples friendly to oneself and one's opponents. In the ever changing world of Greek alliances, the neutral parties of the next war might not always be easily discerned. One could always recruit from as diverse a number of states as possible, and this would entail a rather extensive network. The maintenance of any sort of peacetime network, however humble, is interesting in itself and reinforces the notion that not all intelligence efforts were entirely extemporaneous.

Unfortunately, no historical examples of neutrals used as covert agents are preserved. We have only one fictitious example, an anecdote found in the *Education of Cyrus*. However, as is so often the case with examples from Xenophon's work, it does have much to offer the student of ancient espionage.⁹⁶ Xenophon recounts how ambassadors from an Indian king came to Cyrus to tell him that their ruler had agreed to an alliance, based on their assessments of Cyrus and his Assyrian foes on their last visit. Cyrus asked three of them to go to the Assyrians, pretending the Indian king had decided in their favor, and to report back to Cyrus and their own king when they had learned what the Assyrians were saying and doing. The Indians obliged and returned with information on the enemy generals, their resources and provisions, the types and numbers of their men (further distinguishing which contingents had arrived and which were en route), their arms, the place where they were mustering, and their intent to advance against Cyrus.

The value of such information to any commander is considerable. Xenophon noted that such high-grade intelligence was to be expected from such men as the Indian envoys—they did, after all, represent themselves to be ambassadors of a nation whose alliance the Assyrians eagerly

95. Demosth. II (2 *Olynth.*) 17. Cf. [Lysias] VIII (*Accus. of calumny*) 8–9.

96. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.1ff.

courted. It is of equal interest that he contrasted their superb opportunity with the lot of infiltration agents disguised as runaway slaves or the like.⁹⁷ He noted, however, that captives told stories similar to that of the Indians. While this seems to diminish the exceptional nature of their role (while at the same time providing a lesson in the need of a prudent commander to corroborate information when evaluating it), it ought to be noted that captives were not available until initial contact had been made. Thus the Indians provided time for Cyrus to make decisions and put them into effect.

Other Spies of Unspecified Types

There are a number of other references to spies of unspecified types, which provide little detail on the use of covert agents but possess some relevance.⁹⁸ One of them indicates that the Syracusans fielded spies at least as far away as Rhegium⁹⁹—which should not be a surprise in view of their interests in southern Italy. These agents brought them news of the presence of the Athenian fleet across the straits and served to dispel doubts of earlier reports of the Athenian expedition that Athenagoras had inspired. Hermocrates, the bearer of those reports (on the basis of information apparently obtained from private sources), had come up with what must have been a bluff—a plan to send a fleet to Italy.¹⁰⁰ He contended that when the Athenians got wind of such a move—and apparently he could count on their doing so—they would not dare to advance further than Corcyra. He thought they would take counsel there and then send out *kataskopoi*.¹⁰¹ Since their deliberations and informa-

97. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.2: “Moreover, while spies disguised as slaves are not able to report knowledgeably about anything except what the man in the street knows, men such as yourselves are often able to gain an intimate knowledge even of plans.” The choice of *Indian* envoys in this context is quite interesting. This people has no further part in the *Cyropaedia*, so obviously they were cast specifically for this sketch. Why? Is it too far-fetched to speculate about some tales of espionage in India (which became sophisticated fairly early) arriving in Greece even before Megasthenes took up residence there in the closing years of the fourth century?

98. Some, however, merely attest their use. Of these, some are of questionable historicity, e.g., Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 137, Aeschines III (*Against Ctesiphon*) 77—both of which may be mere slander—and other various accusations of espionage made by these two. See also the D scholia to *Iliad* 10.207 (of Lacedaemonian spies allegedly sent into Athens on the advice of Alcibiades, possibly an invention based on Thuc. 6.91.6).

99. Thuc. 6.45.1.

100. Cf. Gomme 4:299 on Thuc. 6.34.4 and Bloedow *passim* on his intentions.

101. Thuc. 6.34.6.

tion gathering would take time, the Athenians would be compelled to winter in Corcyra, and the Syracusans would thereby be able to make more thorough preparations.

This passage brings home the (perhaps obvious) point that espionage does not grant instant knowledge. Rather, the collection of information by covert agents, like any other, takes time and is affected by distance, the nature of a mission, and the modes of communication. Consequently, informed decisions often consume time. Tangentially, the passage attests to the use of spies by two democracies.

