

Information Gathering in Classical Greece

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Frank Santi Russell

Ann Arbor

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Without fail, a man harms his foes thus: those things
that they most dread he discovers, carefully investigates,
then inflicts on them.

—Thucydides 6.91.6

It hasn't changed

—Milt Beardon, Director, U.S. covert action
in Afghanistan from 1986 to 1989

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Notes on Conventions

All dates are B.C. unless otherwise stated.

The familiar anglicized Latinate forms of Greek names are given, rather than transliterations of the Greek (e.g., Thucydides, rather than Thoukudides, for Θουκυδίδης). Titles, offices, and specialized vocabulary are transliterated and italicized (e.g., *kataskopos*, rather than katascopus, for κατάσκοπος).

When the attribution of authorship to a work is suspect or spurious, the author's name appears between brackets (e.g., [Lysias] *Against Alcibiades I*).

Translations of Greek and Latin are my own unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

About this I was quite at a loss what to do. For to write in detail and with precision about matters which the kings managed between themselves and secretly, seemed to me to be open to criticism and exceedingly hazardous; but to pass over in complete silence matters which seem to have had more practical effect than any others in the war, matters which enable us to detect the causes of much that was afterwards difficult to explain, appeared to me to be decidedly indicative of indolence and entire lack of enterprise. (Polybius 29.5.1)¹

Polybius is by no means alone in his dilemma. His near contemporaries might have occasionally slipped into sensationalism and the allures of the secret world, but for the most part they avoided that treacherous path and trod by the familiar markers of virtue, vice, and chance en route to explaining the causes of history. His modern heirs have added new markers along the way and looked out on wider vistas, but their analyses must inevitably become conjecture when they attempt to explain the decisions that led to the actions of the ancients. For while competent contemporary historians do look to explain *why* something happened in a particular case, few have looked beyond the particular to the general: to a context into which one can set and thereby interpret individual decisions, a context that must include a consideration of how the ancients obtained the information on the basis of which they acted.

It would be the height of folly to allege that a study of information gathering would in itself illuminate the motives behind decisions obscured by two and a half millennia, but it can at least establish parameters for the knowledge people would have or would not have possessed when they made the decisions. That is the ambition of this book: to

1. Loeb translation.

define terms, to describe mechanisms, and, in effect, to produce an intelligence resource of use for specific studies.

The contributions of this book are more or less limited to the Hellenic world in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Information before that time is sparse and shrouded in myth but is nevertheless included to illustrate development and continuity, not so much by actual events as by perceptions of how events might have occurred. In other words, while Odysseus never really donned rags and snuck into the citadel of Troy, the story of his adventure was told and retold from the time the *Odyssey* was first sung, so that we know such espionage was conceivable in the eighth century; thus we can contrast the portrayal of Odysseus' adventures with those of his heirs in the fourth. With the advent of Herodotus and Thucydides in the fifth century, we begin to enjoy real historical examples of collection, especially at the tactical level (e.g., battlefields), but also at the strategic (e.g., foreign relations). Covert collection remains somewhat difficult, however, since spy stories tend to be just that, and since democratic Athens—from which most of our information about the ancient world is derived—had the same ambivalence between fascination and fear of the secret world that democratic states do today. While inscriptions, which begin to be more numerous in this period, grant us information concerning strategic, and occasionally tactical, intelligence, they are mute on covert aspects. The real gold mines for collection of every sort are the theoretical treatises of Xenophon (especially the *Education of Cyrus* and the *Cavalry Commander*) and Aeneas Tacticus (*How to Survive under Siege*) in the early and middle part of the fourth century. Valuable, if highly biased, information on political intelligence can be culled from orators (Andocides, Lysias, Demosthenes, Aeschines, Dinarchus, Isocrates, and the like) and some from philosophers (especially Aristotle) and playwrights (especially the author of the *Rhesus*). Much evidence comes from later writers—chiefly Diodorus, Quintus Curtius, Plutarch, and Arrian—who lived centuries after the events they described yet had sources (such as Ephorus, Theopompus, and Ptolemy) since lost. Isolated gems hide in odd places—from Linear B records to Athenaeus, Eustathius, Harpocration, Lucian, and Strabo. Later collections of stratagems, especially those of Polyaeus, provide tenuous but exciting evidence. Herein the task of the historian of intelligence bears some resemblance to the tasks of the intelligence analyst—to extract from a mass of data, most of it irrelevant, pertinent and useful items.

After Alexander's flame had burned out, the political stage in the

Mediterranean had changed substantially. While continuity in collection methods was strong, especially on the tactical level, there emerged a sense of professionalism lacking in the classical age. While there were proto-typical intelligence organizations as early as the fourth century, the classical poleis lacked either the centralization or the continuity of government (in many cases both) that would have allowed evolution into professional services. The Hellenistic kingdoms had both these qualities, and the uses to which they put the opportunities so afforded are another story.

Culturally, the focus of this work is on public life, rather than private. The methods of the two spheres scarcely intersect, and the realms really belong to separate works.² The goals also are different in form, if not in essence, and hence we come to the consideration of the very nature of information gathering in ancient Greece: what were its goals? This question can be answered in at least two ways: one can look at what information was sought and hence determine the goals, or one can try to discover the fundamental reasons for seeking information in the few passages on intelligence left to us by the ancients.

Intelligence Goals Inferred from Practice

A survey of about one thousand examples of verbs of learning (see app. A for details) yielded a wide range of objects. About half pertain directly to military operations.³ Of this group, about a third concern movements of forces; the other two-thirds include information on orders of battle (especially origin, type, numbers, and dispositions of contingents), capabilities, morale, circumstances, states of preparation and alertness, results of engagements, and plans. Another 5 percent are inquiries into geogra-

2. For private life and social interaction, the interested reader may profit from the recently published work of S. Lewis, *News and Society in the Greek Polis* (Chapel Hill, 1996).

3. The large proportion of examples found in the context of open hostilities could be taken to mean that the need for information gathering was more widely recognized, and hence that action was more often taken, during war than in peace. Such a characterization is plausible, especially in light of the practice of later eras, and is probably accurate. The distribution of the data, however, cannot be expected to show otherwise, since the historians tended to treat events occurring during war at greater length and detail than those occurring during occasional times of peace. Thus the sources have an intrinsic bias. Yet one should realize that the subject matter of the histories in turn reflected what their Greek authors thought to be worth researching and recording; hence the bias itself can serve to justify the data.

phy, especially routes, most of which have immediate military significance. Such goals belong to the realm of tactical or operational intelligence.⁴ Intelligence of this type was typically derived from military agents (e.g., scouts, patrols) and sources (e.g., deserters, captives) who are frequently identified by type (but rarely by name) in our texts. Collection of information was usually supervised by military commanders. The value of tactical intelligence was (and is) ephemeral but highly visible, and immediate response was required (or else, e.g., an enemy force might have moved from its reported position). Consequently, it was most liable to manipulation or inaccuracy, since a commitment usually had to be made before reports could be investigated.⁵

Only 10 percent of the catalogued examples are overtly political (e.g., diplomatic activity or policy). The bulk of the remaining third are varied enough to defy meaningful categorization, and many are found in contexts of anecdotes concerning private lives. Still, it may perhaps be said that a substantial number contain information of a social nature that could today be included under the general rubric of strategic intelligence. Different types of agents and sources were involved in gathering strategic information: envoys and oracles, for example, were not uncommon. Individuals are occasionally named and at times are people of note and stature, but sometimes sources specify no further identity than the state of origin (e.g., the Corinthians informed the Spartans). Supervision

4. "Operational intelligence" can be variously defined according to context; here I follow Handel's description (*Intelligence*, 2–3, cf. 28), which encompasses such matters as an enemy's resources, ability, and plans for waging a given campaign (e.g., the potential of Peloponnesian naval forces in the Aegean campaign). Its value was less ephemeral than tactical intelligence: compare "operational" intelligence on the order of battle of the Athenian expedition to Sicily, which would be a consistent factor in Syracusan planning, with the "tactical" intelligence on Nicias' plans for the second battle in the Syracusan harbor, which was of great value but only for that one encounter.

The term "operational intelligence" has elsewhere been used for intelligence acquired to put together a plan of operation for further (especially clandestine) collection of information; it is *not* used in that sense here.

5. For example, Alexander extracted from Persian captives news that Darius' army was at the Tigris (an instance detailed in chapter 1). Alexander wished to force an immediate encounter and marched his army to the Tigris, only to discover there that the information was inaccurate. Yet good tactical intelligence could make a great difference in a battle: witness, for instance, the victory of Dionysius I over Heloris by the Eleporus River, which was in large part owed both to careful attention paid to tactical intelligence by the former and to its neglect by the latter (Diod. Sic. 14.104.1–105.1). Dionysius made good use of scouts (*kataskopoi*) and watchers; Heloris was unapprised of his presence, although only forty stadia (about five miles) separated Dionysius' camp from his own.

tended to be the province of civil authorities (insofar as civil authority could be separated from military in ancient Greece). Strategic intelligence was fairly accurate and accessible and had long-term value (there were strategic surprises, but they were far fewer than surprises on the tactical level).

Information pertaining to future, and sometimes secret, events is also represented in the examples. About 9 percent are of plans, intentions, or preparations; an additional 3 percent concern plots. Developments in weapons technology were a concern then even as now.⁶ The agents who gathered such sorts of information were varied but included spies, provocateurs, and traitors in their number. Their fields of operation are generally situated amid military campaigns, revolts, and tyrannies.

Certainly this exercise offers only a partial picture of Greek intelligence goals. Projecting back modern needs can be a fruitful, if risky, supplement. There is little detailed information, for instance, of a logistical nature, yet one now and again finds accounts of sophisticated intelligence applications, such as projecting an army's planned route through information on supplies. Hence one can fairly conjecture additional items that would have been of interest to the people setting intelligence goals, as

6. A prevalent fallacy in the academic and professional worlds holds that the Greeks had little inclination to preserve or penetrate secrecy, since they were democratic, and had no interest in technological innovation, since their technology was relatively primitive. So argues, for example, Dulles (15): "Athens in the days of democracy and Rome in the days of the republic were not climates that bred espionage. . . . Except for the size and placement of enemy forces at key moments before the engagement in battle there was little need felt for specific information." First, many Greek states during the classical period were not democracies but were climates entirely conducive to espionage. Second, even the democracies perceived the need for information beyond the immediate demands of battle.

Starr (2) and Gerolymatos (*Espionage*, 15) maintained that technology was not of concern to Greeks and was thus neglected in information gathering. But examples indicating the contrary may be found at Thuc. 7.62.3, 7.65.1 (reinforced rams, grappling hooks); Arrian *Anab.* 3.8.6 (Diod. Sic. 17.53.1: scythed chariots; but in Q. Curtius 4.9.3–4 and 4.15.4 Alexander's men were unprepared), 3.9.4 (Q. Curtius 4.13.36; Polyaeus 4.3.17: traps and caltrops). One would expect the warring parties in the Lelantine War, in which an agreement had been reached banning the use of missile weapons, to have had an interest in discovering whether their foes intended to abide by the treaty.

See also Aristotle *Politics* 1330b–1331a, regarding the effects of new inventions in types of missiles and siege artillery, and Arrian *Anab.* 5.18.5, regarding Porus' armor (although the knowledge was obtained only after he was taken captive). Plutarch would have us believe that Epaminondas despised news that his opponents had new weapons at their disposal, since he considered skill and virtue more important than technical innovations (Plut. *Mor.* 193f.). Yet this sentiment seems more in keeping with Plutarch, the philosopher, than Epaminondas, the *strategos*.

Engels did with regard to Alexander, (e.g., harvest dates, arms manufacturing, the availability of transport facilities and pack animals).⁷ Similar details are needed to flesh out other categories. They are not forthcoming from the ancients, who do, however, afford us some indication of why the Greeks sought the types of information they did.

Intelligence Goals Expressed in Ancient Sources

While early writers at times contained accounts of information gathering and intelligence, no extant work written before the fourth century contains a theoretical treatment of the subject. Honorable mention must be given to Herodotus and especially Thucydides for beginning to formulate criteria and methods for historiography, which bear close kinship with the intelligence process.⁸ But the distinction of being the first—and only—Greek practical theorist on the subject of intelligence must be awarded to Xenophon, who alone went so far as to study the gathering and evaluating of information as a field in its own right. His instruction is contained in discourses on reconnaissance, surveillance, and espionage in the *Cavalry Commander*, in detailed models of various elements of intelligence in the *Education of Cyrus*, and in dialogues in the *Memorabilia*. These texts are theoretical, not historical. They are particularly valuable, even though—or, perhaps, because—his descriptions and analyses of intelligence are based on examples contrived for the purpose of illustrating his points, rather than historical events. It might be added in passing that his fictitious accounts are in no way incompatible with historical accounts in the *Hellenica* and *Anabasis* (or, for that matter, with those of other historians); rather they tend to be more detailed, no doubt so as to better serve as models of instruction.

These texts reveal Xenophon's understanding that the basis of the need for information lies in conflict and competition—especially military (and thence political) and economic. Xenophon's primary strategic con-

7. Engels 328–31. However, the Spartan invasion of Attica in 425 was deleteriously affected by a failure to ascertain harvest dates (Thuc. 4.6.1).

8. Thucydides' doctrinal statements of method are, of course, quite familiar to any classical historian. More subtle are his apparent distinctions between information and intelligence (for which the Greeks lacked specific terms), whereby he tended to use αἰσθάνομαι in instances of the former and συνθανόμαι combined with an adverb (e.g., ἀκριβῶς, σαφῶς) in instances of the latter.

cern was the absolute and relative capabilities of states to wage war.⁹ His terminology is rather broad and vague. In two instances he used as the object of inquiry the word *dunamis*, a word that is quite general and abstract and that implies concerns beyond a reckoning of the strengths of armies.¹⁰ On another occasion the object was simply “the enemy’s affairs.”¹¹ On tactical levels, Xenophon perceived intelligence as a means to security and advantage. Efforts were to be directed toward the prevention of surprise and toward gaining a sound knowledge of terrain.¹²

Xenophon saw a connection between good intelligence and success in attaining and fulfilling political and military offices, and he maintained that intelligence enhanced one’s capabilities.¹³ Those who lacked it were unlikely to advance in rank; if, by chance, they did, they would be at best

9. Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.7–8: “It is necessary, is it not, to know the power [*dunamis*] of both our polis and the enemy’s, should one advise us with whom we should wage war, so that if the power of our city be greater, one would counsel taking up a war, but if the enemy’s is greater, one may persuade us to refrain.” Cf. *Mem.* 4.2.29. For the importance of knowledge of one’s own situation, see Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.9 and Sun Tzu (the famed Chinese strategist) 3.31–33.

10. LSJ s.v. I.1–3.

11. Xenophon (*Cyr.* 1.6.43) included in topics for consideration by a military commander “how one might best learn the affairs of one’s enemies [τὰ τῶν πολεμίων], and how they might have least knowledge of your own.”

12. E.g., Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.6.

13. Isocrates also noted the value of intelligence to generals and leaders of states: a general must know against whom and with whom he ought to make war (XV [*Antidosis*] 117); a ruler should spend most of his time making inquiries into, reflecting on, and taking counsel about events (IX [*Evag.*] 41, 42). Isocrates also praised Evagoras for his knowledge of public affairs and citizens, whereby no plots escaped his notice. Cf. his *Letters* 1.4 (to Dionysius) and 6.9–10 (to the Sons of Jason). Cf. also Plutarch (*Mor.* 187d), who attributed to Chabrias the saying that the best *strategoi* were those who best knew their enemies’ affairs (τὰ τῶν πολεμίων).

Not surprisingly, this idea is implicit in Herodotus and Thucydides. Curiously, in other instances, Thucydides concentrated more on the psychological effects of “intelligence failures” than on the positive effects of its successes. His most striking discourse is set in a portrayal of the effects of stasis in Corcyra, wherein he described the fall of those of greater intellect to their inferiors, since “they, assuming in their arrogance that they would be alerted in advance and that there was no need for them to accomplish by deed that which they might gain by intellect, were caught off guard and perished all the more” (3.83.4). Similarly, he described the Athenians as confident that the Peloponnesians would not be able to attack the Piraeus without the Athenians learning of their enemies’ plans in advance. Yet they were surprised by a Peloponnesian force, and disaster was narrowly averted (2.93.3). This emphasis on the failure of intelligence may be a result of his interest in dramatic reversal caused by hubris, rather than a reflection of contemporary perception, since many examples of effective use of intelligence are present in his work.

of little use to their compatriots, at worst a danger to their own state. A passage in the *Memorabilia* illustrates this quite clearly: Socrates is depicted questioning Glaucon, who had aspirations to political power, about his knowledge of matters on which he proposed to guide Athens. Socrates' questions focused on the military disposition of the state and of its enemies, of which Glaucon knew nothing. Yet Glaucon still wanted to do away with the Athenian garrisons as superfluous. Socrates questioned him as to the consequences of this and asked him whether he had himself gone out and investigated the matter or learned in some other way that they were badly maintained. Glaucon admitted that he had come to his conclusion through conjecture. At this he was gently rebuked and told to get information on the matter before he acted rashly.¹⁴

For all its apparent worth, intelligence for Xenophon—and for the Greeks in general—was valuable only insofar as it enabled a person to accomplish a goal, primarily one defined by military or political conflict. It was not desired for its own sake. Therefore a curious and lasting pattern developed: when conflicts occurred and the security of an individual or state was threatened, intelligence goals were set and met. But when a person or populace was confident in its power, wealth, or virtue and saw no probable outcome of circumstances save success, intelligence might be neglected. Consequently one may find in oratory, such as the speeches of Isocrates and Demosthenes, a certain condescension toward information gathering. Demosthenes on occasion alluded to it as the concern of the threatened party: “[if you use your strength] perhaps, just as now you make inquiries about what Philip is doing and where he is going, so he may wonder whither the might of your city is bound and where it might appear.”¹⁵

Indeed, it is demonstrable that success has often been achieved with little or no intelligence, given the right mixture of luck and strength.¹⁶ And so the Greek states have often been characterized—unfairly, one

14. Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.9–11.

15. Demosth. X (4 *Phil.*) 23; cf. 19 (*On the embassy*) 288. Cf. also Isoc. *Epist.* V (*To Philip*) 70. One must, however, note the rhetorical motive present in all these cases. This philosophy is by no means peculiar to the ancients. Handel (*Intelligence and Military Operations*, 39; cf. 69) noted: “There is no stronger incentive to encourage the appreciation of intelligence than fear and weakness (whether real or perceived); conversely, victory and power reduce one’s motivations to learn about the enemy, thus bringing about the conditions that eventually cause defeat.” This characterization would explain the attention given by the tyrants and Spartans to internal espionage.

16. Cf. Handel, *Intelligence and Military Operations*, 32ff., 65ff.

must add—in part because of modern perceptions of democratic virtue and vice. The remainder of this book is dedicated to illustrating how the Greeks achieved their intelligence goals, in hope that the account will serve as a piece of intelligence applicable to the animated, if bloodless, conflicts of historians.

Chapter 1

Beyond the Hill: Tactical Assets

The people who collected or supplied information are the subject of this and the next two chapters. Most are faceless, their individuality lost by the scale of history and the passage of time. Yet however anonymous they may be singly, their experience and influence can be recalled in outline from a collection of scraps compiled from varied sources. To this end, reports of their activities have been categorized according to context and type, and this information has been drawn into a more or less coherent picture.

Reconnaissance and Surveillance

Into modern texts and manuals has descended from the Greeks a conception of tactical intelligence that encompasses two distinct but related modes: reconnaissance and surveillance. The distinction rests primarily on method and to some extent on aims. The relationship is indicated by terminology.

Reconnaissance entailed agents entering and exploring a hostile or unknown area to acquire tactical information—the location and disposition of the enemy, the terrain and roads by land, the coast and anchorages by sea.¹ Strategic information was not generally available to them, except insofar as they might capture officers or couriers while scouting.² Surveillance involved regular, protracted observation of an area or a military force to note changes, such as the advent or withdrawal of men or

1. E.g., location and disposition of the enemy: Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.52; Aen. *Tact.* 27.15, 28.4; Q. Curtius 4.10.9; Diod. *Sic.* 17.33.1; Arrian *Anab.* 1.13.2, 2.7.2, 3.7.7; Plut. *Eum.* 9.5. Topography and geography: Hdt. 7.177; Thuc. 6.50.4; Arrian *Anab.* 1.20.5, 2.8.1, 3.9.4, 4.30.5–6, 6.19.3, 6.23.2, 6.26.5; Arrian *Ind.* 32.11, 42.5; Plut. *Nicias* 14.

2. Diodorus Siculus (19.25.1), however, mentions plans learned by Eumenes' and Antigonus' *kataskopoi* before Gabene. For capture by reconnaissance parties, see Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.16–18, 6.3.10; Arrian *Anab.* 4.30.5–6; Q. Curtius 3.13.2; Plut. *Lys.* 28.2; Plut. *Nic.* 14.5. Cf. Diod. *Sic.* 11.21.4–5. Cf. also [Nicephorus] 2 on Greeks of the Byzantine era.

ships. While reconnaissance normally involved movement and exploration, surveillance was often sedentary, although it could also be conducted along fixed patrol routes on the periphery of a friendly area.

Nomenclature is somewhat confused and evolves over time.³ The following identifications can, however, be made. All reconnaissance and some surveillance agents can be called *skopoi*. Reconnaissance agents can also be called *kataskopoi*—a word with a range of meanings, encompassing those serving in a vanguard (also called *prodromoi*), those reconnoitering with a small team or alone, an official investigator, and spies (usually—but not always—infiltration agents, rather than “agents in place” or “provocateurs”). Surveillance agents who are active during daylight may be called *skopoi* or *hemeroskopoi* (day-observers); those active during the night are called not *skopoi* but *phulakes* (watchmen or guards). Unlike *hemeroskopoi*, *phulakes* are less concerned with long-distance surveillance than security; like them, they are typically stationary. A *peripolos* is similar to a *kataskopos* in that he is mobile but, like a *phulax* or *hemeroskopos*, he is bound to protect and keep an eye on an area and operates out of established bases.

Reconnaissance Agents (*Skopoi*, *Kataskopoi*)

Before proceeding to a general discussion of reconnaissance in antiquity, a case must be made for its very existence, especially in the earlier years. It has been argued that military intelligence was generally neglected by the Greeks; indeed, one prominent scholar, W.K. Pritchett, has gone so far as to say that there are no examples of the use of scouts with a marching army before the age of Xenophon (i.e., the early fourth century).⁴ His

3. The word *episkopos*, for instance, has a wide range of meanings in Homer, from “spy” to “overseer”; in later times the latter meaning eclipsed the former, and the term eventually acquired the primary meaning of “bishop.” It is noteworthy that Aristarchus (citing *Od.* 8.163 and 22.396; cf. also 10.324 and 342) remarked on Homer’s failure to differentiate between compounded and un-compounded forms of *skopos*; also, the scholia to the *Iliad* (e.g., 10.38d [Hrd.]) used *kataskopos* in reference to Odysseus, Diomedes, and Dolon, who are called *skopoi* and *episkopoi* by Homer; the author of the *Rhesus* did likewise (125–29, 140, 523, 591).

4. Pritchett 1:132 (see, generally, 127–33). Spence follows him (*Cavalry*, 145 and n. 87; but see 149–50 and 149 n. 109) and, in an otherwise admirable treatment of the role of cavalry in reconnaissance, unfortunately falls into the error of thinking that if cavalry were not used for this role in earlier times, no one was (cf. 134), attributing the cause to “the nature of hoplite warfare” (147).

statement has two foundations: an absence of successful candidates for his qualifications for a scout, and a number of examples of intelligence failures, which ought never to have happened had scouts or observers been in use. It in turn provides a basis for his more general theory: that the Greeks neglected both reconnaissance and surveillance.⁵

In one respect, he is quite right: if one defines a scout as he does, there are no examples. But is his definition suitable? It demands the following qualifications: “(1) The whereabouts of the enemy is not known. (2) The scout merely acts as an advance eye for the army. (3) It is not the express purpose of the scout to find the enemy. (4) The armies are not static. (5) The scout functions separately from the army.”⁶

This definition is in accord with neither ancient nor modern practice and terminology; it resembles most the concept of the “Indian scout.”⁷ As will be seen shortly, *kataskopoi*, like their twentieth-century heirs, operated jointly more often than separately, with a variety of purposes and degrees of reluctance to use arms. Clear parallels exist between their practices and those recommended for those termed “scouts” in modern military histories and manuals. In any case, scouting was (and is) a subset, rather than the whole, of reconnaissance operations, and to deny the latter on the basis of an absence of the former is not logical.

With regard to surveillance, there is epigraphic testimony going back to the Mycenaean era, and there are examples in historical narrative in the text of the Father of History; these are treated later in this chapter. Specific historical examples of the successful use of reconnaissance teams on land before the late fifth century are less forthcoming, but the Homeric poems leave no doubt as to their existence. Reconnaissance is found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—the most lengthy example being the so-called *Nuktegersia* of Odysseus and Diomedes, those most comparable to later Greek practice being the men sent forth by Odysseus upon landing on the shores of strange and exotic islands.⁸ It would be rash to believe that Homer’s contemporaries did not send out men to explore newfound lands and peoples in the age of colonization or that they never tried to

5. This point of view is also found in Adcock’s *Greek and Macedonian Art of War* (40–41) and is echoed by S. Lewis (esp. 175 n. 10).

6. Pritchett 1:128.

7. As Spence (*Cavalry*, 149–50 and 149 n. 109) has also noted, most modern reconnaissance operations do not meet Pritchett’s criteria.

8. *Iliad* 10.206–10; *Od.* 9.88–90, 9.147ff., 10.100–102. While the exact date of the tenth book of the *Iliad* is open to question, it is generally accepted to have been in existence by the time of Pisistratus.

reconnoiter the positions of their foes. The first unequivocally historical examples of land-based reconnaissance by Greeks are found in Thucydides. In one instance, in 422 B.C., the Athenian *strategos* Cleon reconnoitered the territory around Amphipolis. Pritchett cited this very example as evidence for a lack of scouts, since a large portion of the army was involved; but in any case this is an example of a reconnaissance in force.⁹ A few years later, the Syracusans, on their ill-advised march on Catana, were preceded by cavalry who discovered the Athenian ruse.¹⁰ It may be that the *Skiritai* and “fore-traveling cavalry,” who preceded the Spartan king on the march, were used in reconnaissance roles in yet earlier periods, but this cannot be positively ascertained.¹¹ It can, however, be demonstrated that fleets under sail were preceded by scouting detachments of ships at least as early as the second decade of the fifth century.¹²

A potentially more serious objection is Pritchett’s list of intelligence failures. It is worth noting, however, that many of his citations are instances of movement under cover of night and reflect more on the nocturnal *phulakes* than on *skopoi*.¹³ Even still, must these be taken as evidence for absence rather than imperfection? An intelligence failure does not necessarily indicate a lack of intelligence resources. Should one operate on this assumption, one must conclude that Lee neglected reconnais-

9. The passage at issue is Thuc. 5.7.3–4. The problem with gathering early examples can be exemplified by Thucydides’ depiction (at 5.8.1) of Brasidas, the Spartan general, who learned that Cleon and his men were on the march and took measures to ambush them. How did he learn this? His source is unspecified—indeed Thucydides merely used the word εἶδε (which is translated in the Loeb edition as “saw,” but which can here equally be “learned” unless he kept the Athenians under personal observation). Such a lack of specification cannot be interpreted to mean a lack of information gatherers—indeed, one can only conclude the opposite.