General Comments on Covert Agents of All Types

It is curious—indeed decidedly odd—to find spies operating together almost as often as alone. By this I mean not merely that more than one spy was engaged in the same area or on separate but similar missions (although this did occur) but that they sometimes operated in small groups.¹⁰²

Such a practice has its hazards, particularly an increased risk of notice and exposure. During an exercise in England in World War II, spies in training were given assignments in a specific area, while the local police were generally alerted to their presence. In a number of cases, two men operating together were arrested when one of the two aroused suspicion. Had the other member of the group not been implicated by association, he would not have been caught. In other cases, one man, although careful or skillful during searches or interrogation, was implicated because his associate was not as proficient.¹⁰³ The results of this exercise would surely be applicable in the ancient world. Yet even Aeneas Tacticus and Xenophon had nothing to say about such matters (at least in their extant works)—perhaps this lesson was not yet learned or, if learned, not open to public discourse.

Some benefits might be derived from such a practice. Perhaps the physical presence of allies might stave off loneliness or psychological weak-

102. See, e.g., Hdt. 7.145–48; Xen. *Anab.* 7.4.13; Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.1 (and cf. 6.1.44); Paus. 3.13.5, 4.28.7, 6.23.8; Arrian *Anab.* 4.1.1–2; and possibly Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 137. There are many examples in which it is not clear whether the spies are operating together or independently (Thuc. 6.34.6, 6.45.1; Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.11; Xen. *Cav Com.* 4.7–8; Aristotle *Politics* 1313b11–16; Aeschines III (*Against Ctesiphon*) 77 and 82; Clearchus frag. 25; Strabo 14.1.32; Plut. *Dion* 28.1; Plut. *De curiositate* 522f–523a; Eustath. 3.515.16; *FGrHist* 153F7).

103. Mendelsohn 24–41, esp. 33ff.

ness. Perhaps agents possessing different fields of expertise might complement each other's abilities and process information while still in the field, thereby setting new intelligence goals to be pursued. In an era in which swift communication was not available, the ability of one spy to return to report important information while the others continued their mission would have been valuable. Conversely, agents sent independently would either have to make other arrangements for sending messages back or return themselves. Yet would not the chance for at least one of three agents to arrive safely back be better if they were sent separately?

While Pausanias commended Homer's example of sending out two *kataskopoi* together, other—and probably more expert—authorities point to a danger that spies operating in conjunction might come into collusion and bring back false reports.¹⁰⁴ Polyaeus observed: “Pompiscus sent as spies [*kataskopoi*] men unknown to each other [either men who were strangers to each other or men who did not know that others were being sent as spies] lest they come together and become bearers of false tidings.”¹⁰⁵ It is not clear whether the spies were sent together or individually. The former possibility—though somewhat easier to extract from the Greek—is somewhat wanting logically. Might it not be better to send those who were mutually compatible yet held differing views, as in the case of diplomatic envoys? A lack of familiarity might make people hesitate to make deals, but known honesty and fidelity could do the same. Indeed, one would expect from occasional remarks of Xenophon (and other anecdotes in Polyaeus himself) that independent reports of the same news would be perceived as more likely to provide accurate intelligence.

104. Paus. 4.28.7. He did not give reasons why he thought Homer's example admirable.

105. Polyaeus 5.33.6: Πομπίσκος κατασκόπους ἔπεμπεν ἄνδρας ἀγνώστους ἀλλήλοις, ἵνα μὴ συντίθειντο μηδὲ ψευδάγγελιοι γίγνοιτο. The passage continues (Krentz and Wheeler, trans.): “He forbid them to converse with anyone in the camp, lest someone might get to the enemy first and report their imminent arrival.” The testimony of Polyaeus about Pompiscus is important for the study of covert agents and counterintelligence. Unfortunately, Pompiscus is not mentioned in other sources, and there is no internal evidence for his dates, save that he must have lived before the second century A.D.—a date long after our period. I have taken the liberty of including him on two grounds: (1) Pompiscus is said to be an Arcadian, and as Prof. M. Chambers pointed out to me, the Arcadians were quite active in the fourth century. The stories about Pompiscus could thus have their origins in this era. (2) Prof. E. Wheeler informed me that although a Byzantine writer substituted *Pompeius* for *Pompiscus* in Polyaeus 5.33, it is not likely that he had special information that enabled him to do so. Indeed, Woelffin and Melber's apparatus criticus admits no alternate readings for either name or ethnic.