10. Thuc. 6.65.3; see also Plut. *Alc.* 34.5.

11. See Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 13.6. The *Skiritai* first appear in Thucydides (e.g., Thuc. 5.67.1, 71.2–3, 72.1—at Mantinea, drawn up on the left wing, as was customary) but were not distinguished as a vanguard, nor are the functions of the *hippeis* securely established. Cf. chap. 3, Covert Agents in Laconia; and also Lazenby 10–12, and Anderson 245–49.

Herodotus (7.208) portrayed a mounted Persian scout at Thermopylae in his tale of the Spartans preparing for death. I strongly suspect that such a use, if historical, was not limited to the Persians; if fictional, reflected Greek expectations at the time of Herodotus’ composition in the mid-fifth century.

12. Hdt. 7.179; Thuc. 6.50.

13. Pritchett 1:127 (i.e., Hdt. 8.76.3; Thuc. 7.81, 7.73.3, and possibly 5.66.1). In the last instance, Pritchett’s protest (citing Thuc. 7.44.1) against Gomme’s proposal of a night move (4:99–102) is irrelevant, since the battle of Mantinea was fought by day; more damaging to Gomme’s case is the Τῇ δ’ ὑπεροίῳ opening 5.66.1. In any event, the exceptional nature of the Lacedaemonian surprise is explicitly mentioned by Thucydides at 5.66.2.

sance because of his misjudgments prior to and at Gettysburg in July 1863—instead, one must ask why Stuart failed to apprise him of Meade's advance. Equally, one would posit that reconnaissance patrols were not employed by the American army during World War II, since the Germans achieved tactical surprise at the opening of the Battle of the Bulge—rather, one must look to weather and miscalculation. To return to the Greeks, Alexander was obviously ignorant of Darius' movements before Issus yet was not by any means heedless of reconnaissance.¹⁴ Therefore, failure cannot be taken to mean absence or neglect; further, it may not even mean utter incompetence, since counterintelligence and deception measures were prevalent among the Greeks.

In conclusion, the theory that the Greeks did not use reconnaissance before the final years of the fifth century is not tenable. Yet Pritchett's argument has merit, if adapted. It may be more accurate to say that the age of Xenophon appears to herald a marked increase in emphasis on reconnaissance. Whether this appearance reflects reality or is merely a result of the accident of the survival and extinction of sources is debatable. On the one hand, it was not until the fourth century that Xenophon emerged to write descriptive and critical commentary on the subject, and this suggests an increased interest in the subject.¹⁵ On the other hand, to argue, as Spence does, that the fourth century brought about conditions unknown in these earlier years, when the hoplite ruled supreme in battles on familiar ground, is reasonable, if perhaps Athenocentric, in outlook. Yet the perimeters of the Greek world were expanding throughout the eighth and following centuries, and conflict with other peoples at these frontiers was all but perpetual. A need for information on terrain and

To the failures described by Pritchett (1:127–28), Spence (*Cavalry*, 145–46) adds (1) Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.18–19, the surprise of Thibron by Struthas (here one must ask how Struthas knew Thibron was overconfident and susceptible to attack) and (2) Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.14–20, Dercylidas all but running into a Persian army drawn up for battle. Spence (148 and n. 104) also adds the battle of Tegyra (375), in which he proposes that the report of the enemy came via a member of the front rank rather than a scout—in any event, little warning was given. Spence does, rightly, mention the use of cavalry for reconnaissance from the late fifth and early fourth centuries (149).

14. See Delbrück 206, contesting Koepp's criticism of Alexander's generalship: "There he [Koepp] underestimates the difficulty of conducting a reconnaissance 2 days march away, over mountain passes, in enemy country . . . Such uncertainties and surprises are inevitable in war and very frequent, and they do not necessarily indicate any laxness."

15. Yet while the *Anabasis*, *Cavalry Commander*, and *Cyropaedia* are rich in detailed information, the *Hellenica*, a more general history, gives no greater emphasis to reconnaissance than the analogous works of Thucydides and Herodotus.

enemy forces (a need historically met by reconnaissance units) was certainly present, and since the Homeric poems testify that the idea of reconnaissance existed, one can maintain that reconnaissance was employed at this time, and attribute a lack of examples to the utter paucity of historical sources.

The apologia concluded, let us turn to the details. While reconnaissance units by definition sought to collect information, the relative emphasis on collection versus combat varied, and this affected the size of the units. These varied in size from a few men to about a thousand. On the smaller scale, reconnaissance tended to blend with espionage—as Dulles' ghostwriters put it: "At its simplest, espionage is nothing more than a kind of well-concealed reconnaissance."¹⁶ There is almost certainly a link in Greek practice, with the cavalry class effecting the join—this is discussed in the section on infiltration agents in chapter 3.¹⁷ Large forces, generally composed of cavalry (sometimes mixed with light-armed troops), operated in advance (and sometimes on the flanks) of an army, as *prodromoi*—in effect a vanguard. These could, but did not always, conduct skirmishes or engagements, and there is some debate as to the relative importance of combat and information gathering—it is perhaps most accurate, if least definite, to say that the relative emphasis varied according to commander and circumstance.¹⁸ On his southward march along the Aegean coast, Alexander was preceded by *skopoi*—who amounted to no less than an *ilé* of Companion cavalry and four *ilai* of *prodromoi*, over a thousand men. Just before the battle at the Granicus River, the *sarissa*-bearing cavalry (*sarissophoroi*) and five hundred light troops (*psiloi*) reconnoitered and reported the presence of the Persians; they did not, however, engage in advance of the main force.¹⁹ In the ini-

16. Dulles 58.

17. To which category, for instance, do the nocturnal adventures of Odysseus and Diomedes belong? An interesting conflation of the categories, from the last years of the fourth century, occurred during the siege of Rhodes by Demetrius (Diod. Sic. 19.17.3–5; cf. 37.22b [= Const. Exc. 3.209–10]). There being communication between the warring sides because of mines opened up beneath the walls, Demetrius' men undertook to bribe Athenagoras, a Milesian mercenary who had been entrusted by the Rhodians with the command of their guard. This man promised to turn traitor and admit by night a Macedonian officer to conduct a reconnaissance of the area under his charge, where Macedonian troops might assemble. A Macedonian *philos* (in this context meaning more than "friend," it denotes also the idea of "officer" or "henchman" of a Hellenistic king) was sent to do this, but Athenagoras was playing a double game and turned him over to the Rhodians.

18. Cf. A. Pauli, "Πρόδρομος," *RE* 23, no. 1 (1957): 102–4.

19. Arrian *Anab.* 1.12.7, 13.1.

tial contacts before Gaugamela, the *prodromoi* maintained a covering screen, without engaging, and sent riders back to Alexander—first with preliminary reports of Persian presence, then with an estimate of numbers. No attack was made until Alexander so commanded, and then only when reinforced with two *ilai* of Royal and Companion cavalry. The Persians, said to number “no more than a thousand,” were also referred to as a reconnaissance force.²⁰ One might note that Alexander’s vanguard served to some extent as a screening force, preventing the Persian cavalry from getting close enough to his main body to get a good look. Yet in this instance we see a complementary and deleterious aspect of large reconnaissance forces—their very presence indicated the proximity of a large army. The ancients recognized both positive and negative aspects and attempted various solutions. Xenophon portrayed Cyrus disguising his preceding *psiloi* as brigands—these men would attempt to capture any who saw them, but even those who escaped would be led by the disguise to misinterpret their presence.²¹

The use of very large vanguards seems more of a Macedonian and Persian than Greek phenomenon. The difference in practice should not be surprising—a survey of different reconnaissance methods of the belligerents in World War II indicates that even within a brief period there can be considerable variation.²² One tries with difficulty to apply Clausewitz’s axiom that the size of the vanguard is determined by the amount of time needed by the commander to effectively deploy his main body (i.e., the larger the vanguard, the more time that could be bought). There seems no such correlation in the classical world. Rather, the critical factor may have been availability of cavalry, since non-Macedonian Greeks did on occasion send cavalry ahead of their forces when it was available, and these could offer battle with varying degrees of success—one of the more memorable incidents being the stand of the Athenian cavalry against Epaminondas before Second Mantinea (362), which bought the

20. Arrian *Anab.* 3.7.6–8.2; the Persians are called *kataskopoi* at 3.9.1.

21. Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.23. For reconnaissance forces evading, capturing, or killing all they encounter, see Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.1–2; Polyb. 8.26.4, 27.2. For the danger of reconnaissance activity giving away intent, see also Simonyan and Grishin 4.

22. Cf. Applegate 73–83. During World War II, the Russians in particular but also to a lesser extent the Germans and Japanese gave emphasis to reconnaissance in force by large (battalion-sized) forces (see also Simonyan and Grishin 140). One may find Carthaginian and Roman reconnaissance forces large enough to sustain losses of 200 and 140, respectively (Polyb. 3.45.1ff.); cf. 220 casualties at Livy 27.26.11, and 80 at Polyb. 8.26.4.

Mantineans time to seek the shelter of their city's walls.²³ A more typical action for a cavalry vanguard, perhaps, was a skirmish between Agesilaus' and Tissaphernes' cavalry during the course of a reconnaissance in advance of their respective armies—numbers are not given, but Xenophon tells us that the Greek and Persian formations were roughly equal but drawn up differently: the Greeks in a wide phalanx four deep, the Persians in a formation twelve men wide but very deep—hence the numbers involved on each side must have been considerably more than forty-eight, perhaps as many as two hundred.²⁴

Xenophon recommended the use of two separate contingents, one preceding the other, in especially dangerous country. There are no recorded examples of such practice, but the suggestion indicates at least one mind alive to the consideration of reconnaissance doctrine and may perhaps originate in his own experience. Certainly there were successive layers of surveillance; it may be that a similar principle was applied to reconnaissance. However, we may have here an example of a divergence between doctrine and practice, not unlike that found in the Italian army in World War II.²⁵

More generally, reconnaissance units involved in interpolis warfare were relatively small and did not engage the enemy. They typically numbered two or three for covert operations, around thirty for general

23. The Athenian cavalry were not explicitly acting as a reconnaissance force. Cf. Buford at Gettysburg. Other examples of forces preceded by cavalry include Thuc. 6.63.3; Xen. *Anab.* 6.3.22, 7.3.41; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 13.6. Cf. Polyaeus 3.9.24; Onas. 6.7.

24. Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.12–13. It seems Agesilaus' entire cavalry force preceded him. He was not given cavalry by his own state (3.4.2), but Spithridates, a Persian noble who defected to his cause, had two hundred horsemen whom he might have brought into the combined force. There are two complications with identifying this contingent as the combatants here: (1) Agesilaus' cavalry are specified as Greek (3.4.13); (2) Spithridates had left his cavalry behind (3.4.10) when he came to Agesilaus. Hence one must presume (1) that the cavalry were identified not by ethnicity but by alliance, or that these were Greek mercenaries; or (2) that the cavalry had since joined Spithridates and Agesilaus. Such presumptions do not strain credibility; still, I hesitate to declare *ex cathedra* that these two hundred must be the ones shown here, as Agesilaus may have done recruiting prior to the scene at 3.4.15.

25. The recommendation is at Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.5. In critiques of reconnaissance methods of the belligerents of World War II, Applegate (76) mentions that the Wehrmacht employed three separate contingents in a reconnaissance in force: the lead unit was highly mobile and lightly armed, the second retained an emphasis on mobility but gave more attention to firepower, and the rear unit was less mobile but heavily armed. The second and especially the third were support groups, providing a solid, if moving, base for the advance unit. For an assessment of the disparity between theory and practice in Italian reconnaissance, see Applegate 75.

duties.²⁶ Such groups were employed primarily to collect information, rather than fight: Xenophon recommended fear as the appropriate ally to such a force, as they would be more likely to avoid contact than provoke it; consequently mobility and speed were more important than arms.²⁷ Xenophon further admonished, “a few are no less able to look out as many,” and censured Iphicrates for sending out his whole cavalry force as *skopoi* to reconnoiter the Thebans’ position, since they hindered each other with their numbers and not only failed in their mission but suffered losses.²⁸ On the other hand, fear could impede reconnaissance: Menidas, when sent ahead by Alexander to find Darius’ camp, heard the noise of men and horses from Mazaeus’ troops camped nearby and feared to go further; hence he returned with only vague information.²⁹

Reconnaissance teams were drawn from the cavalry or light-armed troops (*psiloi*), the former being attested more frequently in Sicily and Asia Minor than in the more rugged areas of mainland Greece. The two were often used in conjunction, particularly as screening forces ahead of a moving army, but also as complementary bodies, the cavalry breaking the path of the army, the *psiloi* on more difficult terrain along the flanks. Xenophon also suggested that when a force passed through difficult

26. For two or three, see *Iliad* 10.206–10; *Od.* 9.88–90, 9.147ff., 10.100–102; Plut. *Aratus* 5.4, Arrian *Against the Alans* 1. For the number thirty, see Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.12; Xen. *Anab.* 3.3.1; and perhaps Thuc. 6.43. Bugh proposed (99 and n. 63 ad loc.), quite sensibly, that the thirty horsemen sent by the Athenians to Sicily were to be used as *kataskopoi*. Cf. also Theophylactus 4.10.7 of *peripoloi*.

27. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 7.7–8. Hence the Greeks relied on cavalry for this purpose when terrain permitted (cf. Q. Curtius 9.9.23).

28. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 7.6; *Hell.* 6.5.52. Some twenty of Iphicrates’ men were killed. It is to be assumed that a smaller troop would have been better able to evade the enemy.

In critiquing the moves of the contestants at Hydaspes, Arrian did not believe that Porus sent his son with sixty chariots against the Macedonians when Alexander crossed the Hydaspes, since he considered such a force too large for reconnaissance but too small to give battle (Arrian *Anab.* 5.14.5–6). Whether or not his argument is correct is peripheral to the issue; it is important that he *perceived* this number to be unsuitable. His thoughts are echoed by modern writers, such as Simonyan and Grishin (93): “Under no circumstances should a large number of men be chosen to conduct a [reconnaissance] raid unless there is a special need for this. The more personnel in the party (subunit) allocated to a raid, the more quickly it may be detected by the enemy and the more difficulty it will have in achieving covertness of action.” The U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps advise that the size of a reconnaissance force should be proportionate to the expected opposition, and they note that reconnaissance in force can bring about an unwanted general engagement (U.S. Department of the Army, *FM* 35 art. 4–48a; U.S. Marine Corps *FM* 2–1 art. 1003a2b, 1003b1c, 1003b2a). Cf. Plut. *Flam.* 8.1–2.

29. Q. Curtius 4.12.4–5.

ground (whether in hostile or friendly country), some of the attendants (*huperetai*) of the hoplites were to find paths in close areas, while cavalry did so in open areas.³⁰ *Psiloi* were used alone when cavalry was unavailable or impractical—on rough ground, when stealth was wanted, and by night. Even though he had a large and skilled cavalry force, Alexander used Thracian peltasts to explore the mountain paths around the Persian Gates.³¹ Xenophon portrayed Cyrus' army marching by night preceded by light-armed troops who scouted with ears as well as eyes; the Ten Thousand sent Democrates son of Temnus with a body of foot soldiers into the mountains to verify sightings of fires.³² Reconnaissance by night tended to be the prerogative of smaller units. Individuals or small teams could hope to approach and even enter camps and cities under cover of darkness, and hence pickets and night patrols were posted to counter this type of threat. Night and especially inclement weather are generally agreed to be an asset to scouts, for while they hinder the agent's vision, they provide security against detection. Reconnaissance by day was undertaken by units of all sizes, the numbers determined by the assignment and the potential for contact with an enemy. A small group of warships might serve for reconnaissance by sea; a single lighter vessel sufficed

30. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.4. Cavalry and archers: Arrian *Anab.* 2.8.1. Cavalry and *psiloi*: Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 13.6; Aen. *Tact.* 15.5; Arrian *Anab.* 1.13.1–2, 3.9.5. Cavalry ahead, *psiloi* on flanks and heights: Xen. *Anab.* 6.3.14. Cf. Vegetius 3.6. Arrian noted the utility of light troops armed with missile weapons (javelins and slings) for scouting (*Tactica* 15.5). The Egyptians used mounted archers as scouts, according to Worley (12; cf. also 180 n. 19), who described a picture of a mounted archer with the caption "The scout of the army of the pharaoh."

31. Q. Curtius 3.4.13 (*Thracas . . . leviter armatos*). Cf. Aelian *Tactica* 17.7; Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.15. Similarly, Antiochus III (in 218) took *euzonoi* to reconnoiter the Plane Tree Pass (described as rocky, narrow, and difficult at 69.1) held by Ptolemy IV's general Nicolaus (Polyb. 5.68.10–11).

32. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.56ff.; Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.15–18. See also Q. Curtius 8.11.22. Vegetius (3.6) pointed out that it was safer to operate by night, but the difficulty of navigation in unfamiliar territory without a compass must have been considerable—it is hard enough with one! Scouts by night (and day) must therefore have relied on landmarks for their bearings, which would have some effect on their routes.

A high proportion of modern reconnaissance by small units is done after dark. However, Simonyan and Grishin (88–89) point out that daylight reconnaissance-oriented raids for the purposes of capturing prisoners have better chances for success and a better ratio of capture to loss than those by night. While this observation may apply to Greek practice, one nevertheless can find a similar (and successful, from the point of the Greeks) mission by night in fiction (the *Doloneia*, where capture is an important component of the instructions) and history (Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.15–18, where it may have been incidental).

when contact with the enemy was not expected or when hostilities were not yet open.³³

While reconnaissance forces were often drawn from particular types of troops, there is no evidence of units organized for the specific and sole purpose of gathering information, although the Lacedaemonians frequently relied on the *Skiritai* for this role.³⁴ Yet the repeated employment of the same men and leaders contributed to a degree of specialization and development of expertise. Commanders of reconnaissance forces determined what was and was not necessary to report back to the commander and they consequently needed a combination of experience and an ability to distinguish reality from appearance and to realize what was or was not important.³⁵ The aforementioned Democrates was described by

33. Examples: (1) the Megarians sent a ship to verify reports of an Athenian landing on Salamis (Plut. *Solon* 9.4.4); (2) the Athenians used ten ships to reconnoiter the harbor of Syracuse in the 415–413 expedition (Thuc. 6.50.4; Plut. *Nic.* 14.5); (3) Alcibiades sailed with twenty ships to Gythium to take a look at the triremes that he had learned the Lacedaemonians were preparing (Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.11); (4) Antiochus, Alcibiades' lieutenant, may have used two or ten ships for reconnaissance at Notium (Russell *passim*, citing Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.11–14; *Hell. Oxy.* 8.1–4; Plut. *Alc.* 35.5–6; Plut. *Lys.* 5.1–2; Diod. Sic. 13.71.2–4); (5) Lysander sent ahead two or three triremes to report back on Athenian movements at Aegospotami (Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.24; Plut. *Lys.* 10.3, 11.1–2; Front. *Strat.* 2.1.18; Polyaeus 1.45.2. Cf. Diod. Sic. 13.106); and (6) Chabrias waylaid a force of twelve Laconian scout ships (Polyaeus 3.11.3). Cf. the exploratory *presbeia* of Phaeax with two ships (Thuc. 5.4.1). See also Hdt. 3.136, 7.179; Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.11.

Smaller ships used for reconnaissance included fifty-oared (Hdt. 1.152), thirty-oared (Hdt. 8.21; Arrian *Anab.* 2.7.2, 7.20.7; Diod. Sic. 17.33.1), and heralds' boats (Arrian *Anab.* 6.19.3). Cf. the use of light ships (*lemboi*) preceding Roman fleets (e.g., Polyb. 1.53.9; Plut. *Cato Minor* 54.5), and cf. the forty-oar ships (variously given as *pictae*, *picati*, and *pecati* in the manuscripts) described by Vegetius (4.37), these latter with sails dyed blue and hulls waxed for silent running.

34. For the *Skiritai*, see n. 11 and Gomme 4:103–4 on Thuc. 5.67.1. Cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 4.2.1. It is curious that the Spartans seem to have had a tendency to use non-Spartiate Laonians (*perioikoi*) for intelligence operations. The *Skiritai* were from a northern district of Laonia (Skiritis), bordering Mantinea—an area that was the stage for numerous battles, marches, and raids—and life in such a milieu could have encouraged the evolution of a breed trained by hard necessity. A parallel might be the Moroccan Ghoums employed by the British during World War II—perceived as being particularly adept at stealth and reconnaissance, the Ghoums were used frequently but not exclusively, and after all, they were not British (or Spartiates!). Alternately, there is the practice of recruiting poachers as gamekeepers: the British in Egypt used patrols of tribal militias recruited from the very people against whom the security was directed (Keegan 143).

35. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.56ff., describing the role of the *arkhon* of the scouts. Cf. Anon. Byz. (s. VI) 20, who called for intelligent, observant, and experienced men (therein called *phulakes*, but the context clearly indicates reconnaissance). One would expect the rank and file

Xenophon as just such an individual and fulfilled his role as commander of scouts admirably. Xenophon recorded a few occasions when generals (Seuthes, Timasion, and himself) went in person to reconnoiter, and in his *Cavalry Commander* he advised the commander to take a look for himself whenever he could do so with minimal risk.³⁶ Alexander sometimes accompanied a reconnaissance in force, and at times he went himself accompanied by only a few men. When he delegated the command of a reconnaissance force to others, they were usually men of note and stature.³⁷

Skopoi relied primarily on their eyes when collecting information, at least by day.³⁸ To obtain an accurate observation, they might approach quite near to an enemy force—there are examples of mounted Syracusan scouts coming close enough to shout insults at encamped Athenians, for instance, and of traps set by commanders for unwary scouts who approached their camps.³⁹ Direct contact was avoided by small teams, except to capture a straggler, or accost a native, who might be questioned. Larger forces used their inherent threat to force the enemy to disclose his own power.

The distances at which land reconnaissance teams operated varied from the immediate locale to two days' journey; seaborne forays could

to be selected for their merits also, since Aeneas Tacticus set forth requirements for observers; see also Vegetius 3.6, who insisted that only the most trustworthy and cleverest (*fidelissimi argutissimique*) should be chosen, and cf. contemporary criteria, e.g., those of Applegate (ix): "An intelligent man of good physique, who is confident, aggressive, and self-reliant, is the best raw material from which scouts and patrol members are made."

36. Seuthes: Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.41. Timasion: Xen. *Anab.* 6.3.22. Cf. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.16. One might infer from parallels that this practice was in fact hazardous—M. Claudius Marcellus and an accompanying force of about 220 cavalry and thirty light-armed troops were ambushed by Hannibal's Numidians (who, says Polybius, were accustomed to lie in ambush for skirmishers and outriders [*proporeumenois*]); the consul met his death in the ensuing fight (Polyb. 10.32.1–12; Livy 27.26.1–27). Polybius censured Marcellus for exposing himself to danger: according to the historian's opinion, a commander ought not to take such risks. Cf. the close call of Scipio in similar circumstances (Livy 24.41.6).

37. Alexander: Arrian *Anab.* 1.20.5, 3.9.4, 4.30.5–6, 6.26.5. Amyntas: Arrian *Anab.* 1.12.7. Hegelochus: Arrian *Anab.* 1.13.1–2. Ptolemy son of Lagus: Arrian *Anab.* 4.24.8. Thoas: Arrian *Anab.* 6.23.2–3. Parmenio: Arrian *Anab.* 3.9.4; Q. Curtius 3.7.6.

38. The word σκοπός is derived from the same root as σκέψομαι (I see); cf. English *spy*. In contrast, ὠτακουστής ("eavesdropper," hence spy—usually in the context of domestic espionage) is from οὖς, ὠτός (ear) and ἀκούω (I hear).

39. Pace Starr (9), who said scouts relied on distant observation; he may have had surveillance in mind. For Syracusans, see Thuc. 6.63.3. Xenophon (Cyr. 3.3.25) advocated stationing *prophulakai* well before watch fires for this end (cf. *Anab.* 7.2.18).

extend still further.⁴⁰ Among the aforementioned examples, Democrates and his team advanced no more than a few miles, while before Gaugamela, the contact between Persian and Macedonian vanguards occurred when the two armies were separated by perhaps 150 stadia.⁴¹ According to Diodorus Siculus, a source not always given to accuracy, Eumenes learned from *kataskopoi* that Antigonos was crossing the Coprates River, eighty stadia distant from his camp.⁴² Information on the area covered by a patrol can only be guessed at through comparisons. Apparently British cavalry units in World War I could not be expected to cover an area wider than ten miles, no depth being specified—although even this sounds like the ideal rather than the norm.⁴³ A World War II Soviet independent reconnaissance patrol, traveling on foot, typically penetrated to a depth of about eight kilometers, with squads sent out two to three kilometers from the main axis of movement.⁴⁴

Surveillance Agents

The employment of surveillance agents was a general, but not universal, practice, as Xenophon noted: “All know that it is better to place both day and night watchers before the camp, but even this duty is heeded by some

40. For a day's march, cf. Diod. Sic. 19.25.1 (of Eumenes and Antigonos One-Eyed in 317); for two days, see n. 30. Numidian cavalry leading Hannibal's march on Tarentum preceded the main force by a bit less than four miles (thirty stadia). Napoleon *Maxims* 7 (Philips 1:409) merely says “at sufficient distances to allow the main body of the arm to deploy and take up its position.”

41. I.e., Democrates advanced a distance less than that which an army of ten thousand was able to traverse and return in a single day despite snow and difficult terrain (Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.15–22). Arrian (*Anab.* 3.9.2) gives 60 stadia (ca. seven and a half miles) as the distance between the two armies; Curtius (4.10.15) says 150 stadia (about eighteen and a half miles). It is likely Arrian is giving the distance at the end of Alexander's march *after* the contact, Curtius the distance before it (ten or eleven miles being a reasonable distance in these circumstances). Curtius says that the Persians with whom the Macedonians fell in were stragglers, not scouts, but his own statement that Mazaeus had sent ahead a thousand cavalry (4.9.24), and the relative positions of the armies, suggests that Arrian is in fact correct.

42. Diod. Sic. 19.18.4 (about ten miles).

43. “As to the front of the possible reconnaissance, it should be clearly understood that the maximum width of a zone that can be effectively reconnoitered by a reconnaissance detachment regardless of strength—whether a squadron or a troop—is approximately ten miles. The anticipated difficulty in obtaining the information will determine whether the reconnaissance detachment should be a squadron or a troop” (Schwein 36). A British squadron in World War I contained about 150 men.

44. Simonyan and Grishin 156.

and neglected by others.”⁴⁵ In fact, emphasis on surveillance was a function of perceived security.⁴⁶ In time of war commanders normally assumed that their opponents had placed watchers and, when planning to surprise or elude their foes, took precautions accordingly. When they perceived that their opponents either failed to post watchers or did so carelessly, they were often able to exploit the omission.⁴⁷ An attack during peace promised surprise, as when the Thebans marched on Plataea before war was declared.⁴⁸

Surveillance was generally distinguished according to day (*hemerinaí phulakai*) and night watches (*nukterinaí phulakai*), which began and

45. Xen. *Oecon.* 20.8. This neglect is not necessarily indicative of contempt for tactical intelligence. The Apaches and Sioux were widely admired for their abilities in this field yet, according to Wagner (203), “they post no sentinels after dark, but are on the alert at the first sight of dawn.”

46. Xenophon, in his address to the Greek camp (*Anab.* 5.1.9), proposed posting guards about the camp. This might imply that up to this point the camp had not been guarded, but he was probably warning his troops not to cease such precautions now that they had reached the sea. As may be expected, a general would pay more attention to posting watchers when the proximity of the enemy demanded: the Syracusans did not mount watches in the Sicel cities until they learned the Athenians were at Rhegium (Thuc. 6.45.1); Arrian remarked that Alexander posted forward watches with care when Darius’ army was near (*Anab.* 2.8.2; cf. Diod. Sic. 14.105.1 of Dionysius, 14.108.4 of the Rhegians).

General statements of practice reinforce individual examples. Consider, e.g., Xen. *Hiero* 6.9: “whenever we are on expedition we post sentinels and take dinner and rest in confidence”; *Cav. Com.* 4.8: “do not neglect to post guards even if you have confidence in your spies.”

47. Some examples follow. (1) Thuc. 2.93–94; Diod. 12.49.2: In 428, the Lacedaemonian navarch Cnemus learned through unspecified but obviously effective channels that the Athenians, in overconfidence, had neglected to post guards at the Piraeus docks. He attacked by night and took Salamis by surprise, but the Salaminians were able to flash signal fires to the Athenians, which discouraged him from attacking Athens. After this, the Athenians were rather more careful about guarding Salamis and the Piraeus for a while, but the lesson was not properly learned. In 388, Teleutias sailed into the Piraeus, which he rightly expected to be poorly guarded, and caused havoc (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.19ff.). (2) Thuc. 6.100.1: the Athenians besieging Syracuse noted a relaxation of the guard and were able to exploit this negligence. (3) Arrian *Anab.* 5.12.4: Alexander, when making a river crossing, tried not to be seen by Porus’ scouts. (4) Arrian *Anab.* 1.6.9: when Alexander noted that Clitus son of Bardylis and Glaucias, king of the Taulantians, had failed to post sentries, he moved into position unobserved and he attacked. (5) Q. Curtius 9.7.2: the citadel of Bactra was carelessly guarded when Alexander was in India, since it was thought safe; rebels took it with relative ease.

48. Regarding Plataea, see esp. Thuc. 2.2.3. In the *Agamemnon* (line 337), the Greeks no longer posted sentries when their victory was complete; the Syracusan demos was often careless of their security after a successful battle, to its grief (Diod. Sic. 16.18; Plut. *Timo-leon* 18.3; cf. Thuc. 7.72–73). Cf. Diod. Sic. 30.10.1 of Perseus.

ended at dinner and dawn, and according to relatively stationary (*phulakes*) and roving (*peripoloi*) parties.⁴⁹ Since the verbal division is reflected in practice, they are treated separately here.

Observers (*Skopoi*, *Hemeroskopoi*)

Agents involved in surveillance by day engaged in protracted observation of an area or force to learn of any significant changes or activities.⁵⁰ They were relatively static and obtained their information chiefly through visual means. They should, according to Aeneas Tacticus, be competent to report on the “enemy’s preparations, his numbers, his line of march, and the other movements of his army.”⁵¹ He also required that they be swift, trustworthy men, experienced in war.⁵²

Records in Linear B indicate that the use of observers dates back to the Mycenaean era. Tablets found at Pylos contain a list of ten captains and their men stationed in small detachments along the Peloponnesian coast under the heading “Thus the watchers are guarding the coast.”⁵³ Among the records are what appear to be various ethnic names. Chadwick was inclined to believe that these represented indigenous peoples who would

49. Dinner marks the posting of sentries in Xen. *Hell.* 4.6.7; Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.34; Xen. *Cyr.* 3.3.33, 7.2.1; Xen. *Hiero* 6.9; Aen. *Tact.* 18.1 (upon a signal). Aeneas Tacticus (27.15) advised that the watch be maintained until the nearby terrain was searched in the morning. The division between night and day watchers is embodied in Xenophon’s verbal distinction (*Cyr.* 1.6.43; cf. Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 12.2–3) and in Aeneas Tacticus’ separate treatment of day and night watches (*hemeroskopoi* in his chap. 6, *phulakes* in chap. 22). A similar division existed among the Romans of Polybius’ day (*Polyb.* 6.33.7–37.6).

50. So U.S. Marine Corps art. 1001b; see also 1001a1 and a2.

51. Aen. *Tact.* 6.3, Whitehead’s translation. A sampling: Hdt. 7.192; Thuc. 4.26.5–9; Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.27, 7.2.5; Diod. *Sic.* 11.21.5, 14.10.1; Arrian *Anab.* 5.10.4; Onas. 22.2.

52. The exclusion of those who did not meet these standards implies that some degree of specialization did exist, at least by the fourth century. On a less historical note, the watcher (*skopos*) of Aegisthus was hired for the express purpose of looking out for Agamemnon’s return (*Od.* 4.524); the watchman in the *Agamemnon* kept his post continually over a long period (Aeschylus *Ag.* 2).

53. Ventris and Chadwick nos. 56–60; their translation of no. 56, line 1 (*o-u-ru-to o-pi-a2-ra e-pi-ko-wo*). They, quite reasonably, considered the 780 men spread along the coast to be an early warning system rather than a defense (indeed, some units mentioned were as small as ten men). The watchers were in most cases accompanied by “Followers” (*e-qu-ta*, whom Ventris and Chadwick compared to the *hetairoi* [companions] of a king), who possessed chariots and might have served as swift couriers (429). In his later work (*The Mycenaean World*, 176–77), Chadwick thought that since the Followers tended to be distributed in places most at risk, they would likely be present with their troops.

not be trusted in the army but could be trusted as lookouts.⁵⁴ If his notion is right, this would imply that surveillance was perceived by the Mycenaeans as either relatively unimportant or relatively free from manipulation—curious attitudes that have reigned in some times and places, but odd in light of the effort that went into the dispositions. To be sure, the watch failed to avert disaster—after all, the clay tablets are preserved only because they were fired into brick when the palace was burned—but was this a failure in the vigilance of the watchers or in the arms of the soldiers?

After the gap in the written record following the fall of the Mycenaeans, observers reappear in the *Iliad*, in which lookouts are found on the shield of Achilles and again at the funeral of Hector. Their presence continues and extends throughout the period under discussion.⁵⁵

Poets and tacticians alike were inclined to situate one to three men in an elevated observation post (sometimes called a *skopie*), a practice that continues to the present.⁵⁶ Homer depicts the Trojan Polites atop the burial mound of Aesyetes to keep an eye on the Greeks,⁵⁷ and parallels range from the eastern to the western frontiers of the Greek world. The Greeks in Asia Minor encountered and made use of *skopoi* atop heights and burial mounds; *hemeroskopoi* were stationed on the heights of Euboea near Artemisium; Gelon posted *skopoi* on high ground overlooking Himera, in Sicily.⁵⁸ Archebius of Heraclea sent a trumpeter to a treetop for want of higher ground—and such was the vantage of the ill-fated Pentheus in the *Bacchae*.⁵⁹

54. Chadwick 175–76.

55. *Iliad* 18.523, 24.799 (cf. schol. 799); night watchmen are also found in 10.97–101, 180ff., etc.

56. Aen. Tact. 6.2, 6.5; cf. Simonyan and Grishin 54, 66. The contingents on the Pylos tablets were all divisible by ten, but it may be rash to speculate that this was the size of units assigned to individual observation posts.

57. *Iliad* 2.792; his post was criticized by Strabo (13.1.37), who observed that he could have watched from the acropolis of Ilium as effectively and in greater security—quite right, but perhaps less poetic. Aegisthus' anonymous lookout watched for the return of Agamemnon from a *skopie* (*Od.* 4.524); the suitors watched continually for Telemachus from heights (*Od.* 16.365); in his tale to Antinoos, Odysseus speaks of sending out watchers (*opteres*) to heights while in Egypt (*Od.* 17.430). Cf. Paus. 4.19.2 of Aristomenes' watchers in the hills (set in the eighth century, but no doubt an anachronistic detail supplied by Pausanias or Rhianus [s. III], his source).

58. Respectively, (1) Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.14; (2) Hdt. 7.183, 192. Cf. Hdt. 7.219; Plut. *Alc.* 34.6; Bosworth, *Commentary* 1:114, on Arrian *Anab.* 1.13.2; (3) Diod. Sic. 11.21.5.

59. Polyaeus 5.39.1; Eur. *Bacchae* 1061–62. Cf. Simonyan and Girishin 76–77.

Obviously, heights afforded a wide field of vision; less obviously, they often offered a direct line of sight to a main camp or base, thus facilitating signaling.⁶⁰ In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon mentioned an officer in charge of watchers, the *skoparkhes*, who maintained contact with his superior through messengers.⁶¹ The title is found only in this work; otherwise watchers seem to have operated independently, sending back word to their *strategoi* through runners or signals.⁶² Since a *strategos* would not normally have leisure to look out for signals himself, arrangements must have been made for their messages to be relayed to him. While on Corcyra, Iphicrates posted watchers at a predetermined point visible from the city and “established with them how they ought to signal when the enemy ships were approaching and when they anchored.” The news was then relayed to his ship captains via a herald.⁶³

Observation posts were at times established in such a way as to provide relay points for communication. Alexander, for example, set his watchers in a line along the Hydaspes, within sight and earshot of each other, so as to pass on messages.⁶⁴ Eumenes, awaiting the approach of Antigonos, was said to have stationed pickets along the entire length of the Pastigris River, a distance of almost ninety miles (seven hundred stadia), with a similar line of posts extending back into Persia, by which shouted messages could be passed.⁶⁵ More permanent arrangements,

60. Iphicrates at Corcyra went in person to look over the ground for good vantages, where those approaching could be seen by the watchers, and where the watchers themselves could be seen from the city (Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.34). Aeneas Tacticus (6.1) advised posting *hemeroskopoi* before the city on high vantage points. Xenophon attributed to Lycurgus the origin of the Spartan practice of having the daytime guard posts (*phulakai methemerinai*) look inward toward the weapons stores and friendly troops, while the enemy was watched by cavalry from high ground (Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 12.2). Cf. Lysias *Against Simon* 11; Polyb. 4.70.5; Front. *Strat.* 2.5.15; Diod. Sic. 19.96.3, 19.97.1. When heights were unavailable, Iphicrates made use of mast tops (Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.29).

61. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.6: σκοπάρχης MSS; σκόπαρχος Dindorff. Cf. 6.3.12. See also Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.56; Arrian *Anab.* 1.13.1–2; and Mycenaean practices mentioned in n. 53.

62. Hdt. 7.192 and Aen. *Tact.* 6.5 (runner); Arrian *Anab.* 5.13.1 (horseman). Cf. Shepherd 216, 76 n. 231. Aeneas Tacticus (6.7) deemed it necessary for day watchers to raise their signals at periodic intervals to confirm their presence and safety; in case of there being no line of sight, relays were advocated (Aen. *Tact.* 6.4).

63. Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.33–34. His arrangements worked well and to his advantage. Other examples of signaling by watchers: Thuc. 8.102.1; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.2, 5.1.27, 7.2.5.

64. Arrian *Anab.* 5.10.4ff.

65. Diod. Sic. 19.17.3. Antigonos the One-Eyed is said to have established (or reestablished) a net of couriers and fire signals throughout the part of Asia under his control (Diod. Sic. 19.57.5; ca. 315). Cf. Herodotus 8.98; [Aristotle] *De mundo* 398b30–35 for Persian precedents.

consisting of towers and forts, were erected in strategic sites: passes, straits, and borders. It has been proposed that interlocking systems of fortified observation posts and strongholds were conceived and constructed in such states as Attica; it has equally been argued that what appear now to be coherent systems were products of accretion not necessarily driven by any sort of plan.⁶⁶ In any event, it has been demonstrated that towers and forts served to keep strategic locales under scrutiny and that those wishing to escape their eyes felt compelled to avoid them.⁶⁷

If not behind hard stone, the observation posts ought to have been concealed—and so say Xenophon and Aeneas Tacticus. Xenophon argued that hidden outposts cause the enemy to feel insecure, since they know they are watched but not from where. Conversely, the watchers are secure.⁶⁸ Aeneas Tacticus mandated that *hemeroskopoi* be sent to their posts before first light, lest they be observed.⁶⁹ Both men knew that, for all their precautions, observers were likely to fall into enemy hands—hence Xenophon’s recommendations to capture them and Aeneas’ monition that these men be given passwords different from those used by the rest of an army.

Pickets and Guards (*Phulakes, Prophulakes*)

Surveillance by night was particularly concerned with security—the detection of enemy reconnaissance elements and the prevention of betrayal from within and tactical surprise from without. Night watchmen were (and are still) usually ordinary soldiers assigned to duty in rotating shifts rather than a specialized corps.⁷⁰ We find in the *Iliad* that the duty was given to the younger men, who were posted outside the walls in seven contingents of one hundred.⁷¹ The proportion of seven

66. For the first position, see Ober; for the second, see Munn. It is worth noting that Agis could see the grain ships in the Piraeus from Deceleia (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.35). Byzantine military treatises attach considerable importance to these lookouts (then called *biglai*, corrupted from the Latin *vigiles*); see, e.g., Anon. Byz. (s. VI) *Peri Strat.* 9. Cf. Steph. Byz. s.v. “Metachoeon” for a Boeotian example.

67. Cf. Papalas on Dracanium Icaria.

68. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.10–12.

69. Aen. *Tact.* 6.6. As Simonyan and Grishin note (57; cf. 54–56), most observation posts are compromised when first occupied or when subsequently moved.

70. Xen. *Anab.* 5.1.9; cf. Aen. *Tact.* 22.5a, 22.26.

71. *Iliad* 9.66–68, 80–88. Cf. MSG T. Damm on modern practice (letter to author, 8 Feb. 1996): “The guards are normally the lowest ranking soldier of the unit and are probably also the least experienced and knowledgeable soldiers. They are controlled by a corporal or a sergeant of the guard, whose job it is to enforce the guards remaining at their job.”

hundred pickets to one hundred thousand men (i.e., 1 man in every 143), by the way, is of some interest, since it is not so far from Frederick the Great's recommendation of three hundred men for an army of forty thousand: 1 man for every 133.⁷² However, Aeneas Tacticus advises: "At times of less immediate danger, the number of men on watch and patrol should be half those enlisted. . . . And during peacetime, when there is no danger, guard-duty ought to represent the least possible inconvenience to the smallest number of people."⁷³ Naturally a smaller force, more typical of that fielded by a smaller polis, would have a much higher proportion, yet this still seems immense, if it represents half the entire population under arms. The solution may lie in Aeneas' rating of recruits according to their fitness for duty. He assigns the third of four classes of troops to guard duty, youth once again being a criterion.⁷⁴ If he is speaking of half this body, his proportion makes a bit more sense.

While one could argue that Aeneas is here making some effort to specialize his men, it is apparent that—as is and was typical—night watchmen were usually the most junior and least experienced soldiers. Only exceptional circumstances (e.g., imminent treachery or attack) seem to have called for senior or wealthier men to undertake this burdensome duty. The Lacedaemonians typically assigned night watches to the *Skiritai* or, later, to *xenoi* (probably mercenaries) when the latter were present.⁷⁵ Once again, this custom may reflect an interest in having a specialized corps, yet one must still note that the Spartiates were not the ones wiping sleep from bleary eyes.

In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon states that the night was divided into watches to enable sentinels not only to be alert for their duty but also to be rested and ready to move with the army or fight during the day (it appears that even in his model army, the task was widely shared).⁷⁶ The shifts numbered between three and five, the variation possibly reflecting the change in the length of the night during the course of the year (i.e.,

72. *Iliad* 9.66–68, 80–88; Frederick the Great 336.

73. Aen. Tact. 22.26, Whitehead's translation.

74. Aen. Tact. 1.8; see 1.4–1.9 generally. The fourth class is the general population, so the distinction is hardly an elevated one.

75. Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 12.3. LSJ (s.v. ξένοί IV) and Marchant's Loeb edition read "allies" for ξένων; but, as noted in LSJ (citing Xen. *Anab.* 1.1.10), the word may also be used for mercenaries in Xenophon's works. This particular example is curious, since one would expect *summakhoi* for "allies" who had been regularly campaigning with the Lacedaemonians for some time. Xenophon's remark that this was a recent innovation might in fact indicate that mercenaries were being used; Parke (89) also thought this was the case.

76. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.44; Aeneas Tacticus (22.5–6) also recommended frequent changes to prevent treachery and to keep watchers alert.

perhaps five watches in winter, three in summer) or differing practices in various times and peoples.⁷⁷ The duration of the watches were measured by the stars or by a water clock.⁷⁸

While *hemeroskopoi* were stationed on *skopai* at a distance from the camp, night watchers were posted around the camp, before the gates, or on the side of the camp facing the enemy.⁷⁹ *Prophulakes*, as their name implies, were employed outside the camp, in the area between the *phulakes* and the enemy, to give advance warning.⁸⁰ In the *Cyropaedia* men were sent into the dark around the camp in squads of five and ten, with the double intent of catching anyone who might leave and watching for anyone who might approach.⁸¹ Aeneas Tacticus proposed that dogs be tethered outside the walls of a besieged city for the same purpose, and his recommendation appears to have been followed.⁸² The barking of dogs was supposed to have alerted the Messenians at Eira to the infiltration of the Laconian army into their fortress by night and to have marked Alexander's approach to an Indian town.⁸³ It is probable that in these two accounts the animals were not deliberately posted to aid the sentries, but inscriptions indicate that by the third century, at latest, dogs were enlisted to supplement men.⁸⁴ Certainly dogs are notorious among mod-

77. LSJ (s.v. φυλακή I.4) noted three watches, citing the scholia on [Eur.] *Rhesus* 5, or five watches, citing Stesichorus 55, Simonides 219A, and [Eur.] *Rhesus* 543. Aeneas and Curtius mentioned at least four (Aen. Tact. 18.21; Q. Curtius 7.2.19). In the *Cyropaedia* (5.3.44), Xenophon advocated making watches numerous and short.

78. Aeneas Tacticus (22.24–25) proposed using a water clock, reset every ten days, to ensure that shifts were divided equally as the nights grew longer or shorter. Xenophon (*Mem.* 4.7.4) portrayed Socrates recommending that his pupils learn just enough astronomy for practical purposes, among them setting the watch—his method would be more suitable to an army on the move. Polybius (9.14.4–15.15) treated at some length the importance to a general of telling time by the stars and sun. Curtius (3.8.23) noted that the changes in watch were marked in Alexander's army by the blowing of a *tuba*; this is not otherwise attested and may reflect Roman, rather than Greek, practice (cf. Polyb. 6.35.12).

79. Xenophon proposed the placement of sentinels around the camp (*Anab.* 5.1.9, 6.3.10); sentries in the *Iliad* (10.126–27) were placed before the gates of the Achaean camp.

80. Thuc. 3.112.4; Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.24; Xen. *Anab.* 2.4.15. See also Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 12.3; of *phulakes*, [Eur.] *Rhesus* 523.

81. Xen. *Cyr.* 4.5.5.

82. Aen. Tact. 22.14.

83. Paus. 4.21.1.

84. E.g., SEG 24 no. 154 (dated post-265/4): Epichares, the man honored in this decree, had established additional *phrukteria* and increased the number of dogs assigned to them. See also SEG 26 no. 1306: a provision in a treaty between Teos and Cyrtisus mandated that twenty men and three dogs be assigned to a *phourarkhos*. Aratus was said to have posted fifty dogs (each with a keeper) at Acrocorinth, knowing well the strategic value of that place and its vulnerability to a stealthy assault (Plut. *Aratus* 24.1). Cf. Hesiod *Theog.* 769 (of Cerberus); Plato *Repub.* 375a, 375d–e, 376a–b; Polyaeus 2.25.1, 4.2.16.

ern soldiers for compromising reconnaissance patrols. So, incidentally, are goats (and their accompanying herders) in the Mediterranean and Near East.⁸⁵ Unfortunately (or fortunately, from the scout's point of view), dogs were not always heeded—perhaps a phenomenon akin to that of the boy who too often cried “Wolf!” is involved. An illustrative example in Plutarch follows.

Aratus was setting out to overthrow Nicocles, the tyrant of Sicyon. Like any able general, he sent three men on a preliminary reconnaissance, to verify the report of an escapee that the walls of Sicyon were vulnerable at a certain point. These men (a fellow exile named Xenocrates, brother to the escapee, and two servants of Aratus) confirmed the report and measured the wall, but they noted that a gardener living near the spot kept a number of small but vicious and vociferous dogs. Therefore, on the eve of Aratus' attack, he sent a team of five light-armed men disguised as travelers, to seek lodging from the gardener and, once admitted, lock up him and his dogs. These men succeeded in securing the gardener, but the dogs evaded them; this they reported to Aratus when he drew near. Aratus' men were disheartened and wished to call off the attack, but Aratus decided to take a risk, although promising to withdraw if the dogs proved troublesome.⁸⁶

At the same time [Aratus] sent ahead the men carrying scaling ladders, whom Ecdelus and Mnasisheus led, while he himself followed slowly, the little dogs already barking loudly and running alongside of Ecdelus and his men. Nevertheless they reached the wall and set the ladders without mishap. But while the first men were climbing the ladders, the man who set the dawn watch was patrolling with the *kodon* [a bell], and there were many lights and the sound of men approaching. But [Aratus'] men, just as they were, cowering there on their ladders, escaped notice without difficulty; but since another patrol was coming up to the first, they came into the gravest peril. Yet when they escaped this patrol also as it passed, at once the leaders, Mnasisheus and Ecdelus, climbed up and, taking the parapets to either sides, sent Technon to Aratus, telling him to hurry up.

There was not much distance from the garden to the wall and the

85. See, e.g., the misfortunes of a British SAS team in Iraq, as described by McNab 103–4, 153–57, 186 (a near miss), 352–53, and 395 (another near miss).

86. This paragraph is a paraphrase of Plut. *Aratus* 4.3–5.5, 6.3, 7.3–4.

tower, in which a large hunting dog kept guard. The dog himself did not sense their approach, either because he was by nature lazy or because he had been worn out after the day. But when the gardener's little dogs were calling on him from below, he growled—faintly and indistinctly at first, then he waxed louder when they passed by. And already a great baying pervaded the area, so that the guard opposite inquired of the dog's master with a loud shout why the dog was barking so savagely and if something strange was happening. But he called back to him from the tower that there was nothing to fear and that the dog was set off by the light of the wall guards and the sound of the bell. This greatly encouraged Aratus' soldiers, since they thought that the dog's master covered for them as one sharing their plan and that there were many other accomplices in the city.⁸⁷

This passage in Plutarch shows, if at some length, how things could and did go wrong for both sides. Even at best, the efficacy of night watchers was rather poor—they seem to have served more as a trip line than an early warning system. When the Athenians landed their troops on Sphacteria, for instance, they were able to take the first guard post of thirty by surprise, as the Laconians apparently supposed that the ships they had seen were sailing as usual to their own watch stations.⁸⁸ There are a number of causes for the frequent failures of the night watch, some of them visible from the Aratus anecdote: the practices of (1) sitting by fires, (2) carrying lights and bells, (3) singing while on duty; to these must be added (4) an inclination to treachery and (5) the failings of human nature in the face of inclement weather, fatigue, and discomfort.

The first category—the practice of posting sentinels by fires—illuminates unequivocally defective doctrine.⁸⁹ Anyone who has sat by a

87. Plut. *Aratus* 7.4–8.3.

88. Thuc. 4.31.2–32.1. These watchers were probably not *Skiritai*, who were not mentioned by Thucydides in his account of Sphacteria; the watchers were called hoplites at Thuc. 4.31.2. See also Delbrück 128ff. on this incident. The Persian sentries facing Alexander fared even worse: when Alexander was making a flanking movement about the Persian Gates, the sentries at the first two posts were killed, and the survivors of the third fled into the hills rather than back into camp, so that Ariobarzanes had no warning of the imminent Macedonian attack (Arrian *Anab.* 3.18.6–7; see also 2.4.3–4). Cf. also Hdt. 7.27; Thuc. 4.110.1, 2.

89. So schol. vet. on Aristoph. *Birds* 841: “—To always bank (ἐγκρυπτ) the fire (so that one may have it, if there would be need of a watch). For they used to burn fires during their watches.”

campfire is familiar with the mesmerizing quality of flames and has experienced fire's deleterious effect on vision outside a limited radius of light.⁹⁰ Further, the crackle and hiss of burning wood obscures noises. Some of the ancients realized that hearing was essential for nocturnal surveillance: Xenophon stated that it was superior to vision at night; Aeneas Tacticus would have craftsmen prohibited to work at night, lest the noise of their work impair the hearing of the sentries.⁹¹ Yet, from the time of

90. On this subject, it is instructive to compare the man in the field with the physician. McNab writes (88–89):

Eyes take a long time to adjust in darkness. The cones in your eyes enable you to see in the daytime, giving color and perception. But they're no good at night. What takes over then are the rods on the edge of your irises. They are angled at 45 degrees because of the convex shape of the eye, so if you look straight at something at night you don't really see it: it's a haze. You have to look above it or around it so you can line up these rods, which then will give you a picture. It takes forty minutes or so for them to become fully effective, but you start to see better after five. And what you see when you land and what you see five minutes later are two very different things. . . . Mark got out the Magellan and took a fix. He squinted at it with one eye. Even small amounts of light can wreck your night vision, and the process must start all over again. If you have to look at something [bright], you close the eye that you aim with, the "master eye," and look with the other.

Dr. Christopher S. Connor, of Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital, was kind enough to comment on this passage (letter to the author 20 Feb. 1996).

The eye starts to dark adapt at 6 minutes and reaches its max[imum ability] at 20 minutes. The rods do take over. They are not at the edge of the iris as stated but have a higher ratio outside the macula (the center of the retina and the vision). The dilatation of the pupil at night permits the more peripheral retina, where the rod concentration is higher, to partake in the visual process while allowing more light to enter. There is still some color vision at night. . . i.e. that greenish gray hue on some nights and the aurora borealis are 2 examples.