Cf. Maurice de Saxe (in Philips 1:292): “Spies should not know one another.”

When the number of agents in a particular group is specified, it is either two or three.¹⁰⁶ All such examples are of infiltration agents.¹⁰⁷ The use of two or three men might have been due simply to the fear that larger numbers would have been still more conspicuous, but it might also indicate a relationship between spies and reconnaissance agents. There are some examples of reconnaissance and surveillance missions undertaken by three agents.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, besides the obvious point that the term *kataskopos* can denote either scout or spy (and hence some sort of relationship between them, however vestigial), there is the proposed link between the Lacedaemonian *hippeis* and covert intelligence, and there is also Xenophon's inclusion of an intelligence network among the responsibilities of cavalry commanders.¹⁰⁹

But did Xenophon choose to discuss intelligence networks in his *Cavalry Commander* because he thought that these officers were particularly appropriate recipients of such advice or merely because he thought his comments were pertinent to any leader? Either option is defensible, and it is quite possible that the options are not alternatives but complements.¹¹⁰

Since cavalry were frequently employed for reconnaissance, it would not be unnatural for their commanders to supervise the gathering of information by other means. It is possible that the cavalry commanders acted solely in their own interest, to improve their ability to use their force effectively; alternatively, they might have been operating as specialized subordinate commanders for the benefit of others (perhaps the *strategoï*), as did the *skoparkhes* and Spartan marshals of the knights did.

In Athens (Xenophon seems to be writing for an Athenian audience)

106. Three: Hdt. 7.145; Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.1ff. Two: Paus. 4.28.7, commenting on Odysseus and Diomedes in *Iliad* 10. Two or three: *FGrHist* 115F274 (Theopompus).

107. While the Indian spies sent by Cyrus were perceived by his enemies as neutrals (and potential allies), from Cyrus' perspective they had already joined his side.

108. Homer *Od.* 9.88–90, 10.100; Aen. *Tact.* 6.2. Cf. Hdt. 7.179.

109. Cf. Luvaas in Handel, *Intelligence and Military Operations*, 103, who commented that most Civil War "scouts" were drawn from the cavalry.

110. There is no evidence that Xenophon, although expert in military tactics of all sorts, was himself appointed *hipparkhos*, either to the formal office in Athens or to command of the cavalry possessed by the Ten Thousand. But it is likely that he served as a cavalryman in Athens in the late fifth century, and his sons were enrolled in that force in the fourth century (cf. Krentz, *Xenophon: "Hellenika" I-II.3.10*, 1). Nevertheless, Xenophon's admonition concerning the posting of guards because of the difficulty for spies to provide timely information leads one to believe that his theory was founded on the mistakes and hazards of practice. His implication that spies were not themselves always reliable or trustworthy also suggests *pathei mathos*.

the cavalry commanders kept their office for only one year and could not hold it again.¹¹¹ To set up and run an intelligence network effectively demands time, resources, and continuity; to do so from scratch every year would be quite inefficient—although this in itself by no means precludes the possibility. In the interest of continuity, commanders might pass on their networks to their successors on leaving office.¹¹² A network of this sort, based on the authority of the office rather than on personal affiliation, would have the advantage of reducing potential confusion of identity and authority on the part of agents.¹¹³

Xenophon included discourses on the theory and practice of intelligence in other works of a more general nature. He considered clear intelligence fundamental to the effective administration of any command, whether political or military. It may be, then, that his remarks in the *Cavalry Commander* are an application of a general concern to a particular situation and are thus accidental, rather than essential, to his description of the duties of the office.¹¹⁴ If this is the case, one ought to look for examples of networks built up by individuals and based on personal connections.

Nicias' network in Syracuse fits this description well—the allegiance of his agents was accorded to him not because he was a *strategos* (although the fact that he held such a powerful office might have won him recognition and influence) but because he was an individual with personal and diplomatic connections in Sicily. This is easily demonstrated by the fact

111. During Aristotle's time two *hipparkhoi* were elected annually by the assembly in Athens, each commanding the contingents of five tribes; a third was sent to Lemnos to command the cavalry there ([Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 61.4, 61.6; so Plato *Laws* 756). Earlier, under the five thousand, one man held the office ([Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 31.3). Unlike the *strategoi*, the *hipparkhoi* were not permitted to hold their office more than once. References to *hipparkhoi* are not limited to Athens: other places include Achaëa, Caria (s. III), Cyzicus, Macedonia (s. I), Orchomenus, Samothrace, Sparta, and Thebes (s. III) (LSJ s.v.).