The rods come off the back of the eye perpendicular and not at a 45 degree angle. . . . they are quite capable of quality vision . . . i.e. reading by moonlight but their concentration drops off the more peripheral one goes and that contributes to the less than sharp peripheral vision mentioned earlier.

91. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.43; Aen. *Tact.* 22.24. Cf. Thuc. 3.23.3–4. Simonyan and Grishin (73 and 83) have the following to say about auditory monitoring: (1) effective range depends on the amplitude of the sound, time of year, time of day, weather, and the acuteness of the listener's hearing; the optimal times are quiet summer and autumn nights; sound carries further at night, but echoes make its origin more difficult to locate; (2) a motor vehicle horn can typically be heard at a distance of 2–3 km, a pick or shovel striking a stone at 1 km, commands at 0.5–1 km, movement of infantry subunits on foot at 0.3–0.6 km, soft speech or a cough at 0.3–1 km.

Homer, *phulakes* stationed near the camp habitually sat by fires.⁹² Xenophon remarked on, and commended, the fact that Seuthes had no *nuktophulakes* stationed near the watch fires but that instead the fires burned some distance in front of them, so that the watchers might be hidden in the dark, while those approaching would be shown up in the light.⁹³ Xenophon also advocated shifting the disposition of the sentries and watch fires relative to their camp, so that enemy *kataskopoi* might be disoriented and thus captured.⁹⁴

Many a *kataskopos* haunting the shadows must have given thanks to Hermes that sentries carried lights and bells as they made the rounds. The life of Aratus provides further testimony: four men were patrolling with a light during Aratus' covert assault on the citadel of Corinth. Aratus' men saw them coming and hid in shadows cast by the moon, where they were invisible to the light-blinded eyes of the guards. Instead of letting the patrol pass unharmed, Aratus' men attacked. It is possible that the *phulakes* spotted one of the intruders—after all, there were about one hundred within the walls at that point. One of the four guards survived a sword slash to his head in the initial attack and fled shouting; at this point a general alarm arose.

In addition to lights, patrols carried bells. These, we are told, were to ensure that guards were vigilant. The scholiasts note that the guards would hear the ringing of the *kodon* carried by their inspector and challenge him.⁹⁵ But if an inspector really wanted to test the vigilance of the

92. *Iliad* 10.188–89; the lines describing the fires of the Trojans at the end of *Iliad* 8 (553–65) are followed by the line: “So the Trojans held their watches” (*Iliad* 9.1). Cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.27, where the (fictional) Babylonian guards are portrayed drinking by a fire—these are surprised and fail in their task of protecting their king, although their resistance eventually is heard.

93. Xen. *Anab.* 7.2.18; the practice is found again in the *Cyropaedia* (3.3.25).

94. Xen. *Cyr.* 3.3.25. In the *Cavalry Commander* (4.10) he advised setting concealed lookouts and sentinels both to enhance the security of the watchers and friendly forces and to set ambushes for enemy scouts. Watchers therefore must have a different watchword (*sunthema*) from that used in the city, in case they are captured (Aen. *Tact.* 6.7; at Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.34, the sentinels were posted and given a *sunthema*, but it is not specified whether it was the same as that used in the camp).

95. Schol. vet. on Aristoph. *Birds* 842 (mentioning a parallel in the lost *Palamedes* of Euripides). Cf. Aristoph. *Birds* 842, 1160; schol. vet. on Aristoph. *Lysist.* 485; Harpocration *Lexicon on the Ten Attic Orators* 96 (also citing Euripides *Palamedes*); *Suda* s.vv. Ἀκωδώνιστον, Διεκωδώνισεν, and Κωδωνοφορῶν.

In a different context (having guards throw stones over the wall and call out a challenge at the sound), Aeneas Tacticus (22.12–13) realized that such noises give away the position of the guards and could warn intruders away toward quieter areas, but he preferred that both guards and enemy know that the watch was to be vigilant.

guards, why would he warn them of his advent? For he would equally warn intruders of his position and, incidentally, the positions of the guards. The Athenians at Potidaea passed the *kodon* from guard to guard, so that each would be compelled to leave his post to convey it to the next man. Brasidas came close enough to the walls of Potidaea to plant a ladder against them, since he could judge the location of the guard from the noise.⁹⁶ Aratus, as seen in the passage from Plutarch quoted earlier, was luckier still.

There is a decidedly odd aside in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, when Strepsiades, sent to lie down on a flea-ridden bed to contrive sophistries, tells Socrates that he is "singing [a song characteristic] of guard-duty" to pass the unpleasant time.⁹⁷ In commenting on this curious phrase (apparently a proverb), the scholiasts explain that while on duty, guards were accustomed to sing to keep themselves and their comrades awake.⁹⁸ While the guards may have remained awake, their attention would be diverted, and any approaching enemy would be alerted to their presence.

Fear of betrayal by guards was endemic. Party faction was a contributing factor, and we find Aeneas Tacticus recommending that only well-off men with a wife and children be appointed gatekeepers. Further, guards were not to know where they would be posted until the last moment, and their companies and postings ought to be constantly changed; only the wealthiest and most respectable men should be placed at the more approachable points.⁹⁹ As is typical with Aeneas, one wonders how much of his theory existed in practice.

Despite other cautions against mercenaries, Aeneas thought their presence might check the designs of would-be traitors among the *phulakes*.¹⁰⁰ And indeed when the Spartan Ischolaus learned that some of his guards planned to hand over Drys to the besieging Athenians, he quietly stationed a mercenary at each post.¹⁰¹

Aeneas Tacticus records that the night watch of some cities was contracted out, and we must infer that this practice had its problems, for he

96. Thuc. 4.135.

97. Aristoph. *Clouds* 721: φρουρᾶς ᾄδων—I here am guided by K.J. Dover's grammatical reconstruction in his commentary ad loc.

98. Schol. vet. on Aristoph. *Clouds* 721a, 721b.

99. Aen. Tact. 5.1, 22.15; see also 5.2, 18.1–22, 22 passim. According to Livy (24.2.9), among the Italian Greeks the "plebian" Locrian guard posts could be counted on to admit the Bruttians (and so they did), while those manned by the "senatorial" class could not.

100. Aen. Tact. 13.3.

101. Polyaeus 2.22.4 (ca. 376–374).

suggests that anyone who failed to meet his obligation should be immediately replaced and fined.¹⁰² The night watch of the town of Cranon in Thessaly was contracted to a certain Dianias who, after performing his service admirably for three years, used his position as a stepping-stone to tyranny.

Inclement weather favors the stealthy by obscuring sight and hearing. When the Plataeans wished to break out of their besieged city, “they kept watch for a night stormy with rain and wind, and at the same time moonless.” The night came, and they stole down from their own walls and climbed those of their foes, eluding the notice of the guards since these “could not see ahead because of the darkness nor discern the sound of their approach because of the deafening clatter of the wind.” Not until some had surmounted the battlements of the besiegers’ wall, and a man grasped at a tile that clattered down to the ground, were the guards alerted. Even then the storm bewildered their senses and delayed their reaction long enough for the fugitives to disappear into the night.¹⁰³ Similar stories are told of Brasidas, taking advantage of rough weather and snow in his advance on Amphipolis, and of Lysimachus’ furtive withdrawal from Dorylaeum.¹⁰⁴ We hear of guards abandoning their posts because of rain.¹⁰⁵ “Pity the tired soldier who must be vigilant through these conditions,” remarked one veteran.¹⁰⁶

102. Aen. Tact. 22.29.

103. Thuc. 3.22.1–5.

104. Thuc. 4.103.1–2; Diod. Sic. 20.109.2.

105. E.g., Paus. 4.20.7: the Messenians at Eira were said to have fallen victim to the Lacedaemonians because storms had driven the pickets from their posts. While the story is not historical, it is indicative of a real problem.

106. MSG T. Damm, as a commentary on his letter of 8 Feb. 1996:

The sentry is waiting for his shift to end, bored with inactivity, and lulled to a false sense of security [by a lack of continuous stimuli] to put personal comfort over efficiency. The sentry is likely to retreat to shelter, from which his vision and hearing is limited. Even if he does not, rain on his metal helmet dulls his sense of hearing.

Rain limits the guard’s vision, causes him to become wet and tired quickly, covers the sounds of an approaching enemy, and lulls the guard into a state of relaxation because of its repetitive sounds. Sleet and wind only intensify these effects.

Falling snow provides the guard with all of the disadvantages of rain. His vision is obscured and it is even more difficult to remain alert with the snow flakes slowly floating to the ground. Falling snow protects the advancing enemy from view and can quickly cover up the evidence of his travel. It also causes the guard to exert himself while traveling his route and may influence him to shorten the distance covered or the frequency that he travels on it. [However,] fallen snow is dangerous for an approaching enemy for he knows that his passage or presence will quickly be detected.

Even in the best of conditions, eyelids grew heavy. Had not coincidence intervened to wreck a plan based on a wayward signal, the guards of the gates of Cynaetha would have been slaughtered in their sleep—at midday!¹⁰⁷ At least some generals (Iphicrates, Epaminondas, and Alexander among them) personally inspected the watch, with a view to keeping sentries awake and alert.¹⁰⁸ Even still, the order of discipline evidenced by Roman organization of night security was not equaled in classical Greece.¹⁰⁹

The time between two and four in the morning is considered the most vulnerable for guards torn from their regular sleeping cycle. Therefore, it should not surprise us that the Greeks embarked on secret moves and stratagems not during the first watch (when sentries would presumably be most vigilant) but instead during the second or third and sometimes during the fourth. The end of the night watch and beginning of the day was also dangerous, since day watchers were not always posted immediately. This practice—like any routine—could be noted and taken advantage of by the enemy: when the Lacedaemonian and Pellenean night watchmen were withdrawn at dawn, the Thebans attacked and took Oneum (in 369).¹¹⁰ Aeneas Tacticus advised that the *hemeroskopoi* be sent out while

107. Polyb. 9.17.1–10. Cf. Polyb. 4.57.3ff.: an Aetolian who had deserted to Aegeira and spent time there noted that the guards at his host city were often drunk and neglectful of their watch. He reconsidered his allegiance, returned to his general Dorimachus in Aetolia (at considerable risk, one might add), and urged him to attack. Evidently Dorimachus (whom Polybius characterized as rash—one would hardly expect him to praise an Aetolian) decided to trust the twice-turned traitor, although the act of taking him along as a guide suggests that he wanted him in his power to deter further betrayal. Dorimachus attacked by night, slew the guards in their sleep, and met with success.

108. For devices to keep sentries awake, see Aen. Tact. 22.14, 27; Front. *Strat.* 3.12.1. Cf. Q. Curtius 4.13.21; Paus. 4.20.8.

Those sleeping on duty risked severe punishments. Iphicrates is said to have killed a sleeping guard (Front. *Strat.* 3.12.2); Epaminondas is said to have done the same (3.12.3), but Anderson (304 n. 38) doubted the latter story. In any case, there is no evidence that capital punishment was commonly meted out for this offense (but cf. Polybius 6.34.7–37.6 on Roman practice and punishments). The concern lest sentries sleep at their posts dates at least as far back as the *Iliad* (10.181–82).

109. Cf. Polyb. 35.1–37.6 and F.W. Walbank 1:717–19 ad loc.; although it must be admitted that Aeneas Tacticus does have an impressive (theoretical?) prototype in his twenty-second chapter.

110. Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.16 (cf. Polyb. 3.50.7). Note also that the Plataeans met success because they had studied and knew well the Theban guard routine (Thuc. 3.22.3). Cf. Polyb. 8.27.7ff.: Tarentine traitors kept watch on the house of Livius, the captain of the Roman guard at Tarentum, since they knew that if anyone became suspicious they would report to him and that any countermeasures would originate with him.

it was yet night, both to prevent such a risk and to ensure that they would not be seen by enemy *skopoi* en route to their post.¹¹¹ He further suggested that cavalry patrol the area around the city at dawn, before the gates were held open, lest a foe set a nearby ambush under cover of night.

It would seem from the practices described in Aeneas that guard duty bore no relation to the ideals fostered in the modern world, when you are constantly warned that the strike of a match can be lethal, and when emphasis is on seeing and not being seen. Greek guards, as Ovid described women attending the circus, go to see and to be seen. In the context of a city under siege, this can make some sense, even as do the “armed response” signs tidily but obtrusively growing in the lawns all over Beverly Hills. Aeneas has created a system with two essential objectives: to discourage any attempt at infiltration from without and to allow no opportunity for betrayal from within. He intends his watchmen not to actually collect information for exploitation but instead to communicate to the enemy that they are alert. His methods do not, however, belong to the context of a military camp, when revolt is much less a concern than an enemy attack. And perhaps his—alas, lost—work on *Encampments* featured very different methods. So one might hope, given that some of Xenophon’s comments are quite sound. But be that as it may, while there are some examples of alert *phulakes* saving the day, all too often sentries gave the alert with death cries or perished failing at even that.¹¹²

111. Aen. Tact. 6.6; their post is here called a *hemeroskopeia*.

112. Some examples of the latter phenomenon follow. (1) Bithynians attacked the *prophulakes* of the Ten Thousand, killed some, and drove others into camp (Xen. *Anab.* 6.4.26). (2) When Agis marched by night up to the walls of Athens, he escaped the notice of the *prophulakai* posted outside and managed to capture some men, while the others fled within the walls. However, the Athenians learned of his attack at once and responded promptly (Diod. Sic. 13.72.4). (3) Aratus and a few men scaled the walls of Argos by night and killed the sentries stationed on it, but they were dislodged after a struggle the following day. (4) Rhodian *prophulakes* stationed by the moat were killed during the second night watch by picked men sent by Demetrius (Diod. Sic. 20.98.6). (5) Quintus Naevius learned through his scouts that the people of Apollonia were keeping a negligent watch, not expecting a Roman attack; with the help of traitors from within the city, he was able to infiltrate a thousand men into the city under cover of night, before a massacre began in earnest, the noise of which alerted the citizens (Livy 24.40.11).

See also Thuc. 2.2.3, 4.110.2; Plut. *Arat.* 21.3. Small forces set to watch over a particular point were similarly vulnerable: of three Greek ships keeping watch off Sciathus in 480, two were captured, crew and all, by a larger Persian force; the crew of the third escaped only by abandoning their ship (Hdt. 7.179). See also Hdt. 7.27; Thuc. 8.35.

Patrols (*Peripoloi*)

Peripoloi were, in essence, roaming *phulakes*, operating out of bases (variously called *peripolia*, *phulakteria*, and *phrouroi*) situated on inter-polis borders.¹¹³ Their use can be securely traced back only as far as the late fifth century, although Orthagoras' rise to power (traditionally dated to 655) is supposed to have been marked by a progression in authority from *peripolos* to *peripolarkhos* to polemarch.¹¹⁴ *Peripoloi* are mentioned in Thucydides but not in Herodotus; the earliest inscription dates to 415.¹¹⁵ These early references suggest that disaffection with the institution festered and perhaps that those serving within it were a potential instrument of instability. In the famous inscription pertaining to the Sicilian expedition, we find a regulation establishing penalties for those not fulfilling their obligation to serve in the *peripoloi*. One can only assume that there was an unwillingness to assume this duty. In Thucydides, we find the *peripoloi* involved in the assassination of Phrynichus, and in this crime their commander (*peripolarkhos*) is also implicated. By the mid-fourth century there were at least two *peripolarkhoi* in Attica, one of whom may have been stationed in the area near Eleusis.¹¹⁶

Most of our evidence, typically, pertains to Athens. In that city, ephebes—young men of eighteen to twenty years—were enrolled into their ranks, at least from the fourth century. According to a scholiast (perhaps Ulpian), in their second year as ephebes these youths received a light shield (*aspis*) and spear from the *demos* in a public ceremony and were dispatched to the frontier to undertake their duties for one or two years.¹¹⁷ The *peripoloi* were not expected to let their weapons lay idle.

113. A scholiast (on Ael. Arist. *Panathenaecus* 152.16) tells us: "Let it be known that those guarding something are not only situated in one place but also move about, scouting up and down; they call those doing this *peripoloi*. This class is different from *phulakes*; for while *phulakes* are situated at a certain spot, *peripoloi* go about everywhere." Cf. the distinction drawn by the scholiast on Thuc. 4.67.2 (*peripoloi*). Yet the two classes are close enough in nature that the scholiast on Thuc. 8.92.2 can intelligibly—if less than precisely—gloss *peripoloi* as *phulakes*.

114. Anon. *FGrHist* 105F2.

115. Thuc. 8.92.2–5; *IG* I³ 93, *stele* II, frag. g, line 42 (= Meiggs and Lewis no. 78; Fornara no. 146; Tod no. 77). Cf. *SEG* 19 no. 42.

116. The plural is used in *IG* II² 204 (dated 352/1). The Eleusinians honor a *peripolarkhos* in *IG* II² 1193 (late s. IV).

117. Aeschines II (*On the embassy*) 167–68 and the schol. vet. thereon. There is some disagreement in the sources of the time and length of service: cf. with Aeschines the scholiast (perhaps Ulpian) on Demosth. III (3 *Olynth.*) 36; the scholia on [Plato] *1 Alc.* 105a; and the *Suda* s.v. Περίπολος. Such equipment is typical of *psiloi*, whom we have already seen used in reconnaissance roles.

We find them involved in skirmishing and ambushes, although not in the more set-piece battles.¹¹⁸ In addition to their arms, their pay was furnished by the state, at least in Athens and Syracuse.¹¹⁹ In Athens, pay was apparently irregular, since Xenophon recommended that this be corrected in his *Poroi*. In Syracuse, the expense was a burden to the state. Patrolling of the Athenian frontier was apparently continuous, but Thucydides mentions that the Syracusans sent men into the *peripolia* after learning that the Athenians were at Rhegium.¹²⁰ It is not clear whether the *peripolia* were previously ungarrisoned or were reinforced when the threat of war was imminent.

There are two indications that the *peripoloi* were active by night: (1) an ambush of the guards at the gates of Megara was set by Plataean *peripoloi* by night and sprung just before dawn; (2) a scholiast notes that their patrolling was nocturnal, describing them “going about the territory [*khora*] by night because of this guard duty and their martial training.”¹²¹

Diviners (*Manteis*)

While it is difficult to conceive of a twentieth-century intelligence organization seeking enlightenment from supernatural agencies, one must not project modern prejudices back in time onto the Greeks. In any case, even rather pragmatic denizens of the twentieth century occasionally find “psychics” and “mediums” cooperating with police when conventional resources fail. As one might expect, Greek attitudes toward supernatural knowledge varied according to individuals. There are a few cases, particularly among the Lacedaemonians, in which divine instruction apparently took precedence over human opinions and ambitions.¹²² There are others in which divine sources of information were despised or ignored.¹²³ Most examples seem to fall in the middle area between these extremes, and their spirit can be generally characterized by Xenophon’s advice: “Those things that the gods enable us to learn, we must learn;

118. E.g., Thuc. 4.67.2; Photius 74a. Cf. Xen. *Poroi* 4.47. According to the *Suda* (s.v. Τεραθρεΐα), the ephebic *peripoloi* were only used in the less dangerous elements of a battle.

119. Thuc. 7.48.5; Xen. *Poroi* 4.52. Cf. IG I³ 376, face A, line 36 (ca. 409 B.C.).

120. Thuc. 6.45.

121. Schol. on [Plato] *1 Alc.* 105a.

122. Pritchett 3:70, who provides examples; see also Arrian *Anab.* 4.4.2–3.

123. These are frequently found among storytellers who wished to drive home the virtues of piety, but also at Thuc. 5.103.1.

those that are obscure, we can try to inquire of from the gods through the mantic art.”¹²⁴

*Manteis*¹²⁵ were interpreters of signs of divine activity in the physical world, rather than mediums or prophets.¹²⁶ Their art was thought to be based on *technē* (skill) rather than inspiration. Consequently it could be learned, and books, records, and devices were kept and prized.¹²⁷ Various individuals or peoples specialized in different types of divination; the Egyptians, for example, were recruited by Alexander since he believed Egyptian *manteis* superior at reading the heavens.¹²⁸ The craft of all aimed at deriving specific information from divine indicators—such information included prospects of success in endeavors (especially those of military nature) and revelations of plots and dangers.¹²⁹ *Manteis* were generally held in high esteem for such accomplishments.¹³⁰

Manteis frequently served military leaders and occasionally were engaged by political figures as well (particularly when the two realms overlapped). They served for long periods of time—for the duration of campaigns, if not on more permanent bases. Nicias, son of Niceratus, retained a *mantis* in his household; curiously, Nicias let it be known that the *mantis* was engaged for guidance on public matters, while in fact he advised Nicias on his private interests.¹³¹ Nicias’ apparent duplicity suggests that involvement of *manteis* in public affairs was more acceptable than a reputation for private superstition. More generally, an inscription indicates that *manteis* in Athens were supported by *strategoí*.¹³² In

124. Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.9. See also Xen. *Mem.* 4.3.12; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.46. Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 75.2.

125. There are a number of other terms for diviners (not a few poetic), and the class is subdivided further. As *manteis* are the most relevant to the secular world of decision making, these are the focus of the following summary.

126. Pritchett 3:138.

127. Pritchett 3:73, who provides examples. See also Plut. *Aristides* 27.3, in which passage a tablet (*pinakion*) for interpreting dreams was referred to as a tool of some value.

128. Q. Curtius 4.10.4 (the Latin *vates* was here used for *manteis*); cf. 5.1.22. Telmisi-ans seem to have been particularly valued for interpreting omens (see, e.g., Hdt. 1.78; Arrian *Anab.* 2.3.3), as were the Galeotae (Philistius *FGrHist* 190F47).

129. Some examples: Hdt. 7.219; Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.4; Xen. *Anab.* 6.5.2, 6.6.8; Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.6, 7.16.5–17.5. There are also a fair number of odds and ends, e.g., Arrian *Anab.* 2.18.1, 4.15.8. In legend, a *mantis* served as a guide: Peripoltas guided king Opheltas from Thessaly to Boeotia (Plut. *Cimon* 1.1).

130. Pritchett (3:50–56) argued that they were accorded considerable status; see also Xen. *Anab.* 1.7.18.

131. Plut. *Nicias* 4.2, 5.2–3, 23.5 (Hiero and Stilbides). Cf. Philochorus *FGrHist* 328F135; schol. vet. on Aristoph. *Peace* 1031; Plut. *Dion* 22.6.

132. *IG* II² 17, line 39; cf. Pritchett 3:71.

Sparta, the office of *mantis* was an institutional part of the military: the “general staff” of the Lacedaemonian kings contained at least two.¹³³ Given these opportunities to develop long-standing relationships with commanders, *manteis* could be expected to have some experience and knowledge of temporal, as well as supernatural, matters.¹³⁴ Thus *manteis* are among the few professional intelligence agents with a long-term specialization in their trade.

As *manteis* gained experience in the conduct of campaigns, and hence were better able to relate supernatural data to practical considerations, so commanders often realized the necessity of having at least a cursory knowledge of the mantic art. This realization was based not only on the prospect that a *mantis* might not be available or that a commander might better understand the bases for a *mantis*’ reading of a particular omen but also on a healthy suspicion that *manteis* might manipulate their interpretations of divine will to coincide with personal ambition. Xenophon made this quite clear in his *Cyropaedia*, and his advice was probably based on personal experience.¹³⁵ He had a falling out with a *mantis* accompanying the Ten Thousand, an Ambraciot by the name of Silanus, who leaked to the troops (maliciously, he would have us believe) that Xenophon was consulting him about settling them far from home. Xenophon, called to task by his men, defended himself on the grounds that the omens had been favorable for putting the matter before an assembly and that Silanus was not able to misrepresent them because Xenophon witnessed the sacrifice (as was his custom) and was recognized by all as well versed in the skills of divination.¹³⁶

133. Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 13.7. When Lysander was killed at Haliartus, a *mantis* perished at his side (Plut. *Lys.* 28.5); cf. Megistias at Thermopylae (Hdt. 7.219, 21, 28).

134. Cf. Pritchett 3:56–57, 62ff. See also Hdt. 9.37 of Hegesistratus of Elis, who had escaped from a Spartan prison and hired himself out to Mardonius; thus he might have had some knowledge of affairs in Sparta.

135. Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.2: “For I [= Cyrus’ father] have taught you this, so that you would not learn of the counsels of the gods through other interpreters, but rather, by both seeing what is to be seen and hearing what is to be heard, you would yourself understand, and not be dependant on *manteis*, if they should wish to deceive you by speaking otherwise than revealed by the gods. Further, if you should ever be without a *mantis*, you would not be at a loss how to discern what the gods reveal.” Cf. Arrian *Anab.* 7.16.5–17.5; Onas. 10.25ff.

136. At least this is Xenophon’s version (Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.16, 27–30). In any event, the problem did not begin with Xenophon; such situations existed from the days of Homer.

Mantis of evils, never have you told me good news;
Always evils are a delight to your heart to divine,
But never have you spoken or accomplished anything good.

(Homer *Iliad* 1.106–8, Agamemnon to Calchas)

Given the potential instability latent in the *mantis*' influence, it is no surprise that a commander might retain the same individual over a long period of time on those occasions when a stable and compatible relationship existed. Elemental to such a relationship was confidentiality. In the story of the taking of Ithome, the *mantis* Theocles is portrayed communicating the significance of a baleful omen privately to Aristomenes, enabling the commander to reach a decision while he was yet undisturbed by a general panic.¹³⁷ Quintus Curtius noted that Alexander rebuked Aristander for giving Erigyus, a subordinate officer, news of omens before him.¹³⁸

Conversely, *manteis* sometimes had the problem of upholding their interpretations despite the will of some rather forceful individuals. Alexander, wanting to attack Scythians jeering at him from across a river, was angered with Aristomenes, who, insisting that the omens were unfavorable, would not alter his reading to please his king.¹³⁹ Some commanders rigged or misrepresented omens to accomplish their will or proffered their own interpretations.¹⁴⁰ Even when there was mutual trust between commander and *mantis*, the dictates of military expediency and divine authority were not always reconcilable. At these times, a commander had to make rather difficult decisions and was obliged to face the consequences in any outcome.

Captives (*Aikhmalotoi*)

When a soldier surrendered his spear and shield to a Greek, he was taking a bit of a risk. There was no convention for the treatment of prisoners, just a rather indefinite set of customs.¹⁴¹ True, the suppliant was supposed to be sacred; but sometimes the gods were distant and wrath was all too near. Prisoners therefore had every motive to try to please their captors—who might otherwise abuse, enslave, brand, maim, torture, or

137. Paus. 4.20.3.

138. Q. Curtius 7.7.24.

139. Arrian *Anab.* 4.4.2–3.

140. E.g., Front. *Strat.* 1.11.14; Arrian *Anab.* 1.18.6–9; Polyaeus 2.3.3, 4.3.14, 4.20.1; Paus. 9.13.8. The problem was further complicated by the fact that different *manteis* might give different interpretations to an omen (see, e.g., Plut. *Alex.* 2.5). Cf. Pritchett 3:48–49 for further details on the relationship between *manteis* and *strategoï*.