112. One may well wonder why one would change officers as soon as they became experienced, but this phenomenon has parallels in most other democratic institutions in antiquity. Yet, according to Copeland (106n), the CIA rotates its station officers fairly frequently, indeed as often as every two years. Reviewers, such as Constantides (136–38) have criticized Copeland for inaccuracy; but in this he seems to be accurate.

113. As noted earlier, there were more than one *hipparkhoi* in office at any one time, and confusion of identity might result. Further, since *hipparkhoi* often served abroad, it would have been convenient if news could be passed back to any of the *hipparkhoi* (or, perhaps, even to the secretary [*grammateus*] who served them or to another affiliate stationed at the *hipparkheion*).

114. Indeed the perfect tense of μεμεληκέναι could point to a necessity for the individual to have seen to his intelligence resources before assuming his office.

that the other Athenian *strategoi* did not have access to the spies but learned of their reports through Nicias.¹¹⁵ It is probable that Nicias is not alone. Others (especially those in democracies) no doubt saw the need for private sources not only to give guidance to the state but also to further their own advancement, as Xenophon noted with customary acuity.¹¹⁶ Charidemus, who passed intelligence reports on to Demosthenes, apparently also had a private network of spies due to personal connections rather than as a representative of Athens. Demosthenes himself may have had private sources in Macedonia; he certainly would have had them in Thebes.¹¹⁷ Thucydides portrayed Hermocrates having information not generally available to his compatriots, but one wonders whether the depiction is as much artistic as historic.¹¹⁸

The two aspects of official and personal requirements for intelligence agents are in a sense complementary: an Attic farmer had little need for covert intelligence agents (although tips offered *sub rosa* about prices, ailments of livestock, and such might be welcome), while an Attic *strategos* may have had need for them, both to gain office and to hold it.

115. See, e.g., Plut. *Nicias* 21, 22.4, 26.1–2 (cf. Thuc. 7.43.1, 7.48.4–49.1, 7.73.3–4).

116. Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.9–11.

117. Aeschines III (*Against Ctesiphon*) 77; Plut. *Demosth.* 22. In this context Demosthenes XVIII (*On the crown*) 172 (also quoted by Starr [36]) is quite pertinent: “the call of the crisis on that momentous day was not only for the wealthy patriot but for the man who from first to last had closely watched the sequence of events and had rightly fathomed the purposes and the desires of Philip; for anyone who had not grasped those purposes or had not studied them long beforehand . . . was not the man to appreciate the needs of the hour or to find any counsel to offer the people.”

Semmett (96) has independently anticipated me with regard to the notion of personal networks, by proposing that Demosthenes possessed one. She also treated private sources of information (205–11), and her observations have merit. However, her citation (at 206) of the money spent by Pericles *εἰς τὸ δέον* (Plut. *Per.* 23.1) as evidence for this theory is hampered by a misunderstanding of the context, which is apparently bribery, not espionage. Still, it might be noted that Pericles must have acquired information about the characters of Pleistoanax and Cleandridas and about Lacedaemonian preparations in general before he made the overture. Cf. Aristoph. *Clouds* 858–59 and schol. on 859 (*FGrHist* 70F193 [Ephorus]); *Suda* s.v. *δέον*.

118. E.g., Thuc. 6.34.6, reinforced by the emphatic *ἐγὼ* of *ὡς ἐγὼ ἀκούω*, and Thuc. 6.33.1: *πειθῶν ἐμαυτὸν σαφέστερόν τι ἐτέρου εἰδὼς λέγειν*. Gomme (4:300) credited his knowledge to merchants, which is possible, but Athenagoras’ charges against him (Thuc. 6.38.1–2) imply that Hermocrates consistently provided information from private (as Athenagoras would have his listeners believe, “fabricated”) sources. Starr (36) thought that political leaders like Hermocrates probably had “no special command of specific reports, but great store of general information from past experience.” In his notes (36 n. 4), he did, however, acknowledge that Hermocrates appears to have known of Nicias’ opposition to the expedition.