141. Τινὰς ἰδίους καθάπερ νόμους, which Pritchett aptly translated as “quasi laws” (Pritchett 5:203), in reference to Diod. Sic. 30.18.2; cf. Diodorus' speeches on the Athenian prisoners at 13.20.1–27.6 (for clemency) and 28.2–32.6 (for execution).

kill them—in hope that they would survive to be ransomed.¹⁴² Providing information was one of the few means of doing this that was at their disposal.

Even today, when many belligerent nations are bound by the Geneva convention, prisoners often provide—even volunteer—a good deal more information than the proverbial name, rank, and serial number. Fear and insecurity are effective motivating forces, especially in the hours immediately after capture, when dislocation is still strong. These conditions are exacerbated in wounded prisoners, who have been found “more responsive to interrogation” than their unwounded counterparts.¹⁴³ There is every reason to believe that their ancient counterparts were subject to the same pressures.

Positive motivations or rewards seem hardly to have been necessary, although Xenophon did depict Cyrus promising captives that they would gain the status of benefactor and friend, rather than slave, if they provided information.¹⁴⁴ Torture or death threats were ready alternatives for obtaining information from reticent prisoners. The latter are found in the *Iliad* and Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, and they were not idle. Homer portrayed Dolon being slaughtered even after trying to buy his life with information; the usually rather righteous Xenophon did not shudder to mention that he had his men cut the throat of a prisoner who denied knowing alternate routes through mountainous terrain.¹⁴⁵ This murder was performed in front of a second captive, who quickly became most eager to tell of another track. The first man’s resistance, it might be noted, was due to the fact that his daughter lived by that track; he preferred death to endangering her. One can only hope she somehow escaped, for Xenophon did not subsequently mention her.

Evidence for torture of *aikhmalotoi* is circumstantial, but the case is strong. Thucydides maintained that Nicias’ secret correspondents in Syracuse wanted him dead lest he reveal them under torture.¹⁴⁶ Likewise, Cooper argued that Thucydides’ choice of the word ἀναζητήσαντες sug-

142. As Lonis (46) so nicely put it, “Le principe de la clémence envers les prisonniers nous semble donc encore mal assuré.” He treats the killing (41–47) and maltreatment (47–50) of prisoners by Greeks and Barbarians, noting that clemency was a still rarer quality between Carthaginians and Sicilian Greeks. See also, in more detail, Pritchett 5:203–309.

143. U.S. Marine Corps art. 502e3, 601a3.

144. Xen. *Cyr.* 4.4.12.

145. *Iliad* 10.454–56; Xen. *Anab.* 4.1.23.

146. Thuc. 7.86.4.

gests the use of torture by Astyochus and Pedaritus when interrogating captured Erythraeans.¹⁴⁷ Further, prisoners of war were often sold as slaves, and slaves could be tortured for evidence in legal proceedings—at least in Athens, where the practice was a required element in obtaining a slave’s testimony.¹⁴⁸

Cooperation was further encouraged by keeping prisoners in bonds, so that they could not hope to escape retribution for false information. When possible, their reports were checked against other sources, but more often than not *aikhmalotoi* themselves served to confirm earlier reports brought in by *skopoi* or deserters, for they were not available as sources until after contact with the enemy was made.¹⁴⁹ Corroboration was necessary, for prisoners could be misinformed (due either to their own ignorance or to disinformation on the part of their leaders) or deceitful. When some of Darius’ scouts were captured by Alexander’s men, they reported that Darius was near the Tigris, that he was determined to prevent Alexander from crossing, and that he had a greater force with him than he had possessed in Cilicia.¹⁵⁰ Alexander hastened to confront him but did not find him there. We cannot be certain whether the Persian *kataskopoi* were ordered to mislead Alexander if they were captured, as Engels suggested; had contrived to mislead him on their own; or had inaccurate or outdated infor-

147. Cooper 223–29. These men were, however, suspected of being a fifth column. For released prisoners as a fifth column (or released with the intention of causing mistrust), see Thuc. 1.55.1–2, 3.70.1 (of the Corinthians); Polyaeus 2.29.1 (of Cleonymus); Aen. Tact. 24.3f. and Polyaeus 3.14.1 (of Charidemus). Xenophon used the word βαρυνίζων when speaking of the interrogation of captives by Gadatas; as these were Cyrus’ men captured by secret arrangement, I am not sure that the word should be taken to indicate torture in this context.

148. Pritchett (2:38–39) noted that the public slaves accompanying *tamiai* at Athens were chosen from captives and were liable to torture in investigation of *strategoï* and *tamiai*. He cited a scholiast to Demosthenes (2 *Olynth.* 19, my translation): “The Athenians had public slaves whom they had chosen from the captives, and taught them letters, and sent them out to war with the *tamiai* and *strategoï* in order to record the booty. They did not do this without reason, but so that they could beat them, as slaves, and be able to learn the truth; for among the Athenians it was thought shameful to beat free men. If a *strategos* or *tamias* were proven by these beatings to have lied, they themselves thereafter suffered even as the slaves.” Note also Demosth. VIII (*On the Cherson.*) 47; X (4 *Phil.*) 22.

149. E.g., at Xen. *Anab.* 1.7.13 the reports of prisoners after the battle were in harmony with those of deserters who had abandoned the king earlier. Cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1.25: captives corroborated (ταῦτά ἐλεγον Bothe; ταῦτά MSS) earlier reports of deserters and those of the Indian ambassadors/spies.

150. Arrian *Anab.* 3.7.4–5.

mation.¹⁵¹ In any event, Xenophon wrote of prefabricated stories being circulated among troops who, unbeknownst to themselves, were intended by their general to be captured.¹⁵²

But disinformation was generally the product of fake deserters, rather than captives. The real problem with the latter, as Napoleon noted, was the limited perspective of the run-of-the-mill prisoner—a problem exacerbated in antiquity by the lack of an effective collating process that might have afforded a clearer view of the operational and strategic picture by piecing together the collected data.¹⁵³ There were, however, two mitigating factors. First, Greek soldiers were often members of the deliberative bodies of their states, especially in the democratic poleis, rather than subjects distant from active participation in the rule of large states. As such, they would at least have some ideas of larger issues and perhaps even operational policy. Even men serving in less egalitarian societies could furnish significant information. A Persian captured by Democrates' reconnaissance team was able to reveal that the force shadowing the Greeks was commanded by Tiribazus, that it consisted of Tiribazus' own forces supplemented by Chalybian and Taochian mercenaries, and that he had prepared so as to take the pass through which ran the only road offering escape to the Ten Thousand.¹⁵⁴ For all we know, these statements represent only a fraction of the captive's news, since Xenophon would only include detail necessary to explain the subsequent Greek reaction. Second, interrogation of the prisoners was undertaken by generals themselves (as in the example just mentioned) or was delegated to an officer specially appointed to the task (such as Laomedon, a bilingual Macedonian serving Alexander).¹⁵⁵ Such men would know which questions to ask, and their minds would serve as collating mechanisms.

151. Engels 337; he raised an interesting possibility: did generals give their men consistent stories to feed the enemy if captured? It seems that they deliberately misled their troops at times, which would accomplish the same end. It is probable, however, that commanders withheld information from their troops lest they be captured, just as they did fearing lest they desert (cf. Semmett 127).

In contrast, when German soldiers were captured and interrogated by American personnel during World War II, those who were disinclined to cooperate usually showed their resistance by refusing to provide answers, rather than giving false ones.

152. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.1–2, 15.

153. Napoleon *Maxims* 63 (Philips 1:426).

154. Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.16–18. Cf. the opportune information from a prisoner at Polyb. 5.71.9.

155. Arrian *Anab.* 3.6.6: “. . . since he was bilingual [speaking the barbaric language]

In the hapless Persian captured by Democrates, we see the result of one of a significant number of concerted efforts to procure prisoners for the sole purpose of obtaining information.¹⁵⁶ This captive claimed to be a forager, and certainly foragers frequently came into the hands of their enemies, since they were at some remove from the security of their camp. *Skopoi* also operated in small groups, traveling or posted in advance of a more secure base, and hence we find them also captured and interrogated.¹⁵⁷ Indeed they were probably specifically sought for interrogation, since such men would have a broader base of understanding than most, because they had to know what to look for and could therefore reveal what their commanders were seeking to know. Captured officers would be of still greater value, although they were rarely taken until after battle had been joined and won. Although there are few examples of them being interrogated against their will, it is significant that Thucydides felt it necessary to explain the failure of the Syracusans to question Nicias.¹⁵⁸ If World War II is any guide, officers were less likely than other ranks to disclose information to their captors.

Deliberate efforts to capture prisoners for the purpose of questioning seem to have arisen from a need for more detailed information than that provided by other sources, particularly scouts.¹⁵⁹ Xenophon and Alexander in particular made plans to take prisoners who might be questioned or employed as guides.¹⁶⁰

Although one would expect to gain information from captives only

...” Laomedon’s (Berve no. 464) appointment is found among the offices of bodyguard, treasurer, commander of allied cavalry, and satrap of Lydia, implying a position of some importance. He is also mentioned at Arrian *Anab.* 3.6.5 as having been banished by Philip on account of his partisanship for Alexander. For men appointed to the task of overseeing prisoners, see also Onas. 14.3. Cf. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 3.4; Demosth. XXIV (*Against Timocrates*) 20.9.

156. Examples begin with a literary precedent, in which Odysseus and Diomedes set out by night to capture “an enemy straggler or perhaps even learn some report among the Trojans” (*Iliad* 10.206–7).

157. *Iliad* 10.340ff.; Arrian *Anab.* 3.8.2.

158. Thuc. 7.86.4. Cf. *Iliad* 10.208–10, 409–11; Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.17; Plut. *Phocion* 14.1; Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.5.

159. Xenophon’s model general, Cyrus, always looked to take captives so that he might learn something from those he had captured (Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.9). In one instance, he sent cavalry ahead to capture men when scouts reported possible enemy activity (Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.6). Cf. [Nicephorus] *Campaign Organization* 18.

160. Xen. *Anab.* 4.6.17; Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.6; Arrian *Anab.* 4.30.6–7. Cf. Engels 332 and n. 31.

during open war, there are examples of kidnapping for the sake of information in time of ostensible peace. We learn from Demosthenes that Hermeias of Artarneus, a man deeply involved in Philip II's policies, was seized by the Rhodian Mentor and carried captive to the king of Persia. The context assumes that this kidnapping was carried out for the sake of learning of Philip's machinations, with the implication that such a source was of particular value.¹⁶¹ Philip again fell victim to a similar misfortune when Nicias, his herald, was taken while yet in his own territory. The herald was brought to Athens and incarcerated, and the letters of Philip that he carried were taken and read before the *boulé*.¹⁶²

The capture of enemy couriers and their accompanying documents was not uncommon in the ancient world, the Athenians being particularly adept in this endeavor during the Peloponnesian War.¹⁶³ Scouts or cavalry, appearing swiftly in unexpected quarters, were often able to capture couriers and pass on the information for immediate use, as in the cases of the Thebans at Haliartus and Gelon at Selinus.¹⁶⁴ Captured documents that were not of immediate tactical value might nevertheless be useful for planning a campaign: the Athenians were gifted by fortune with the lists of the Syracusan muster role when their scout ships captured a vessel in the Syracusan harbor.¹⁶⁵

Reconstructions of the processing of prisoners can be sketchy at best. Obviously there was a preliminary stage, during which a soldier decided first whether or not to take a prisoner, then whether or not he wished to reveal the capture to his commander. Captives could be sold as slaves,

161. Demosth. X (4 *Phil.*) 32. Hermeias was described as “ὁ πράττων καὶ συνειδῶς ἅπανθ' ἃ Φίλιππος κατὰ βασιλείῳ παρασκευάζεται.” Demosthenes (expediently) portrays him as a source more valuable than the charges of the Athenian embassies, which were expected to be biased. Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.3.

162. *Epist. Phil.* (purportedly a letter from Philip II to the Athenians) 2. This charge appeared first in a list of grievances Philip leveled against Athens.

163. In two cases the *strategoi* sent to collect tribute were credited with the capture. Was this coincidence or a function of their office? It is likely that these *strategoi* afforded an ad hoc but official and secure channel to route captives back to Athens and that the garrisons, at the behest of informers or *proxenoi*, did the actual seizure.

164. Plut. *Lys.* 28.2; Diod. Sic. 11.21.4–5. Cf. a similar story at Polyaeus 6.27.2. Polyaeus attributed to generals the imagination to plant false information among the letters carried by messengers: 3.9.57 (Iphicrates), 4.2.8 (Philip II), 4.11.3 (Cassander), 5.2.19 (Dionysius I). His examples are not to be found in extant works from earlier authors (although a parallel exists in Polyb. 5.28.4).

165. Plut. *Nicias* 14.5. Another example can be found in Arrian *Anab.* 3.11.3: Arrian attributed to Aristobulus a document giving Darius' order of battle, which was later captured.

and a soldier benefited financially if he could hide one away and sell him on the sly, as did the Syracusans who took Athenians into private custody after the disastrous retreat in 413.¹⁶⁶ If the capture was a product of a raid or ambush to capture a potential informant, the victim would likely be immediately turned over to officers or a general. More commonly, after battles some of the better generals made inquiries of captives to better understand the consequences of the outcome. No mention is made, however, of why or how a particular individual would be selected for the general's attention. There was some rudimentary categorization of prisoners as early as Cimon's recapture of Sestus and Byzantium in the 470s, when men of higher birth or position were separated from the common herd; this was done regularly by Alexander.¹⁶⁷ In the first case, the ascribed motive was monetary (ransoms); in the second, chivalry (for want of a better word). Such a division has consequences for intelligence—one separates men from their commanders to achieve better chances of extracting information from both.¹⁶⁸ Onasander, a much later source, alluded to categorizing types of prisoners according to their potential impact on morale.¹⁶⁹ Those arrested on suspicion of espionage or participation in plots were treated differently from those captured in battle—the former's torture and death were inevitable, barring exceptional intervention.

In the twentieth century, prisoners are typically questioned separately, their stories cross-checked, and their admissions (or alleged admissions) used to manipulate other captives. We find this method also in antiquity, in the aforementioned story of the two men questioned about routes by Xenophon. But on another occasion, we find him and the other *strategoí* of the Ten Thousand conducting interviews with a number of captives at once.¹⁷⁰ Prisoners were dismissed before options based on their informa-

166. Thuc. 7.85.2.

167. Plut. *Cimon* 9.2–4; Q. Curtius 6.2.9.

168. Information on categorization can be found in some detail in U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 30–96c Interrogator*, 2.35–42.

169. Onas. 14.3: “the general, if he is able, should take prisoners [en route] either by ambush or skirmishing or should capture those deserting their own camp. If he should find them admirable in mind and body, he should kill them at once or bind them and hand them over to those appointed to these duties, ordering them to guard the men lest many see them; but if he find them weak and despicable and fainthearted, he should first threaten them in the privacy of his own tent and enslave their spirits to fear, then lead them, bound and weeping, before his troops.”

170. Xen. *Anab.* 3.5.14–15: “And the generals came together again, and when they had gathered the captives, they interrogated them about the nature of the entire surrounding territory.” The prisoners were sent away without the generals revealing which way they intended to march. Cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.6ff.

tion were discussed—the Greeks were hardly stupid and realized that escaped or released prisoners could supply information about their captors. Agesilaus and his men, for example, learned of the doings of the people of Lampsacus from prisoners escaped from nearby mines.¹⁷¹ Curiously, prisoners were sometimes used as messengers to the hostile force from which they were captured.¹⁷²

Deserters (*Automoloi*)

The list of deserters and traitors in Greek history is a long one,¹⁷³ in which the great and noble are found beside the anonymous and obscure.¹⁷⁴ The types of information they provided were rich and varied, depending on their former rank and degree of access to information. While it has been observed that the information conveyed by a common soldier would normally extend only to what he had seen and heard in camp or what he could deduce from his army's preparations, generals and leaders could give a broader range of information. But common to all was a considerable degree of knowledge about their own city or army,

171. Polyaeus 2.1.26. Cf. Front. *Strat.* 1.4.2. Some samples of escapes include Thuc. 7.85.4 and perhaps 3.3.5; Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.12–14, 1.1.9–10, 1.3.22; Polyaeus 6.49.1. For exchanges of prisoners, see Thuc. 2.102.1, 5.18.7. Clauses pertaining to the return of captives were sometimes included in peace treaties, and there are a number of inscriptions praising men for their efforts to bring home citizens taken prisoners in war.

In general, the extent of information possessed by escaped prisoners might have been limited if, as one might expect, they avoided contact with the enemy on fleeing internment (cf. U.S. Marine Corps art. 502e: "They may, nonetheless, be able to furnish information on natural conditions in the area and limited information on enemy forces").

172. Xen. *Anab.* 7.4.5; Xen. *Cyr.* 3.2.13, 5.4.24.

173. As treated in this book, deserters are distinguished from traitors by vocabulary rather than deed. They are those who abandon their ranks for the enemy's while serving in their armed forces. For a wider treatment of betrayal, see Losada passim, esp. chap. 2.

174. Among the more infamous and illustrious deserters was Alcibiades, *strategos* of Athens, who first deserted to the Lacedaemonians, whom he abandoned for the Persians before finally returning to the Athenian side. For some other examples of deserting nobles and officers, see Diod. Sic. 18.23.3ff.; Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.3, 3.21.1, 3.27.2–3; Q. Curtius 3.11.18, 5.13.9. Cf. Polyb. 5.70.10ff. with respect to officers deserting Ptolemy IV to Antiochus III—these men ought to have been able to tell Antiochus of the large force being gathered by Sosibius, but Polybius made no indication that this possibility was realized.

Many references to deserters are to unspecified individuals, implying, but not necessitating, that these were not of particular note. Some examples: Hdt. 7.219; Thuc. 2.57.1, 5.2.3, 8.40.2; Xen. *Anab.* 1.7.2; Xen. *Ages.* 1.19; Arrian *Anab.* 1.23.4, 5.23.6; Polyaeus 1.48.5, 2.3.10, 2.10.1. It is not impossible that the attribution of information to anonymous deserters at times reflects an uncertainty on the part of the historian rather than actual evidence: in Polyaeus, for example, (false) information from *automoloi* is so common as to be suspect.

absorbed through long exposure and experience. An excerpt from a speech ascribed to Lysias reads: “who is so unfamiliar with his own city that he could not, should he want to be a scoundrel, explain to the enemy which ground they ought to seize, and reveal which forts are poorly guarded, and instruct them on which public policies and efforts were vulnerable, and inform them which allies wish to revolt?”¹⁷⁵ What usually accounts for their presence in the histories is the topographical and tactical information—details of military activity, intentions, fortunes, forces, and capabilities—that deserters so often bore and that so often influenced the course and outcome of battles.¹⁷⁶ For instance, had Agesilaus not been warned by an anonymous and obscure deserter that Epaminondas was marching on Sparta, his city might well have fallen to the Thebans in his absence.¹⁷⁷

Motivations for desertion were many and varied. Onasander mentions the desire for honor and gain.¹⁷⁸ To this must be added jealousy, hatred, and fear.¹⁷⁹ Some soldiers, such as Mantitheus and Apsephio in the fifth century and Amyntas son of Antiochus in the fourth, abandoned their own side when they were in danger of persecution or death.¹⁸⁰ Famine could also lead men to abandon ranks.¹⁸¹ Unwilling allies pressed into service might desert, if an opportunity presented, and bring timely information: the crew of a Tenian trireme deserted the Persians for the Greeks before the battle of Salamis and told of Persian movements.¹⁸² Plutarch even mentions troops forsaking their leader because they despised him

175. [Lysias] XIV (*Against Alcibiades I*) 35.

176. Some examples: Hdt. 3.4, 6.79, 7.82, 7.219, 8.8, 8.26; Thuc. 5.2.3, 8.40.2; Xen. *Ages.* 1.19; Xen. *Anab.* 1.7.2, 1.7.13; Polyb. 4.57.3ff., 4.66.6, 29.15.1–3 (Plut. *Aem.* 16); Diod. Sic. 19.26.1, 19.50.5, 19.68.6, 20.94.1; Q. Curtius 4.13.36–37, 5.13.2, 5.13.7; Livy 24.2.9; Arrian *Anab.* 1.23.4, 1.25.3, 2.6.3, 3.21.1, 5.23.6; Polyaeus 1.48.5, 2.3.10, 2.10.1.

177. Polyaeus 2.3.10; Front. *Strat.* 3.11.5. Xenophon (*Hell.* 7.5.10), who ought to have known, called the deserter a Cretan; Plutarch (*Ages.* 34.4, following Callisthenes *FGrHist* 124F26) names him Euthynus, a Thespian. Fougères (581 n. 3, 582 n. 1) proposed the existence of two deserters, one to Agesilaus, another to the Lacedaemonians’ allies at Mantinea. Polybius would contradict him, saying that Agesilaus was still at Mantinea (9.8.6), but in this instance at least, Xenophon is to be preferred to his less maligned successor.

178. Onas. 10.24.

179. Hdt. 3.4; Xen. *Anab.* 1.4.7–8 (in the latter case, Xenias and Pasion did not desert to the enemy but merely abandoned Cyrus).

180. Andocides *On the Mysteries* 44; Arrian *Anab.* 1.17.9, 25.3. Cf. Polyb. 4.86.3; Diod. Sic. 18.22.3–4, 18.25.3, 19.56.1.

181. Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.15; Diod. Sic. 19.50.1. Cf. Polyb. 1.19.7.

182. Hdt. 7.82; Polyaeus (2.1.18) attributed to Agesilaus a stratagem to prevent such a move on the part of his allies.

and admired the reputation of his opponent.¹⁸³ Although in that passage the biographer's ascription of motive must be treated with caution, it does point to a well-attested broader phenomenon of low morale fostering desertion.

Deserters and traitors could be solicited, although advertising hospitality had its problems. Themistocles left messages by water sources for the Ionians serving in Xerxes' expedition; Leotychidas coasted off Mycale shouting appeals to their brethren.¹⁸⁴ In both instances the invitation was obvious to the Persians, who could take measures to prevent desertion. Ptolemy I, camped across the Nile from the invading army of Antigonos the One-Eyed, sent men in boats to announce extravagant rewards (two minae to each common soldier, a talent to each officer) for those who would desert to him. Bribery proved an effective motivation, and Antigonos was compelled to station archers, slingers, and catapults on the banks to check the announcements and the desertions. He also made unpleasant examples of men caught trying to desert.¹⁸⁵ But these anecdotes illustrate that the intent of such solicitations was to sow distrust or gain military advantage rather than information.¹⁸⁶

The example of Ptolemy and Antigonos also serves to demonstrate the risks faced by would-be deserters, and similar precautions and punishments are well attested as far back as the fifth century. Danger was especially present in three stages: first on leaving camp, then when entering an enemy camp, and finally on the conclusion of conflict. Flight was facilitated by darkness, but countermeasures—such as dogs and a close watch—were heeded more diligently at night.¹⁸⁷ Topography and distance also imposed constraints.¹⁸⁸ But despite all obstacles, natural and man-made, it was universally acknowledged that desertion was

183. Plut. *Demet.* 44.5, 48.3, 49.1.

184. Hdt. 8.19, 9.98; Diod. Sic. 18.39.5.

185. Diod. Sic. 20.75.1–3.

186. Cf. Antigonos the One-Eyed having had his heralds announce immunity (*asphalia*) for Rhodian deserters while his son Demetrius was besieging Rhodes (Polyaenus 4.6.16). Thucydides noted that Alcibiades, after deserting the Athenians and fleeing to Elis, came to Sparta in response to an invitation, having first obtained a promise of safe passage from the Spartans (Thuc. 6.88.9).

187. For desertion by night, see Diod. Sic. 19.26.1, 20.66–67; Plut. *Demetrius* 49.1. Cf. also Frederick the Great (121), who advocated special measures at night to prevent and catch deserters.

188. But cf. Hdt. 8.8f.: Scyllies of Scione, a diver, intended to desert but lacked opportunity. Finally he left the Persian base at Aphetae and went, by boat or by swimming, to Artemisium, where he told the *strategoi* of the shipwreck and movements of the Persian fleet. A statue at Delphi honoring Scyllies was noted by Pausanias (10.19.1). Cf. deserters swimming from Molon's army to Xenoetas' at Polyb. 5.46.8.

inevitable.¹⁸⁹ Further, strongholds in enemy territory (such as Pylos and Deceleia in the Peloponnesian War) served to provide relatively accessible havens for deserters and bases for measures taken in response to the guidance and information they afforded.¹⁹⁰

The first reception of deserters would have been the province of watchers on guard at the camp or stronghold to which they were fleeing.¹⁹¹ These guards would have had to establish by some means the nature and intent of an enemy soldier approaching their camp—a problem of no little consequence, given the Greek propensity to ambush and kill enemy guards. No more definitive statement can be made than this: it *seems* that individuals were not turned away.¹⁹² Yet would a historian bother to record the unhappy fate of an anonymous and faceless soldier fleeing his own camp, or would a picket be so bold as to slay unheard an individual of apparent importance? Large-scale defections (more characteristic of the Hellenistic era than the classical) were more complex. These were typically negotiated in advance, as was the case prior to the battle of Lade in the early fifth century. Although this practice entails risk of detection, it is entirely sensible. For what would be the natural reaction to a substantial force of approaching enemy soldiers? If one believes Herodotus, some of the Thebans who deserted en masse at Thermopylae were killed before they made it clear that they were not hostile.¹⁹³ Five

189. In many instances generals, realizing that deserters were inevitable, withheld information from their troops until the last minute. See, e.g., Onas. 10.22–24; Gomme 2:164 on Thuc. 2.57.1.

190. Thuc. 1.142.4, 7.26.2, 7.27.5, 8.40.2; Paus. 4.9.1. Cf. Anon. Byz. *Peri Strategikes* 9.

191. See, e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1.46; Polyaeus 4.9.2. Cf. Polyb. 8.24.4ff.: Philemelus and Nicon, Tarentines seeking Hannibal's aid against their Roman garrison, were taken into custody by Hannibal's *phulakes* on approaching the Carthaginian camp. They did not say who they were or whence they came, but they maintained that they wished to meet with the general. When Hannibal admitted them, they insisted on a private conversation, which was readily granted. A password (*sunthema*) was agreed on for future visits, so that they would gain easy admission from the guards.

Whether or not the details of this story are true (how would Polybius have discovered them?), they are indicative of what a (later) Greek general would expect to have happened.

192. An Athenian decree mandated that deserters not be received (*IG I³ 58b*, line 24, ca. 430 B.C.), but there are no instances of adherence to this rule. A historian might not think it worth mentioning an incident when deserters were turned away, except perhaps in unusual circumstances. Such circumstances existed in the case of Mnasippus' siege of Corcyra: oppressed by famine, so many deserted the besieged city that Mnasippus determined that no more would be received. He ordered a proclamation to be made that deserters would be sold as slaves, yet they continued to come. Finally he ordered his men to drive them back into the town with scourges; since the townspeople would not readmit them, many died underneath the walls (Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.15).

193. Hdt. 7.233.

thousand Libyans one night abandoned Agathocles for the Carthaginians; they were spotted by pickets, who thought they were marching to attack. A confused battle resulted, and the Libyans fled back to the Greek camp, only to meet a similar reception there.¹⁹⁴ Even though an understanding existed, Antigonos the One-Eyed viewed with some skepticism a mob of Eumenes' men approaching to join his side, and he sent ten elephants and a large body of men to check and control their advent.¹⁹⁵

Deserters were almost certainly disarmed on reception. For example, the Greeks of Cyrus' army compelled those deserting from the king's army to throw away their arrows.¹⁹⁶ Historians depict deserters being brought before a commander to impart their information; this may in part be a product of narrative style, but it probably reflects practice as well, for Xenophon noted that Cyrus questioned deserters, "as is fit," regarding the affairs of the enemy.¹⁹⁷ Imparted information was preceded by an expression of motives—an attempt to establish credibility. Not surprisingly, given the widespread use of fake deserters in strata-gems, their veracity was suspect. Thus deserters were kept under guard, or even bound, until their information was borne out by events or validated by other sources, at which time they were liberally rewarded.¹⁹⁸

Deserters of higher rank and social class might be retained in honor as advisors, because of their valuable ability to interpret information unintelligible to their new patrons. At times even minor figures held positions of considerable responsibility: Alexander employed one of the Indians who had deserted to him, a man particularly trustworthy and familiar with the area, to carry a message instructing Ptolemy to attack when signaled.¹⁹⁹ More generally, deserters might be recruited into the ranks, dismissed to their homes, or held under some sort of supervision. The first option does not seem to be frequently exercised with common soldiers,

194. Diod. Sic. 20.66–67.

195. Plut. *Eum.* 18.2.

196. Xen. *Anab.* 2.1.6. The allusion is in reference to the use of arrows as firewood and does not suggest an exceptional demand on the deserters. U.S. Marine Corps intelligence policy is to handle deserters just as prisoners of war, except insofar as they are separated from the prisoners (art. 502e3).

197. Xen. *Cyr.* 3.3.48ff. (ὡς περ εἰκός). Other instances of information apparently given directly to a commander include Hdt. 3.4, 6.79, 8.8, 8.26; Thuc. 5.2.3; Xen. *Ages.* 1.19; Arrian *Anab.* 1.23.4; Polyaeus 1.48.5, 2.3.10.

198. Q. Curtius 4.13.36–37; cf. Onas. 10.15. Although no doubt generally effective, this advice might avail little when practiced on one willing to die.

199. Arrian *Anab.* 4.29.4; Sisicottus (Quintus Curtius recorded his name as "Sisicostus" at 8.11.25), who had joined Alexander some time after deserting the Indians, was appointed commander of a garrison (Arrian *Anab.* 4.30.4).

perhaps for good reason, since interest as well as fidelity was at issue. While Livy's depiction of the Romans carrying arms for Syracuse is no doubt colored by rhetoric, it nevertheless suggests a real possibility that a large contingent of deserters was potentially disruptive. The second option was granted by Cassander to those deserting Olympias due to famine (with her consent, according to Diodorus); Diodorus was somewhat skeptical of his generosity and stated that his altruism was a guise for a desire that news of the hopelessness of Olympias' plight might be circulated.²⁰⁰ The third possibility is suggested by the Old Oligarch's description of the duties of trierarchs, which included making decisions regarding deserters.²⁰¹ This passage occurs immediately following mention that the trierarchs appointed keepers for the prisons; perhaps some sort of detainment or restrictions were involved.

When the war ended, a deserter had better have chosen the winning side. Deserters to the Hellenistic kings faced the prospect of being returned to the gentle admonitions of their former masters, and later to Rome, under the terms of an imposed peace treaty.²⁰² Most treaties between Greek city-states lack clauses pertaining to deserters,²⁰³ but there was still the danger of recapture by the army they had abandoned: Artaxerxes, when he took Cyrus' camp, seized those who had deserted to the Greek side; Amyntas brought back his brother Polemon who had fled in fear of Alexander.²⁰⁴ In neither instance are the fates of the deserters recorded but it is not likely that they were pleasant.

Locals (Epikhorioi, Enkhorioi), Especially Guides (Hegemones, or denoted by an article and [καθ-] ἄγω participle [often + ὁδοῦ (rarely ὁδόν) or πλοῦ])

Any commander worth his office sent out *kataskopoi* and questioned merchants, captives, prisoners, deserters, and the like, but crucial information was often available only from the inhabitants of a region—those who, as Polybius says, “not only know best the directions of the winds, as the say-

200. Diod. Sic. 19.50.2.

201. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 3.5; cf. 3.4.

202. Polyb. 18.44.6, 21.30.3, 25.2.8.

203. See, e.g., Thuc. 5.18.1–19.2, 23.1–24.1, 47.1–12.

204. Xen. *Anab.* 1.10.6; Arrian *Anab.* 3.27.3. Although they might have been rewarded by the side to which they had defected, deserters and traitors were, in most cases, understandably despised by the peoples they had betrayed (Xen. *Hell.* 7.3.10; Lycurgus *Against Leocr.* passim).

ing goes, but also the nature of their compatriots.”²⁰⁵ In less eloquent but more specific terms, we are here speaking of geographic information: most importantly routes, but also natural and agricultural resources, military activity and dispositions, and local relationships, customs, and lore.²⁰⁶

This was valuable information, to be sure, but there were complications inherent in the relationship between informant and informed. In most instances, we find the people of a region being approached by members of a hostile or potentially hostile army for information about their homeland. Animosity would therefore impede cooperation, as would fear of retribution from peers or authorities. Further, there were frequently cultural, ethnic, or even language differences, since locals and guides often appear in accounts of military expeditions into areas beyond the familiar hinterlands of the Mediterranean.²⁰⁷ It should come as no surprise that few volunteered and that none did so out of selfless motives.²⁰⁸ Consequently commanders used persuasion or (more often)

205. Polyb. 9.25.3.

206. Of a sample of sixty citations pertaining to information provided by guides, thirty-three specifically contain geographical information (twenty-two of which concern routes), and an additional twelve presume similar content. The remaining fifteen involve military matters, booty, local myth, elephants, and (apparently) whales. Of seventeen citations concerning locals exclusive of guides, eight concern geography (four of which tell of routes); eight, the situation or activity of the enemy; and one, local myth. Cf. Simonyan and Grishin 184; U.S. Marine Corps art. 502h.

207. Given the prevalence of geographic information, it should not be surprising that the recorded uses of guides and local inhabitants occur most frequently in passages treating the great expeditions of Xerxes, the Ten Thousand, and Alexander. There are fewer incidents of their being employed by Greeks in Greek-speaking territories, and most of these are situated in areas more or less on the borders of the civilized world (at least in the Attic conception of it).

An interpreter (see chap. 4) would be needed to understand those who did not speak Greek, and Alexander might have had to employ more than one interpreter at once when he was campaigning far in the east (see Engels 332, 339). Engels (332) spoke of Alexander's Iranian “experts” Pharnuces and Mithrenes, who probably served as advisors or supervisors in the handling of information brought by people of that ethnic group. See Berve nos. 768 and 524.

Frederick the Great (126) wrote: “We had need of guides in 1760, while crossing Lusatia to march on Silesia. We sought them in the Wendish villages and when they were brought before us they let on that they could not speak German, which greatly distressed us. But on being informed that they would be beaten they spoke German like parrots. You must therefore always be on guard with respect to guides taken in enemy country.”

208. Quintus Curtius maintained that the Persians were particularly reticent, noting that Alexander was unable to learn the whereabouts of Darius in the prelude to Arbela, since the Persians had the custom of keeping the secrets of their king with wondrous fidelity, in the face of threats or promises (4.5.5–6). He adds that the penalty for not living up to such a standard was death.

Mazenes, “hyparch” of an island, embarked with Nearchus to serve as his guide. Arrian (*Indica* 37.2) emphasized that he did so willingly, which implies that this might not have been common during Alexander's campaign.

coercion to obtain information from people living along their path, or they looked to allies bordering the region or sympathizers within it; also, they sought to find particularly well-informed individuals and join them to their army to have sources available who could continually provide information and who could be held responsible for what they said.²⁰⁹

Persuasion was effected by rewards, which were at times extravagant.²¹⁰ These seem to have been in the nature of reciprocal gifts, but in one case at least, there is a suggestion that a more or less professional guide might be hired: Xenophon relates that when the Phliasians were left behind by the Lacedaemonian army in the crises of 370, they hired a guide from Prasiae to reach Sparta and provide assistance.²¹¹ The participle used (μικθωσάμενοι, from μικθόω) implies the payment of a wage, such as that of a carpenter, rather than a reward or gift. This passage also illustrates that it was necessary to solicit geographical information even within the Peloponnese and mainland poleis, as does a memorial honor-

209. There were, additionally, a fair number of individuals whose motives are not specified. A sampling: Hdt. 8.34, 7.128, 130, 197; Thuc. 7.80.7; Xen. *Anab.* 2.4.10, 4.6.1; Diod. Sic. 17.49.5; Arrian *Anab.* 3.17.2, 6.26.4–5; Arrian *Indica* 27.1, 30.3, 31.3, 40.11.

Although valuable information was often obtained from anonymous locals, one rarely finds a high opinion of the value of the chance-met informant (see, e.g., [Eur.] *Rhesus* 266–70 and cf. Frederick the Great 127; Simonyan and Grishin 184); so notes Semmett (esp. 28–29). This may in part be due to suspicion of a lack of social standing, in part to suspicion of a lack of expertise. Cf. Vegetius 3.6: one must look to *prudentioribus et honoratis ac locarum gnaris* for information about topography; guides must be *sapientes exercitatie*. The Greeks attached a particular value to the knowledge of old men; perhaps for this reason we find them being questioned by Xenophon's cavalry and pressed into service as guides (Xen. *Anab.* 6.3.11).

Information from locals continues to be important and sometimes surprisingly accurate. Hans von Luck, commander of the Third Panzer Reconnaissance Battalion serving in Libya in 1943, was cut off from his base and fell in with Bedouins, who gave him exact directions on how to avoid a British camp and return to his own. Wrote von Luck (107): "I have never understood how the man knew our position and that of the British so accurately."

The U.S. Marine Corps (art. 502h) advised: "Enemy civilians in recently captured areas often give information readily. Many disclose information in consideration of their own self interests. Generally, the longer the delay in questioning civilians, the less valid is the information obtained." There is no similar theoretical statement available from antiquity, but it appears that those questioning locals did so soon after contact.

210. Some examples follow. (1) Xen. *Anab.* 4.7.27: After five days guidance to the sea, the Greeks dismissed their guide with generous gifts—a horse, a silver cup, Persian dress, and ten darics. He also asked for rings and received many from the soldiers. (2) Diod. Sic. 17.68.4–6: μεγάλας δωρεάς. (3) Q. Curtius 8.11.3. Cf. Diod. Sic. 17.85.4–5; Arrian *Anab.* 4.28.7–30.4; Plut. *Alex.* 58.3; Justin 12.7, 12–13: eighty talents. (4) Q. Curtius 5.7.12: thirty talents.

211. Xen. *Hell.* 7.2.3.

ing Python of Megara, who safely led a large, endangered force of Athenians from Pagae (in Megara) through Boeotia to Athens.²¹²

If persuasion failed, there was always force. The capture and questioning of locals is found in the mythical tradition,²¹³ and Xenophon's (and later Alexander's) pragmatic solution to a lack of willing guides was to compel the unwilling. These would be recruited from prisoners in hand, or ambushes would be laid to capture soldiers or brigands when local talent was otherwise unavailable.²¹⁴ The captives would be motivated by fear: "Consider," said Xenophon, "whether you have a better guide in Tissaphernes, who is shown to be plotting against us, or in those men whom we might take and order to lead us, who will know that should they fail in anything in our cause, they will fail in their own breath and body."²¹⁵ Nevertheless, captives were not trusted and were subjected to safeguards.²¹⁶

The aforementioned Python leads us to another motivation: sympathetic factions within a state could volunteer or be persuaded to help foreign armies in need of guidance. This phenomenon occurred most frequently in states having subject populations, such as the *perioikoi* and helots in Laconia who helped the Athenians and later the Thebans. Likewise the guidance of slaves in Chios proved particularly advantageous to Athenians attempting to subdue the Chian citizenry.²¹⁷ Similar service was rendered by political factions within a state, as was the case with Brasidas' march through Thessaly in 424.²¹⁸ At that time the ruling families were leaning toward Sparta, while the majority of the state apparently

212. Meiggs and Lewis no. 51 (Tod no. 41; Fornara no. 101; dated ca. 446/5). Meiggs and Lewis (137) suggested that the need for his services was occasioned by Pleistoanax's march north, which precluded passage on familiar routes.

213. Lycurgus *Against Leocr.* 86. Oddly, there are no explicit references to this practice in earlier sources. It may have been a development born of desperation in the long march of the Ten Thousand.

214. Xen. *Anab.* 4.1.22–23, 4.6.17, 6.3.11; Diod. Sic. 17.68.4ff.; Arrian *Anab.* 4.30.6–7; Q. Curtius 3.13.1–5.

215. Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.20.

216. The reliability of captives forced to act as guides was, of course, suspect, as Curtius noted so colorfully when describing the risk Alexander took when he put his life into the hands of a Lycian prisoner serving as his guide. See Q. Curtius 5.4.4, 5.4.10, 5.4.19; Diod. Sic. 17.68.4ff. Cf. Polyaeus 4.3.27; Plut. *Alex.* 37.1–2 (in which the man was not defined as a captive); Arrian *Anab.* 3.18.4 (and Bosworth, *Commentary* ad loc.).

217. Caryaeans (*perioikoi*): Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.25. Chian slaves: Thuc. 8.40.2; cf. Hdt. 6.135; Xen. *Cyr.* 7.2.3. Exiles: Diod. Sic. 18.19.3 and perhaps Hdt. 6.102—Hippias guided (κατηγγέτο) the Persians to Marathon so they could employ their cavalry to advantage.

218. Thuc. 4.78.1–2; cf. Gomme 3:540ff. ad loc.

avored maintenance of the alliance with Athens. Brasidas sent an *angelos* to his friends in Thessaly, asking them to meet him at the Thessalian border. They did as he bid, along with Strophacus, *proxenos* of the Chalcidians, and several Thessalians. Their service was invaluable in arguing with their fellow countrymen and dissuading them from resisting Brasidas. At this point, Thucydides steps back from his narrative to note that it was suspicious to travel through a country without consent, hence the provision of guides by allies might have another aspect: when a foreign army passed through one's own territory, guides were the physical manifestation of one's assent to the passage.²¹⁹

More frequently, an army was guided through its area of operations by contingents from allied states bordering it. In all such cases, the guides' *poleis* were following the banners of larger, more powerful states and were often exploiting an opportunity to settle old scores with a hated neighbor—so the Thebans and the Thessalians served as guides for the Persians in Phocis, the Messenians and Locrians for the Athenians in the Peloponnese and Aetolia, the people of Gymnias for the Ten Thousand, and so on.²²⁰ Thus even the most faithful allies had their own motives in providing guides, and since alliances were not always so warm, there was often cause for suspicion: who could trust guides provided by Tissaphernes, or by Cyrus himself if the Ten Thousand had chosen to abandon him, or by Uxians recently forced into Alexander's fold, or by Milesians itching to escape from Persian dominance?²²¹ The integrity of deserters

219. Cf. Q. Curtius 5.2.8: Abulites, satrap of Susa, sent his son to Alexander with overtures and to guide the king to him. See also Xen. *Anab.* 7.8.9; Q. Curtius 8.10.2.

220. Thebans: Hdt. 9.40. Thessalians: Hdt. 8.32. Ozolian Locrians: Thuc. 3.95.3. Cf. Hdt. 5.100: the Ephesians guided the other Ionians during their march on Sardis. Gymnias: Xen. *Anab.* 4.7.19ff. (the guide urged the Greeks to lay waste the lands they passed through, making clear his enmity to the local population, and begged them not to leave captured shields as dedications without making them unfit for use). See also Hdt. 5.12, 15; Xen. *Anab.* 5.2.1–2; *Hell. Oxy.* 21.3 (and Bruce 138–39 ad loc.; cf. Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.10; Xen. *Ages.* 3.3; Plut. *Ages.* 11.2; Plut. *Lys.* 24.1); Arrian *Anab.* 4.15.4.

221. Clearchus argues the impossibility of abandoning Cyrus (Xen. *Anab.* 1.3.14–17); Xenophon disparages further faith in Tissaphernes' guides (Xen. *Anab.* 2.3.14, 2.4.10, 3.2.20); Alexander, advancing through a pass held by Uxians in their native land, prudently took Susians as guides, even though the Uxians who dwelt on the plains recognized his authority (Arrian *Anab.* 3.17.2). At Mycale the Persians, suspecting the loyalty of the Milesians, stationed them in the passes so that they could not work harm in the ranks yet might serve the Persians as guides and bring them safely to the heights if they were defeated. In the event, the Milesians misguided and killed the Persians (Hdt. 9.104). Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 5.4.10: the Mossynoecians made a pact with the Greeks and sent men to fight alongside them and to guide them. At one point, when the combined forces were defeated (5.4.20), Xenophon tried to encourage his men by pointing out that at least they now knew their guides were in fact enemies of the hostile locals.

serving as guides was also suspect, not only since they had demonstrated a lack of constancy in abandoning their former allegiance, but also because fake deserters were by no means unknown.²²²

Thus even newfound allies and guides provided by allies were subjected to general precautionary measures—that is, binding, death threats, and occasionally hostages—and, curiously, these measures were apparently accepted as reasonable. Those proffering their services for one reason or another might emphasize their willingness to be subjected to such terms, thereby enhancing their credibility. Witness those Caryaeans who came to the Theban army in Arcadia, telling them of the dearth of men at Sparta, promising to act as guides, and bidding the Thebans to kill them if they were shown to be deceitful.²²³ Captives, of course, had no pretense of choice in the matter. They were usually bound, which both made escape improbable and served as a reminder that their fates were contingent on faithful service.²²⁴ The binding and threats were not gratuitous cruelty, for it seems guides were otherwise decently treated as long as they performed well. Xenophon criticized Cheirisophus for both ill-treating and not binding a village chief who was acting as a guide for the Ten Thousand. The man resented Cheirisophus' harshness and had the means to escape. This he did successfully, leaving behind his son, whom the Greeks held as a hostage.²²⁵ In this vignette we find that while hostages and threats foster cooperation, they cannot guarantee it—this was true in the case of the aforementioned captive who suffered death rather than reveal a path leading by his daughter's house. In light of this, the Greeks employed more than one guide simultaneously whenever possible, and they probably checked their reports against each others'—it cannot be accidental that two-thirds of the references are in the plural. By the fourth century some guides were supervised, either by a subordinate officer (perhaps in the vanguard, as Xenophon described in the *Cyropædia*), or by one party of a joint command.²²⁶

222. Diodorus (19.16.4) tells of some of Eumenes' men who in 317 were captured by Antigonus, escaped, and then were besieged. Two of these deserted by arrangement with Stratonice, Antigonus' wife, to Antigonus' forces. One (Docimus) was not trusted, but his unnamed companion was and served as a guide. Polyænus (7.25.1) offers an anecdote of a fake deserter as a guide; for more general information on fake deserters, see chap. 5.

223. Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.25; see also Xen. *Anab.* 4.7.19ff.

224. Cf. Hdt. 8.23; Xen. *Anab.* 4.2.1.

225. Xen. *Anab.* 4.6.1. A similar mishap befell Alexander (Q. Curtius 9.9.1). Alexander also employed hostages (Q. Curtius 7.2.18); it is possible that Agesilaus did likewise (cf. *Hell. Oxy.* 24.3). Cf. Niceph. *Camp. Org.* 18.

226. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.53. Among the Ten Thousand, Cheirisophus seems to have had specific responsibility for the guides (Xen. *Anab.* 4.1.21, 4.6.1).

The preceding precautions, combined with a habitual practice of sending scouts to confirm information furnished by guides and locals, afforded respectable results: voluntary deception was rare, as were mistakes.²²⁷ The Greeks could afford no less, for often geographic knowledge was a question not just of military advantage but of survival. Ignorance of the terrain could prove disastrous in defeat and on campaign abroad, when logistics were particularly tenuous.²²⁸ The vulnerability of an army without guides was a recurring problem for the Ten Thousand: it bound the Greeks to Cyrus, it strongly influenced Clearchus to try to come to terms with Tissaphernes, and it made an impact on the theoretical writing of Xenophon.²²⁹

Mercenaries (*Epikouroi*, *Misthophoroi*, *Xenoi*)

Charidemus, who at times rendered Athens service as a military commander, was censured by Demosthenes for serving Cotys when Cotys was hostile to Athens and for serving the Olynthians under similar circumstances.²³⁰ Leaving aside the question of Demosthenes' bias, it can be fairly said that Charidemus was by no means the only individual to find

227. Voluntary deception: Hdt. 9.104; Polyaeus 7.25.1. Errors: Arrian *Anab.* 6.26.4–5; Q. Curtius 9.9.6. Refusal to reveal information: Xen. *Anab.* 4.1.22–23; Diod. Sic. 17.68.4; cf. Polyaeus 4.3.27. Desertion: Xen. *Anab.* 2.2.8, 2.5.35–39; 4.6.1. Sample size: eighty-three citations.

228. See, e.g., Thuc. 3.98.1: when Athenians campaigning in Aetolia were defeated, their knowledge of the terrain perished with Chromon, their Messenian guide, and their flight was blind. Many were slain, trapped in dried-up watercourses from which there was no way out, or lost in a forest when the Aetolians set the wood ablaze.

229. Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.27. Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 2.4.5: Clearchus was reluctant to set out on the long route back after Cyrus' defeat at Cunaxa, since he had no guide. The eventual outcome of his decision to remain near King Artaxerxes was his death by treachery, but nevertheless his policy must have seemed prudent at the time. Alexander was also uncomfortable at the prospect of proceeding without guides (Q. Curtius 9.9.1–2). For other examples of the consequences of operating without guides, see Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.2; Arrian *Anab.* 6.18.4–5, 7.22.1. Cf. Aen. *Tact.* 16.20.

230. Demosth. XXIII (*Against Aristocr.*) 149, 150; cf. 130–32 of Iphicrates. For details of some colorful careers of mercenaries and condottieri, see Parke, Griffith, and Pritchett. See Parke 20–21 for a discussion of the terminology referring to mercenaries and its change over time. Mercenaries in the Greek world were fairly active in the sixth century, less so in the fifth, and very active in the fourth.

Mercenaries are treated herein exclusive of incidental functions. E.g., since many mercenaries served as light-armed troops, it is possible that they were employed as scouts. Menidas (Berve no. 508), e.g., is mentioned commanding mercenaries at Arbela (Arrian *Anab.* 3.12) and scouts on another occasion (Q. Curtius 4.12.4–5). Mercenaries were also particularly susceptible to overtures regarding desertion (see, e.g., Plut. *Pelop.* 27; cf. the importance of Phanes of Halicarnassus, who deserted from the Egyptians to the Persians [Hdt. 3.4 ff.]).

himself in the pay of the enemy of a former employer, especially in the fourth century.²³¹ Similar circumstances arose when Alexander enrolled Greeks who had been in Persian service; and when Leosthenes recruited mercenaries in Taenarum in 323, he no doubt engaged some who had earlier served the Macedonians.²³² Some of these men, like Charidemus, had attained considerable stature in another's service, and in such cases it would be strange if their employers did not seek to learn such information as they could provide. Even if they did not, such men could use their experience to good effect in their own decisions. There is little evidence for mercenaries from the rank and file informing or advising employers, but there is ample testimony for commanders doing so.²³³ It is possible that there was an information flow between Hicetas' mercenaries and Timoleon (under whom they had served at the Crimissus), since some sort of arrangement was implicit in their betrayal of Hicetas to Timoleon when the Corinthian advanced on Leontini.²³⁴

231. However, Parke has observed that it was rare to find mercenaries fighting against their countrymen, at least during the Peloponnesian War. He cites as exceptional the example of the Arcadians serving in both the Syracusan and Athenian armies during the campaign of 415–413 (Thuc. 7.19.4, 7.62).

232. For mercenaries in Persian service subsequently recruited by Alexander, see, e.g., Arrian *Anab.* 1.19.6, 3.23–24. The Persians and Egyptians both made use of Greek mercenaries; I know of no all-embracing legislation forbidding Greeks to fight for barbarians for pay against Greeks until the Corinthian League apparently so decreed in the late fourth century (cf. Arrian *Anab.* 1.16.6; Parke 178). See Parke 199ff. for a discussion of Alexander's policies toward his satraps and their revolts, which would have occasioned the availability of mercenaries for recruitment by Leosthenes in preparation for the Lamian War. The Sicilian tyrants would not have benefited from Greeks who had served the Carthaginians until sometime after 340 (if Plutarch [*Tim.* 30.3] is correct, the Carthaginians did not engage Greeks before the battle of the River Crimissus; cf. Diod. Sic. 16.81.4). Both sides did, however, engage Iberians.

Similar capabilities might be possessed by (nonmercenary) troops of the same nationality as the enemy serving a foreign ally. Most of our examples are of Greeks in Persian service; the information they provided was on the nature of other Greeks and on the tactics and devices most suited to taking advantage of them. See, e.g., Hdt. 9.2–3, 31, 39, 58 (the last is almost certainly fiction, as one can assume Mardonius had been present at Thermopylae); Diod. Sic. 14.81.4–6, 14.82.2, 14.83.1, 14.86.6, 17.18.2–3, 17.30.2–3; Q. Curtius 3.2.10–19; Arrian *Anab.* 1.12.9; Polyaeus 1.48.3. Due to the pro-Athenian bias of our sources, such service was portrayed as base when they hindered Athenian interests (e.g., the enrollment of Thebans in the Persian army in the early fifth century), noble when advancing them (e.g., Memnon's command of the Persian fleet in campaigns against the Spartans in the early fourth century).

233. Cf. Hdt. 8.26, in which the Arcadian *automoloi* seeking employment might be mercenaries.

234. The men are called *stratiotai* (Plut. *Tim.* 32.1), but Parke (176) maintained that they were mercenaries, since the context suits this interpretation, and since the distinction between the two was not hard and fast by the late fourth century. He further added: "it is likely that he [Timoleon] had many agents in their ranks."

Mercenaries also must have served as informal sources of information in the manner of travelers and merchants. Mercenaries had an interest in keeping abreast of political and military developments and can be found getting wind of existing and potential employment opportunities.²³⁵ Thus in antiquity, as today, there were centers, such as Taenarum, that attracted both mercenaries looking for work and potential employers.²³⁶ These places would no doubt have been rich in news and rumor from around the Mediterranean, and it is possible that an inquirer might have learned something of the problems and strengths of commanders and territories over a casual cup of wine, if he could sift fact from fiction.

On a final note, mercenaries were frequently engaged by tyrants and, according to Xenophon, were of use to a tyrant in achieving both external and internal security. Not only were they necessary to protect his person and state, “but also,” argued Xenophon, “who would be better prepared to uncover and check the secret and sudden inroads of enemies than those always armed and organized?”²³⁷ Here the enemies are quite specifically external, and it is likely that watchers or scout patrols are meant.

The agents and sources described in this chapter were fielded by military commanders. Their information was normally exploited soon after it was received. It served to position a force advantageously to win or avoid a battle, to prevent a surprise or ambush by the enemy, and to revise plans for the conduct of a campaign. Some information provided by these people was of enduring value, especially when it pertained to geography and personalities. But the utility of the bulk of their information was ephemeral since it often consisted of enemy dispositions that were rarely static. Strategic information, which was of lasting relevance, was the province of a different set of agents, who are described in the following chapter.

235. See, e.g., Polyaeus 3.10.10. Cf. McKechnie 87; Parke 108.

236. For Taenarum (in Laconia) as a gathering point, see Diod. Sic. 18.9.1, 21.1; cf. 17.111.1–3.

237. Xen. *Hiero* 10.6.

Chapter 2

Beyond the Border: Strategic Assets

Envoys (*Presbeis*, *Presbantai*)

Presbeis and *presbantai* are translated “ambassadors” by Liddell and Scott,¹ but I have used the translation “envoy” to avoid confusion with the twentieth-century conception of ambassadors, who are professionals and normally take up residence in a foreign nation. Most *presbeis* in the Greek poleis, by contrast, held their office for the duration of a specified mission and traveled from their own city to a foreign land to accomplish their assignments.²

Xenophon mentioned that custom accorded envoys some protection, based on morality and the more practical necessity of keeping lines of communication open.³ Unlike heralds, however, they did not normally enjoy a right to immunity (*adeia*), and they were therefore subject to arrest and even execution.⁴ Immunity could be obtained for them through treaties and specific agreements negotiated by heralds.⁵ Other-

1. LSJ s.v. πρεσβευτής I, πρέσβυς, II.

2. This generalization is more true of democracies and oligarchies than autocracies and of the classical period than the Hellenistic. We find, for example, Megasthenes (the ethnographer) in residence at Chandragupta’s capital in India while acting as Seleucus Nicator’s diplomatic agent (ca. 300–290, cf. Cary 66–67). For specialization in Antigonos the One-Eyed’s court, see Billows 252–54.

3. Xen. *Anab.* 5.7.27ff.

4. Some examples: Hdt. 7.137; Thuc. 2.67ff., 3.72.1, 8.86.9; Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.22; Xen. *Anab.* 5.7.19; *Epist. Phil.* (in Demosthenes’ corpus) 3; Diod. Sic. 19.79.1; Arrian *Anab.* 2.15.2, 3.24.4–5; Plut. *Ages.* 16.3; Photius *Biblio.* 44b; Harpocration s.v. *Hagnias*. Even so, maltreatment of envoys was an offense against the state that they represented—in a later context (179), we find it listed among the (alleged) reasons for war between the Romans and Perseus.

5. The truce between the Athenians and Peloponnesians near the close of the Archidamian War, for example, contained provisions for safe conduct for *kerukes*, *presbeiai*, and *akolouthoi* engaged in negotiating peace terms (Thuc. 4.118.6). It is odd that special provision was made here for heralds, who would normally have already possessed *adeia*—perhaps the outrages of the war had rendered even these “untouchables” touchable. See also Thuc. 8.70.2. States sometimes sent *kerukes* ahead to arrange safe conduct for other

wise, open (and even imminent) hostilities could and did interrupt the flow of envoys to and from states and hence limited their use.⁶ Even in such times, however, envoys might conduct *sub rosa* negotiations between disaffected subjects and their prospective allies.⁷ Given their sphere of operation and their curtailed use during conflicts, it comes as no surprise that the information they provided related almost exclusively to diplomacy and contained little military content.⁸

The criteria for the appointment of envoys varied according to state, period, and circumstance, and a full treatment of these factors is a study in itself. For our purposes, it suffices to note a few aspects that have a bearing on their function as agents or sources.

First, during crises, when another state was hostile and needed to be placated, men were sometimes selected as envoys on the basis of their good personal relationships with the foreign state's leaders. Such was the situation when the Athenians sent the pro-Spartan Callias to Sparta to secure peace (in 371) and when they chose men congenial to Alexander after he had crushed the Theban revolt (in 335) and was looking south with a suspicious eye.⁹ One would expect that reports sent by such men could be colored by their sympathy. Conversely, in situations in which a state's fate did not rely so heavily on another's goodwill, the selection of people hostile to a foreign government was thought to ensure that the envoys would be critical of appearances and announce what was true rather than what was pleasant. Demosthenes alleged that Aeschines was

envoys or to accompany them. See, e.g., Aeschin. II (*On the embassy*) 109; Demosth. XIX (*On the embassy*) 163. Cf. Adcock and Mosley 153–54.

At the opening of the Peloponnesian War the accompaniment of envoys by a herald's *kerukeion* would have indicated that a state of war existed (Thuc. 1.53.1ff.; cf. Demosth. XVIII [*On the crown*] 166). Thucydides noted that before war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians was openly admitted, there was interaction between Athens and Sparta without heralds, albeit with suspicion; after the war was being waged openly, they no longer had relations without heralds present (Thuc. 1.146; cf. Hdt. 3.43).

6. E.g., Thuc. 1.139.1, 5.80.1.

7. E.g., Thuc. 1.67.2, 8.7.1. Cf. Aratus' secret negotiations with Antigonos, at the time his enemy in policy, if not in spirit (Polyb. 2.47.4).

8. Except insofar as foreign relations and military operations on the strategic level were always intertwined. However, in the Hellenistic period there are references to quite detailed descriptions of military forces given by envoys: Polyb. 21.26.1–4; Plut. *Flam.* 17.4.

9. Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.2; Arrian *Anab.* 1.10.3. See also Thuc. 5.40.2, 5.44. Cf. Homer *Iliad* 9.197–98; Xen. *Cyr.* 5.1.3; Plut. *Nic.* 9.3–5. It is possible that when Alexander chose a man from his ranks who happened to be of the same ethnicity as the recipients of his embassy, he did so for convenience of translation as much as congeniality (Q. Curtius 8.2.25). See also Thuc. 8.5.4, 8.85.2, for Persian employment of Greeks and Carians.

sent as an envoy to Philip because of his initial hostility to the Macedonian, since other envoys had given misleading reports about the prospects of peace.¹⁰ One might, however, expect that interpretations of events presented by these men would be influenced by their ill will. An embassy comprising both types might provide a balance, and the Greeks may well have realized this. In any event, the custom of sending three or more envoys on a given mission afforded recipients of information access to different perspectives and also made it difficult for any one envoy to manipulate messages based on his own personal agenda.¹¹

Second, while envoys did not normally hold a professional office, they were often drawn from small groups of people considered appropriate for particular tasks, based on their status in their own community and their connections to men of influence abroad. This characterization has some validity even in democratic states but is particularly true of the Lacedaemonians (who might have been inclined to restrict the number of individuals exposed to foreign corruption). Antalcidas, for example, is thought to have handled all embassies to Persia in the early fourth century.¹² Autocrats might go so far as to appoint specialists, as the Thracian Seuthes appointed Medosades.¹³ Hence there was a possibility for individuals to develop expertise in policy with a given state and be recognized as an authority on it.

Third, the application of minimum age requirements could also have an impact on the credibility of envoys as sources, if older men were perceived (as Lysias indicated) as knowledgeable and wise.¹⁴

State control of *presbeiai* was strict. People were not permitted to speak on behalf of their states unless so appointed; otherwise they faced fines or death.¹⁵ In Athens, envoys returning from service abroad were subject to a scrutiny of their actions and reports.¹⁶ They were accountable for the accuracy of their reports as well as for the general conduct of their missions, and they could be liable to measures taken by a state exas-

10. Demosth. IX (*On the embassy*) 12.

11. Nearly all references to diplomatic activity refer to more than one envoy. See Adcock and Mosley 155 for numbers commonly sent by various states.

12. Adcock and Mosley 156.

13. Xen. *Anab.* 7.2.13 and 23, 7.7.6.

14. Lysias XXIII (*Against Panceleon*) 5. Cf. *Iliad* 1.250–74; Isoc. VI (*Archidamus*) 4. I know of no upper limit on the age of envoys—a Rhodian envoy, Theaetetus, was over eighty years old when he appeared before the Roman senate. The poor man died of natural causes before the senate made an official reply (Polyb. 30.21.1–2).

15. Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.11; cf. 2.3.40.

16. Demosth. IX (*On the embassy*) 211; the scrutiny was conducted by the *logistai*.

perated with failure. Andocides mentioned that envoys must be guided by written instructions when negotiating for peace, although it is not clear whether his statement is a recommendation or a reflection of practice.¹⁷ If the latter, envoys would be precluded from taking advantage of information garnered by themselves in the course of an embassy. Such a practice would also provide a target for the information-gathering services of another state, which would no doubt find these instructions highly interesting and valuable for conducting negotiations. In any case, envoys were rarely authorized to make decisions on the spot but were compelled to refer developments back to their states and await instructions.¹⁸ Consequently, negotiations were often protracted.

Before examining the role of envoys as information sources and agents, it would be profitable to look at one of the circumstances surrounding their employment. Lee has illustrated a logical dependence of particular diplomatic activities on intelligence and thereby has shown that diplomatic activity can provide evidence for a reception of information not mentioned in our sources.¹⁹ His theory has application to the ancient Greeks.

There are examples of embassies sent in reaction to received information: the Syracusans, on receiving from various sources news of an imminent Athenian invasion, sent out envoys to the cities of the Sicels as part of their preparations.²⁰ The link between embassy and intelligence source is here explicit; in many instances it is not. How, at a later date, did the Syracusans know that the Athenians were sending home for aid and so know to send envoys to Corinth and Sparta?²¹ One might reasonably conjecture that they discovered this through deserters or captives, but clarification is lacking in the text. All too often, historians not only fail to specify a source but do not even report that information was received. But how else could the Lacedaemonians have decided to send envoys to Corinth to attempt to forestall secret negotiations between Corinth and Argos in 421?²² In such instances, the fact that the embassy was sent provides the only testimony to an unmentioned, but essential, flow of infor-

17. Andocides *On the Peace* 35.

18. E.g., see Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.17, 5.3.26.

19. Lee, *Information and Frontiers*; "Embassies as Evidence for Movement."

20. Thuc. 6.45.

21. See Thuc. 7.7.3. Nicias somehow knew of these embassies at 7.12.1. A few other examples: Thuc. 5.4.1; Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.8–9, 3.5.7, 4.7.1.

22. Thuc. 5.27–30.

mation.²³ We also find envoys sent to counter embassies sent by rival states, resulting in the dramatic rhetorical agons so loved by ancient historians, but also logically demanding expeditious information-gathering and decision-making processes.²⁴

Aside from this implicit link to intelligence, envoys served both to communicate information to foreign states and to collect it for the benefit of their own.

Collection of Information

The collection of information is and was implicit to diplomacy and no doubt was carried on casually as often as formally.²⁵ At times it was officially mandated, as in the case of the Athenians who were commissioned by their city as envoys to investigate whether the Egestaeans had the money they said they did and to ascertain the situation pertinent to a war in Sicily.²⁶ Lycon proposed to the Ten Thousand that they choose envoys and send them to Heraclea and on the basis of their reports take counsel as to whether or not to engage in extortion.²⁷ In such cases as these, the primary role of the *presbeutes* was that of information gatherer. In others, he acted more as a conduit than a collector, as when in 387 the Persian satrap Tiribazus summoned envoys from the Greek states to read them the king's terms, which they in turn reported to their respective states.²⁸

Demosthenes would have us believe that Phocian envoys were sent to Athens in 346 in the capacity of political observers: "The news [of Philocrates' decree] would have reached Phocis on the fourth day, since there were Phocian envoys in Athens, and they were interested in knowing what report these men would submit and what decree you would

23. This information flow suggests that some source available to the Lacedaemonians was privy to confidential information. For other examples of an embassy implying intelligence not otherwise indicated, see Thuc. 4.122.4, 5.37; Arrian *Anab.* 1.4.6, 1.10.2, 1.24.5, 3.24.3.

24. An example well dramatized by Thucydides was the Corinthian embassy sent to Athens to counter the claims of the Corcyran envoys (Thuc. 1.31ff.). Cf. Thuc. 6.75.3; Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.12–13; Plut. *Pelopidas* 30.1.

25. The potential scope of information available was broad—cf. Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, 166–67 and n. 1.

26. Thuc. 6.6ff.; see 6.46ff. for the story of the trick to which they fell victim. Phaeax's mission sometime earlier might have had similar, if less blatant, functions (Thuc. 5.4.1).

27. Xen. *Anab.* 6.2.5.

28. Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.32. Cf. Thuc. 4.50.1–3; Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.6ff.

adopt.”²⁹ Similarly the Athenian ambassadors in Thebes were in communication with Athens regarding the situation there, and while there is no evidence that such information was demanded of them, it is probable that it was desired. Moreover, the practice does not appear to be in any way out of the ordinary.³⁰ Indeed, when Demosthenes defined the duties of envoys, he noted first their responsibility to submit reports.³¹ They were accountable for the veracity of these, since false information precluded good judgment—and the punishment for falsehood in Athens was, apparently, death.³²

Communication of Information

Official communication by envoys was fundamentally dictated by the interests of the state imparting it. A goal or object was intrinsic to the message. When, for instance, the oligarchs usurped power in Corcyra in 427, they at once sent envoys to Athens to explain their version of recent events. Their aim was to persuade the Athenians to keep aloof from their affairs. They were unsuccessful: the Athenians arrested them as revolutionaries and deposited them on Aegina.³³ Hardly less subtle are the recurring tidings of danger borne by envoys, which were delivered in conjunction with appeals for help. Hermocrates proposed sending out envoys to inform the other cities of Sicily and southern Italy that the Athenians were a danger to them all—Thucydides need not add that Her-

29. Demosth. XIX (*On the embassy*) 59, which continued, “When the Phocians learned your policy from the proceedings of the ecclesia, received the decree of Philocrates, and were informed of the report and promises of Aeschines, their ruin was complete” (both translations are from Loeb); cf. 53. Examples of *presbeis* happening to be on hand in foreign states when important matters were debated include Thuc. 1.72.1ff., 5.30.5, 5.50.5, 6.5.33.

30. So Demosth. XVIII (*On the Crown*) 211: Demosthenes had the dispatches of Athenian *presbeis* active in Thebes read out. These, describing the Boeotian political situation, had been written in 338, while Demosthenes’ speech is dated to 330, signifying that such documents were preserved. Cf. *ibid.* 31.

31. Demosth. XIX (*On the embassy*) 4: they were responsible for reports they had made, advice they offered, observance of their instructions, and acting with integrity.

32. For the sentiment about judgment, see Demosth. XIX (*On the embassy*) 183; for allegations of false reports, 12, 174; for the death penalty, 279, in which Demosthenes recalls an old decree against Epicrates and others, who were convicted and executed for not reporting the truth in the *boulé*.

33. Thuc. 3.71–72. Similar intentions were attributed to envoys at Thuc. 5.82.4 and Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.39–40.

mocrates was thereby requesting aid against Athens.³⁴ Demosthenes time and again badgered the *ekklesia* to send *presbeiai* to tell of Athenian resolve and incite action against Philip.³⁵ Conversely, appeals for aid and alliance almost certainly (even when not explicitly) contained some sort of information about the situation that necessitated the request.³⁶

On occasion envoys were sent in response to specific inquiries. An Athenian decree from the fourth century preserves a record of three envoys selected to go to Hebryzelmes, the king of the Odrysians, to respond to questions concerning their political and military disposition.³⁷ One wonders just how forthright the envoys would be. While information furnished by envoys as representatives of their states was valuable, it was liable to manipulation. The Corinthians charged the Lacedaemonians with ignorance of affairs beyond the Peloponnese and, more to the point, with suspecting the party bringing information (here, the Corinthians) as much as the party accused (the Athenians).³⁸ But were not the Spartans quite right to do so? When Cleomenes I rejected the overtures of Aristagoras, who was trying to involve the Spartans in the Ionian revolt, he realized that the interests of Aristagoras did not coincide with those of his people.³⁹ The Lacedaemonians of the early fourth century were perhaps less prudent or more ambitious than the mad Cleomenes of the early fifth, when envoys from Ionian cities told them that Tissaphernes would make the Greek cities independent if he was forced to deal with an army in Asia.⁴⁰ In the event, it proved not so simple.

The communication of information by envoys was nearly always verbal. There are a few instances in which they acted much like couriers, bearing messages in the form of letters rather than delivering them

34. Thuc. 6.34.2.

35. E.g., Demosth. II (2 *Olynth.*) 11, VIII (*On the Chersonese*) 34–35, XIV (*On the navy boards*) 12.

36. Requests for aid: e.g., Thuc. 1.24.6, 3.4.5, 3.5.4, 3.92, 3.100.1, 6.73.2, 8.5.1, 8.32.1; Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.28, 3.1.3, 3.5.4, 4.6.1, 5.2.11, 6.1.1. Requests for alliance: Thuc. 2.7.1–3, 5.80.2, 8.5.4, 8.6.1; Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.24. Cf. Thuc. 7.2.2–3, 25.1; Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.12–13.

37. IG II² 31 (Harding no. 29; dated to 386/5).

38. Thuc. 1.69.2. This passage has been brought forward to support notions that the Lacedaemonians were ignorant of the world beyond southern Greece (see, e.g., D. Lewis 29–30; Starr 3 [but cf. 44]). It is far more likely that it is a rhetorical ploy.

39. Hdt. 5.49–51; the Athenians were more ambitious or more gullible, or perhaps Aristagoras was more wily in his presentation after his experience in Sparta.

40. Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.12.

orally.⁴¹ It is possible that they differed from *angeloi* in such cases only in that they were perceived as official representatives of their states. It should be noted that the terms *presbeutes* and *angelos* can, at various times, be applied to the same individuals and that the verb ἀγγέλλω is not infrequently used in connection with envoys. The distinction, then, is by no means absolute.⁴²

While the examples of communication of information by envoys on the whole reflect action in an official capacity, it is probable, indeed almost inevitable, that they imparted information informally—perhaps in casual conversation with officials while receiving hospitality at such institutions as the *prutaneion* or perhaps with *proxenoi* or *xenoi*.⁴³ A fair proportion of envoys can be recognized as individuals of some stature, and these enjoyed connections of *xenia* or *philia* with citizens of other states, which have been known to transcend civic ties of fealty. Indeed, Aeneas Tacticus recommended that contact with envoys be limited to curb opportunities for treachery and gathering information.⁴⁴

Heralds (*Kerukes*)

Kerukes held a socially recognized office, which is attested as early as the Mycenaean era, certainly well defined by the time of Homer, and more or less consistent throughout the classical era.⁴⁵ The office underwent some modifications during this time, among them the adoption of the task of securing the bodies of the fallen when the battlefield was in hostile hands; this first appears in Thucydides.⁴⁶ The possession of *adeia* afforded her-

41. E.g., Arrian *Anab.* 2.14.1.

42. A similar phenomenon occurs in sources treating heralds (who are discussed in the next section); the same individuals are called alternately *kerukes* and *angeloi* in passages in Herodotus (1.81–82) and Xenophon (*Hell.* 6.4.20). 'Αγγέλλω is likewise used for them at times (e.g., Hdt. 8.29, 9.21; Thuc. 1.29.2, 4.38; Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.32; Tod nos. 66, 67, 74).

43. See, e.g., Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.6–8, 5.4.22; Isoc. *Epist.* VI (*To the sons of Jason*) 1; Demosth. XXIV (*Against Timocrates*) 202. Cf. Adcock and Mosley 154–55. Note the often cited Plut. *Alex.* 5.1–3, in which the young Alexander was said to have questioned Persian envoys as to the length and nature of the journey into the interior, about the character of the Persian king (especially in regard to warfare), and about the bravery and power of the Persians. See also Aristoph. *Acharn.* 647, for a joking reference to the Persian king exacting information from Lacedaemonian envoys.

44. Aen. Tact. 10.11. Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 2.3.8, 2.3.21; Aeschin. III (*Against Ctes.*) 250.

45. For Mycenaean attestation, see Ventris and Chadwick no. 123 from Pylos.

46. Adcock and Mosley 152–53. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* they can be found summoning and refereeing gatherings and contests (e.g., *Il.* 2.50–52; *Od.* 2.6, 8; cf. Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.47, 4.5.7, 5.7.3); seeing to sacrifices, prayers, oaths, and meals (e.g., *Il.* 3.116–18; *Od.*

alds freedom to operate during time of war. It was considered an act of impiety to harm a herald, and this religious protection was augmented by a general recognition that some lines of communication must be kept open even in war.⁴⁷ A staff, called a *kerukeion*, was the sign of their office and was a tangible reminder that they were under the care and auspices of Hermes.⁴⁸

In some societies, families (such as the Talthybiadae in Sparta and the Eumolpides and Kerykes in Athens) had rights to the office of herald. In Athenian practice, the effect of inheritance seems to have applied more to heralds appointed to the performance of religious functions than to those engaged in matters of state. In Athens, heralds were elected and dispatched—at least for diplomatic tasks—by the *boulé*. The messages they were to communicate, and even the routes they were to travel, were fixed by the *demos* and its officials.⁴⁹ In Spartan practice (at least according to

20.276; cf. Hdt. 6.11; Thuc. 6.32.1, 8.53.2; Dinarchus *Against Aristogeiton* 14; Tod nos. 34, 144, 146; fetching people and items (e.g., *Il.* 1.320–48; *Od.* 8.47); and going on embassies (e.g., *Il.* 7.381–417; *Od.* 10.59).

Some examples of the recovery of corpses are Thuc. 4.38.4, 4.44.6, 4.97–101. Cf. Thuc. 4.114; Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.21, 6.4.15.

47. An anecdote in Herodotus (7.133ff.) vividly illustrates the powerful impact the killing of *kerukes* had, whether in fact or propaganda: heralds were sent by Darius I to the Greek states to collect earth and water; in Sparta, they were thrown down a well. After that, the Lacedaemonians were unable to find good omens in their sacrifices and attributed this to the wrath of Talthybius, who was the herald to Agamemnon and patron hero of heralds at Sparta. The Lacedaemonians called for volunteers to go to Persia and be killed to appease Talthybius: both Sperthias son of Aneristus and Bulis son of Nicolaus volunteered. Xerxes, upon their arrival, is said to have spared them, saying that he would not himself transgress the laws of all men as the Lacedaemonians had done.

The sons of Sperthias and Bulis were slain by the Athenians when arrested on a diplomatic mission in the Peloponnesian War. Herodotus was careful to call the sons *angeloi*, to absolve the Athenians (who also killed the Persian heralds but offered no restitution) from the shame of impiety; I argue that he deliberately misrepresented the situation to cast a better light on Athens, since he elsewhere (Hdt. 6.60; cf. 7.134) noted that the office of herald was hereditary at Sparta and that the fathers of these men were acknowledged by Xerxes to be at least de facto heralds (Hdt. 7.137). In comparison, the Athenians down to the time of Pausanias held the Megarians culpable for the execution of their herald Anthemocritus in the fifth century B.C. (Plut. *Per.* 30.2–3; Paus. 1.36.3); as Strepsiades said in the *Clouds* (484–85), ἦν μὲν γ' ὀφείλῃται τι μοι, μνήμων πάνυ, ἐὰν δ' ὀφείλω χέλῃτιος, ἐπιλήρῃων πάνυ.

Other violations of *adeia* are found in Tod no. 137 (arrest), *Epist. Phil.* 2 (kidnapping and imprisonment), and Q. Curtius 4.2.15 (death); cf. Hdt. 3.13 (death). Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 5.7.3ff. for pragmatic reasons for preserving heralds inviolate.

48. See, e.g., Dinarchus *Against Demosthenes* 18; cf. Hdt. 9.100.

49. See, e.g., Tod nos. 66 (= IG I³ 71; Meiggs and Lewis 69; Fornara 136), 67. *Taktai* wrote down their routes; the *demos* and *prytanes* determined what they would say. Their

Herodotus) both spheres were elemental to the inherited office.⁵⁰ This suggests a potential for the existence of men experienced in diplomacy and hence able to recognize more subtle forms of information pertinent to the conduct of foreign policy. Heralds operating in military contexts seem to have been closely attached to the commander, most likely for convenience in passing on orders. More generally, however, it seems that any individual with a makeshift herald's wand could suffice in a pinch for secular functions. A ready example is the Argive selected for his swiftness to serve as a herald to Mardonius, to warn him that a Lacedaemonian army was heading north and that the Argives would not be able to stop it.⁵¹ Here celerity rather than family or professionalism was the determining criterion, and the Argive was appointed herald for the sake of *adeia*, since he had to travel through hostile (Corinthian and Megarian) territory to reach the Persians.⁵² Even more interesting, for the purposes of this study, is the account in Xenophon of a visit to the Ten Thousand by emissaries of the Persian king and Tissaphernes.⁵³ The members of the embassy were all referred to as *kerukes* and included a single Greek among the barbarians. This Greek was a certain Phalinus, who was honored by Tissaphernes and professed to be an expert in tactics. The reason for his presence undoubtedly lay in these qualifications: his expertise would enable him to evaluate the fighting potential of the Greek mercenaries. Given the situation, it is perhaps a measure of Clearchus' desperation that he asked Phalinus for advice on the grounds that he was a fellow Hellene.

Like envoys, *kerukes* most often served in an official capacity to convey information and, occasionally, to collect it.

pay was furnished by the *kolakretai* (the amount was not here recorded; Tod no. 169 (dated ca. 346–344) included a payment of two drachmas for a herald, but the duration and type of duty performed was not specified).

50. Hdt. 7.134.

51. Hdt. 9.12.

52. In another instance when a herald was used as a courier, however, the route was entirely through friendly territory (Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.32). *Dromokerukes* ("runner-heralds") were found in situations in which speed was of the essence, including an example in which they are described as couriers between *skopoi* and commanders. See Shepherd 216n on Polyaeus 5.26.1, who added, without providing corroboration, "The δρομκήρυκες were not always employed: but only when the urgency of affairs required the continued attention of the σκοποί."

53. Xen. *Anab.* 2.1.7.

Collection of Information

Greek heralds do not appear to have been bound by a code of silence regarding what they had seen while performing their duties, unlike their counterparts of the medieval era.⁵⁴ Rather, from the first they were at least ancillary to collection. When Odysseus beached his ship on the shores of yet another land, Homer twice sang the following lines:

then I sent forth companions to go and inquire
 what men, eaters of bread, might live in this land,
 choosing two men, and sent with them a third, a herald.⁵⁵

The inclusion of a herald in a miniature “type-scene” of a reconnaissance of unknown territory suggests that this might have been thought sensible and normal practice during the eighth century. Later works contain vestiges of an association of heralds and scouts: the horseman who was sent by the Athenians to have a look at what their Lacedaemonian allies were up to at Plataea was called a *kerux*, and the use of herald’s boats (*ker-kouroi*) by Alexander’s scouts is attested in Arrian.⁵⁶

Due to their particular office, heralds had opportunities to collect

54. For medieval heralds, see Allmand (in Neilson and McKercher) 34, 40, and 44 n. 9.

55. *Od.* 9.88–90, 10.100–102. Eustathius (1.171) reasoned that the heralds were present because of the immunity (διὰ ἄκυλον) that they conferred on the mission.

56. *Hdt.* 9.54: ἱππέα ὀψόμενον = 55: ὁ κῆρυξ; Arrian *Anab.* 6.19.3, 6.20.3. Cf. *Thuc.* 6.50.4–5: men sent on triremes to scout out (κατασκέψασθαι) the harbor of Syracuse also made a proclamation (κηρύξαι) to the Leontines in that city. There is a mythical account of a herald named Leos, of Agnus, who betrayed to Theseus the plans of the Pallantidae. Theseus believed his story, contrived an ambush, and slaughtered them (*Plut. Theseus* 13.2–3).

Medon, who was a herald in the house of Odysseus, served as an agent of sorts: he overheard the suitors plotting against Telemachus and communicated their intent to Penelope (*Od.* 4.675–714). He was not, so far as the text conveys, assumed to be a covert agent by virtue of his office, but rather his office seems to have been accidental to these actions. In fact, his allegiance was also somewhat ambivalent—when Penelope received him, she thought him sent by the suitors (*Od.* 4.694), with whom he was on friendly terms (*Od.* 17.172–73). The ambivalence is preserved through to the end of the epic, when he spoke in an assembly, telling the suitors’ families that Odysseus and Telemachus killed their relatives with the aid of a god (*Od.* 24.442–49), at which point some armed for war. Telemachus numbered him among the suitors, along with the minstrel (Phemius) and two squires, when relating the inhabitants of his household to Odysseus (*Od.* 16.252). In the end he was spared at Telemachus’ request (*Od.* 22.355–72). It is perhaps worthy of note that he and the spy Dolon appealed for their lives in similar words (*Od.* 22.371 = *Il.* 10.400); in Medon’s case the supplication was honored.

information when arranging for the return of the dead. There is a curious account in Thucydides of an Ambraciot *kerux* who came to request the bodies of those who had perished during a disastrous retreat two days earlier. Some Acarnanian thought he had come for those who had perished at Idomene the preceding day and gave over far more arms than the herald expected. In the ensuing dialogue, worthy of a tragedy, misapprehension gave way to realization, and the herald learned that his people had suffered two disasters rather than one. Such was his distress and urgency to report back that he left before concluding arrangements for the dead.⁵⁷ Not all news was so bad: the morning after a night escape attempt from besieged Plataea, a herald was sent out by the remaining Plataeans, who thought that those trying to escape had failed and been killed; he returned to tell them that there were no dead to be recovered: the attempt had succeeded.⁵⁸

Aside from the preceding examples, the role of heralds in gathering information is not well attested. Further evidence is inferential: when the Spartiate herald Melesippus was refused admittance by Athenians, he was escorted back on his route to prevent him from contacting anybody.⁵⁹ This provision might have been calculated to insult or perhaps to prevent the populace from learning anything that Melesippus had to say. A further possibility, in no way precluding the other two, is that the purpose of isolating Melesippus was to prevent him from learning anything of Athens' preparations for war.⁶⁰ It may be presumed that *kerukes*, like envoys, had the opportunity to learn information from observation and conversation. Clearchus was aware that Persian heralds would form impressions of his men when they were admitted into his camp, so he kept the heralds out until his troops were drawn up in an ordered parade.⁶¹ It is not impossible that he had been reading Herodotus, who

57. Thuc. 3.113. Cf. the ignorance of the Athenian *kerux* of the fall of Delium (Thuc. 4.97ff.).

58. Thuc. 3.24.

59. Thuc. 2.12.1–2.

60. *Kerukes* and envoys were at times refused admission by warring cities (Thuc. 5.80, 8.75.2; cf. Thuc. 4.38.3; Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.21; Xen. *Anab.* 3.3.5; Polyaeus 2.18.1); this refusal was probably more a form of protest or insult than a security measure (although one must admit that, should the Peloponnesian army be in Attica, *kerukes* and envoys going to and from Athens would have kept the Peloponnesians informed of the result of their actions on morale and about any possible Athenian countermeasures).

61. Xen. *Anab.* 2.3.1ff.

told of preparations by the besieged and starving Milesians to make their city appear well stocked when a Lydian herald entered.⁶² Exceptionally, there is a story that a herald sent by Alexander to those besieged in the citadel of Celaenae was taken to the top of a tower and told to report to his commander the strength of their fortifications that lay exposed to his eyes.⁶³

Communication of Information

Heralds conveyed information far more often than they gathered it. Within an army or city, they did so in official announcements, these being for the most part orders to troops or formal notifications to citizens and metics.⁶⁴ They served also to publish policy, demands, and decrees abroad.⁶⁵ To hostile cities or armies they announced warnings, demands, or offers, and in a few instances they made proclamations containing overtures to potential sympathizers among the enemy. Declarations of war were also among their duties.⁶⁶

All messages and announcements were delivered verbally. Sometimes (e.g., for the proclamation made from Athenian ships off the Syracusan harbor to people no doubt out of range of a bow-shot) their voices had to carry over noise and distance. For this reason heralds were chosen from

62. Hdt. 1.21–22.

63. Q. Curtius 3.1.6–7.

64. Orders to troops: e.g., Hdt. 6.77–78; Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.19, 4.5.7, 5.1.11, 7.2.22; Xen. *Anab.* 2.2.20, 3.1.36, 4.1.13, 5.2.18, 5.7.3, 6.4.14–15, 6.4.23, 6.5.3, 7.1.36; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 12.6; cf. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.9. Anderson (79) noted that when the army was in bivouac, heralds with specially trained voices were used to summon the senior officers or make announcements at moments of emergency; only exceptionally were their voices used to transmit orders on the field of battle. Notifications to citizens and metics: e.g., Tod no. 24; Thuc. 1.27.1, 3.101.1, 5.115.2; Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.9, 7.4.4; Arrian *Anab.* 5.19.6. See also S. Lewis 52ff.

65. See, e.g., Tod nos. 66, 67, 74; Hdt. 1.153, 5.70, 6.105, 8.27, 8.114; Thuc. 2.6; Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.20; Xen. *Anab.* 6.6.9; Arrian *Anab.* 4.22.6; cf. Hdt. 1.77. At Athens, two heralds were often sent to each of five (after 438, four) fixed regions (Thrace, Ionia, Caria, the Islands, and the Hellespont).

66. Warnings: e.g., Hdt. 6.123, 9.87; Thuc. 1.29.2, 2.5.5, 3.52.2, 4.30.4, 4.114, 7.3.1, 7.83.2; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.15, 2.1.7, 3.1.18; Arrian *Anab.* 4.19.3, 4.21.6, 4.27.2, 4.30.2. Overtures: e.g., Thuc. 2.2.4, 6.48.1, 6.50.4–5, 6.52.1, 7.82.1; Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.20; Diod. Sic. 17.9.5; cf. Hdt. 1.76. Overtures as a stratagem to cause dissent: Thuc. 4.68.3; Polyaeus 2.10.1. Declaration of war: e.g., Polyaeus 5.6.1. In exceptional cases, hostilities were opened without a declaration of war, to achieve surprise (e.g., Hdt. 5.81; Paus. 4.5.8).

those possessing clear, loud voices.⁶⁷ It seems a natural (if curious) consequence that heralds were rarely used for secret communication. Art may imitate reality in the contrast between a herald, who openly announced to Penelope before her handmaids (not all of whom were trustworthy) that Telemachus had returned, and Eumaeus, who did so softly.⁶⁸ There are only a few incidents in which heralds were employed for clandestine missions. One is an unlikely tale of a secret request made by Polycrates of Cambyes through a herald, another a mention of appeals made to Nicias through heralds sent by Athenian sympathizers in Syracuse.⁶⁹ The third is an account of Athenian subject cities sending heralds in secret to Brasidas, in hope of securing his aid in a revolt against Athens.⁷⁰ In the last two cases, the employment of heralds was a reasonable measure, since the communication was between people who were technically enemies.

Proxenoi

Proxenoi were men chosen by a polis to represent its interests in another state. They were selected not from the population of the state they represented (i.e., the one that conferred the honor) but rather from that of the state in which they lived (and performed their office). The practice is best illustrated by example: in a decree dated to 411, Hegelochus, a citizen of Taras, was appointed Eretrian *proxenos* at Taras by the people of Eretria. The award was given in recognition of his services to the Eretrians and was extended to his descendants. Hegelochus would henceforth have represented Eretrian interests in his native city.⁷¹

67. Epithets in the *Iliad* relating to heralds' voices include ῥήπυτα, 7.384; καλήτορα, 24.577; ἄστυβοώτην, 24.701; θεῶν ἐναλίγκος αὐδήν, 19.250; λιγυρθόγγοις, 2.50, 2.442, 23.39. Other epithets allude to wisdom (πεπνυμένα μήδεα εἰδώς, 7.278; πεπνυμένω ἄμφω, 7.276; δαίφρων, 24.325) and age (γεραίτερος, 24.149, 24.178; τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ γερόντων, 9.422; cf. Periphas 17.324–25); swiftness is also implied in some of their names, when they act as messengers or *dromokerukes* (Θωώτης, “the swift,” 12.342–43; Εὐρυβάτης, “wide-walking,” 1.320, 2.184, etc.).

Demosthenes (XIX [*On the embassy*] 338) noted that if it was necessary to have a *dokimasia* for a herald, one must ensure that he had a good voice. S. Lattimore has brought to my attention the inclusion of contests for heralds in the Olympic games, beginning in 396.

68. *Od.* 16.333–41.

69. *Hdt.* 3.44; *Thuc.* 6.48.2.

70. *Thuc.* 4.108.3; cf. *Thuc.* 8.44.1, 8.70.2.

71. *Tod* no. 82. Inheritance or beneficence was the normal way one gained this office. Sparta was, as usual, the exception. Herodotus (6.57) said that the Spartan kings appointed *proxenoi* (presumably at the time he was writing) from those of the citizens willing to serve as such. How and Wells (86 ad loc.) thought that the kings appointed these only for those countries without ordinary representatives at Sparta to fulfill honorary functions.

Proxenia accorded a certain status to its recipients (many of whom had positions of influence already). It appears that this status may have declined—coincidentally with the role of *proxenoi* in intelligence—by the late fourth century, although a wider sample of evidence from earlier periods is needed to establish this more firmly.⁷² The office was not limited to Hellenes, as is indicated by a fourth-century Boeotian decree conferring *proxenia* on a Carthaginian, Nabas son of Axioubos.⁷³

Proxenoi seem to have operated fairly independently, but there were some controls. A provision of the treaty between Oeanthea and Chaleum reads, “regarding the *proxenos*—if he should act as a *proxenos* falsely, let him pay a double fine.”⁷⁴ It is by no means clear what type of malfeasance is referred to here. Espionage in some states constituted *prodosia*, or betrayal, and hence called for the death penalty rather than a fine. It is possible that misrepresentation of information could fall under the charge of serving falsely—especially given the choice of the word *ψευδέα*, which denotes deceit—and one could argue that such a misdemeanor would call for a fine rather than death, since it is so close to misinterpretation, which can be quite unintentional. Such musings are, of course, speculation; but the inscription indicates that the activities of *proxenoi* could be monitored.

Although the institution of *proxenia* dates back to the seventh century, explicit examples of their participation in intelligence begin in the fifth and end in the mid-fourth century.⁷⁵ The first involves Alexander son of Amyntas, king of Macedon, who served under Mardonius in the Persian expeditionary force of 480–79. At the same time, according to Herodotus, Alexander held the titles of benefactor and *proxenos* of the Athenians, who were among the most bitter foes of his Persian over-

72. For the enhanced status conferred by the office, see Adcock and Mosley 161; Meiggs, *Athenian Empire*, 216 (although the latter’s notion that *proxenoi* were motivated to give information for the sake of commemoration on a *stèle* in Athens has no foundation in any source to which I have had access). Gerolymatos (7–8, 10–11, 97–98) testified to a decline in status in the fourth century (and, interestingly, a shift in loyalty from state to individual patron). Passages in Dinarchus (*Against Demosthenes* 45) and Hyperides (*Against Demades* 76)—who charged that base individuals were being appointed *proxenoi* as a result of political machinations—can be read to bolster or to weaken his argument. They may indicate that such a practice was becoming widespread, but equally they illustrate a concern lest an office—one presumably still valued—be given to someone unworthy of it.

73. Harding 48 (IG VII.2407).

74. Tod no. 34 (which he dates to ca. 450), lines 8–9.

75. The earliest attestation is found in a cenotaph, dated to ca. 625–600, of a Corcyran *proxenos* at Oianthea in Ozolian Locris (Meiggs and Lewis no. 4; cf. Meiggs, *Athenian Empire*, 215).

lords.⁷⁶ Herodotus narrated a story in which Mardonius sought to exploit Alexander's position by employing him as an emissary (*angelos*) to the Athenians, hoping that the Macedonian could convince them to defect to the Persian side. His hopes were unfulfilled, and Alexander returned with rebukes of faithlessness stinging his ears. Later, at Plataea, he rode out from the Persian camp to the Athenian lines without the knowledge or consent of Mardonius and hailed the Athenian sentries, asking for *strategoi* by name.⁷⁷ Some of the pickets went back to fetch their commanders, while most stayed with Alexander. When the *strategoi* arrived, Alexander first appealed for secrecy from all save Pausanias and then described his motive (philhellenism) for trying to help the Greek cause. He went on to warn the *strategoi* that the Persians would attack at dawn, and he outlined Mardonius' logistic situation. He finally asked them to remember his service after the war and only then gave them his name.⁷⁸

Alexander's information was taken seriously by the *strategoi* and was passed on to Pausanias, who proceeded to alter his dispositions; but the last-minute shuffling of ranks resulting from his warnings does not appear to have put the Greeks in a better situation when battle was joined. Mardonius did not attack in full force at dawn, as Alexander had said, but it must be acknowledged that Alexander allowed for a delay when describing Mardonius' situation, and the information seems to have been more or less accurate.

The story of Alexander has a Themistoclean feel to it (the necessity of forcing an engagement, the secret communication by night with the enemy, the desire on the part of the communicant to assure a reward or refuge with the enemy, etc.), and one hesitates to put a great deal of confidence in it. However, it seems to be, if not real, realistic and thereby instructive. Implicit in it are some questions: was there an arrangement between Alexander and the Athenians for providing information, and was the provision of information intrinsic to his role as *proxenos*? An analysis of the events suggests that this was not the case.

Alexander's arrival at the portion of the line held by the Athenians can, it must be acknowledged, be better ascribed to intent than accident

76. Hdt. 8.136, 143. Some modern scholars have argued that Alexander did not receive the *proxenia* until after the battle of Plataea.

77. In Plutarch's account (*Arist.* 15), he asked for Aristides.

78. Hdt. 9.44ff.

since, as *proxenos*, he had a degree of relationship with them and might expect more serious consideration than he might have gained had he rode up to the Lacedaemonian contingent. To argue that his knowledge of the names of the *strategoï* necessitated a prior arrangement would be reasonable but hardly conclusive, since he might have learned them on his first embassy or perhaps from captives, deserters, or other sources. Also, he was apparently not recognized by the *strategoï*, and indeed he withheld his name until he was ready to depart. It is further interesting to note that the Athenian pickets received Alexander in a manner similar to the way they handled deserters or defectors—with caution, as befitted the situation. It appears that no special arrangements—such as devices or passwords—had been made for his admittance, which again suggests that Alexander's actions were not based on a prior arrangement. Moreover, the necessity of explaining his motives to the *strategoï*, as was typical with deserters and traitors, suggests that during this time period *proxenoi* were not expected to act as information-gathering agents.⁷⁹ Finally, Herodotus felt a need to explain Alexander's motives, which suggests that a connection between *proxenoi* and intelligence was not widely known before the Peloponnesian War. Thus it is probable that Alexander's *proxenia* was incidental, rather than essential, to his intelligence role, and it does not serve as an explanation for his actions or lead one to consider him an Athenian agent by virtue of being a *proxenos*.

A half century after Plataea, it begins to be possible to argue that gathering information was an intrinsic function of *proxenoi*.⁸⁰ When Mytilene prepared to revolt against Athens in 428, the Athenian *proxenoi* in Mytilene, some Mytilenaeans motivated by political dissatisfaction, and some citizens of hostile poleis brought news to Athens of Mytilene's

79. Alcibiades' circumstances offer a good parallel (Thuc. 6.89.2; cf. Thuc. 5.43.2 and Gomme 4:49–50 ad loc.; Plut *Alc.* 14.1). It would be most difficult to argue that he was passing on information to the Lacedaemonians as an aspiring (or better, lapsed) *proxenos* before he jumped ship in Sicily and sought refuge at Sparta. Once there he took pains to validate his actions, including a neat rhetorical dance about the issue of his ancestral *proxenia*. Surely Alcibiades was looking out for Alcibiades at all times, and the *proxenia* provided an entrée, rather than a motive, for giving information and advice to the Lacedaemonians.

80. There are no explicit examples of intelligence activity in the interval. Meiggs (*Athenian Empire*, 216), however, suggested a possibility that Sophocles derived information on the Samian revolt through an Athenian *proxenos* on Lesbos. He cited (216 n. 3) Ion of Chios (*FGrHist* 392F6 in Athen. 13.603f., Meiggs' translation): "When Sophocles during the Samian revolt was dispatched from the main fleet to bring reinforcements from Lesbos he dined with Hermesilaus, a *proxenos* of Athens."

intentions.⁸¹ The Athenians did not at first lend credence to their reports, wishing to believe what was pleasant rather than what was true. But they eventually took them seriously enough to send envoys, who tried unsuccessfully to curb the revolt.

In this instance, *proxenoi* imparted information of serious consequence to the integrity of the Athenian Empire. Thucydides did not feel the need to explain their motives, as he did for the other citizens of Mytilene and its enemies; this suggests that the explanation is implicit in their role as *proxenoi*.⁸² Within an empire, and to some extent in other contexts, *proxenoi* tended to have a coincidence of interest between self-preservation and the authority and power of their patron state, which could therefore expect to be informed by the *proxenoi*, as in the case of Athens and Mytilene, of potential threats or revolts. Should a faction or power hostile to their patron city gain control, the *proxenoi* faced a real danger from their fellow citizens. The would-be Athenian *proxenos* on Corcyra met a bloody end, after protracted infighting among rival factions.⁸³ A decree mentions the slaying of the Athenian *proxenos* on Iulis by a rebelling faction, “contrary to the decrees of the Athenian *demos* and in transgression of oaths and agreement.”⁸⁴ This last example shows that patron states attempted to protect *proxenoi* operating on their behalf, and it hence further complicates the question of allegiance.⁸⁵ *Proxenoi* looked for political and military assistance as well as protec-

81. Thuc. 3.2.3. Thucydides noted that the *proxenos* later repented of his action and embarked on an unsuccessful embassy on behalf of the Mytilenaeans. At 3.4.4 the repentant informer is referred to as διαβαλλόντων ἕνα; at 3.5.1 he is specified as a *proxenos*.

82. Aristotle (*Politics* 1304a9), linking great consequences to minor causes, mentioned only one informer, Dexandrus, the *proxenos* of the Athenians who was piqued at not getting the desired brides for his sons. Gomme (2:252–53 on Thuc. 3.2.3) argued convincingly that Aristotle’s account is not entirely reliable. Perhaps Aristotle’s point of view was influenced by the decline of the role of *proxenoi* in intelligence in the mid-fourth century, so that he found it necessary to seek a motive elsewhere.

83. Thuc. 3.70.3ff. Peithias, an *etheloproxenos* of Athens and a leader of the *demos*, was brought to trial on the grounds that he was serving Athenian interests at the expense of his native Corcyra. Upon his acquittal, he brought counter-charges against his prosecutors, who grew desperate and killed him. Gomme (2:360 ad loc.) defined the term *etheloproxenos* as “presumably a *proxenos* not recognized officially by the state (here Athens) for whom he worked: *self-appointed*; or perhaps, as the scholiast says, not confirmed by his own city.” Cf. Thuc. 6.89.2.

84. Tod no. 142 (dated to 362), lines 37–41; cf. Meiggs, *Athenian Empire*, 218.

85. Adcock and Mosley 162, citing IG II² 33, 111. Cf. also IG I³ 19; Arrian *Anab.* 1.9.10. Meiggs (“Athenian Imperialism,” *passim*, citing IG I² 27.13–17 and 28.11–13) argued that protection may have been granted in special cases, but it was not the general rule.

tion, as seems to be the case of Polydamas, a prominent man in Pharsalus, who came to Sparta to brief the Lacedaemonians on the rise and imminent threat of Jason of Pherae in Thessaly. His speech is prefaced with a reminder of his office and is laced with terms of obligation, and Xenophon may be correct to ascribe his motive to honor, but a cynic would argue that he was only appealing for military backing.⁸⁶ *Proxenoí* were also vulnerable to spillover in conflicts between their patron state and its rivals, or so it seems in Demosthenes' accusation that Philip killed the Athenian *proxenos* of Carystus and refused to hand over his corpse for burial to the envoys sent by Athens to recover it.⁸⁷

It has been noted that the flow of information from the *proxenoí* to their patron cities was, whether formally or not, one of their duties. Intrinsic to the role of the *proxenos* was contact with diplomats and officials from his patron state. This could entail an informal briefing on how matters stood in his native city, as we see the *episkopos* in the *Birds* apparently wishing to check in with the local *proxenos* before carrying out his duties.⁸⁸ But a gap remains between this practice and Gerolymatos' theory that "the title of *proxenos* was at times given to certain individuals in exchange for the past, present, or future conduct of intelligence work."⁸⁹ This gap is to some extent bridged by an inscription that reads as follows:

Cephalus proposed: let the other matters be as was decided by the *boulé*, but also record Phanocritus the Parian as *proxenos* and benefactor, him and his descendants, on a stone *stele*, and let the secretary of the *boulé* place it on the acropolis, since Phanocritus gave information to the *strategoí* about a naval expedition; if the *strategoí* had believed him, the enemy triremes would have been

86. Xen. *Hell.* 6.1.2ff. Westlake (*Thessaly*, 76–81, esp. 78) suggested that Polydamas' actions were influenced more by a dependency on Sparta for his position than by the *proxenia*. He further referred (77 n. 3) to Tropea's notion (*Giasone il tago della Tessaglia* [Messina, 1898] n.p.) that Polydamas was in fact a secret agent. Westlake did not seem to take Tropea's idea seriously; neither can I, since such an interpretation, while not demonstrably false, is unnecessary given the relationship as described by Xenophon, or conjectured by Westlake.

87. Demosth. VII (*On Halonnesus*) 38.

88. Aristoph. *Birds* 1021ff. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.6, 5.4.22. Alcibiades' trick on Lacedaemonian ambassadors during the Peace of Nicias (Thuc. 5.45.2) seems to have been loosely based on such a practice.

89. Gerolymatos, *Espionage*, 5.

taken. For these deeds accord him *proxenia* and the status of benefactor and invite him to hospitality at the *prutaneion* tomorrow.⁹⁰

That this award of *proxenia* was based on the giving of information is quite clear; it is less clear whether the information given was merely one of the many types of benefaction or whether it was a qualification pertinent to the role to be assumed.⁹¹ Given the lack of solid evidence for the latter possibility, the former seems preferable.

Information did not always flow in one direction. Because of their continued and intimate contacts with their patron state, *proxenoi* were perceived to be experts on the affairs of that state. Their expertise was called on when formulating policy, as is illustrated by the role of Demosthenes with Thebes and Nicias with Syracuse. It should also be noted that *proxenoi* did not always act in the interests of their patron state. Timesitheus, *proxenos* of the Molossians at Trapezuntum, used his knowledge of Molossian affairs to the advantage of the Ten Thousand. When the Ten Thousand reached the Molossian border, they sent Timesitheus ahead to ask whether they should pass as friend or foe. The Molossians replied, "Neither." Timesitheus thereupon informed the Ten Thousand that the Molossians were divided into factions and that they would be well advised to exploit the division by allying with another faction against

90. Tod no. 116 (which he dates to ca. 386), lines 6ff.

91. Other examples of benefaction leading to an award of *proxenia* include the provision of wood and timber (Tod no. 91: Athens, to Archelaus, king of Macedon, 407–406); hospitality given to envoys (Tod no. 139: Athens, to Strato, king of Sidon, ca. 367); intercession and negotiation on the polis' behalf (Tod no. 148: Ilium, to (ironically) Menelaus, an Athenian envoy, ca. 359); an interest-free loan, the ransom of prisoners, and general good rule (Tod no. 152: Arcesine, to Androtion, its Athenian governor, 357–356); the ransom of citizens captured by pirates (Tod no. 170: Athens, to Cleomis, tyrant of Methymna).

Gerolymatos' argument for the recruitment of *proxenoi* for future intelligence activity rests in part on circumstances that might be favorable to intelligence activity and in part on the examples of Alexander son of Amyntas and Nymphodorus son of Pythes. Nymphodorus was the brother-in-law of Sitalces, king of Thrace. The Athenians made him their *proxenos* in Abdera even though he had been their enemy in the past. They summoned him to Athens and asked him to win over Sitalces as an ally, which he did (Thuc. 2.29). At a later date, he betrayed Spartan envoys passing through Thrace and handed them over to the Athenians (Hdt. 7.137). Nymphodorus was not necessarily acting in an intelligence capacity here, except insofar as the Spartans he seized might have been questioned at Athens. In any case, he was recruited to act on Athens' behalf with regards to diplomacy rather than information gathering.

those who had refused them passage. The Greeks did so, and were able to continue their trek homeward.⁹²

In general, the Greeks were alive to the need to suspect the allegiance of *proxenoi*. When the Ten Thousand were debating their course homeward along the coast, Hecatonymus, the Cotyoran *proxenos* at Sinope, gave the Greeks information tailored to dissuade them from a land march to Sinope. The Ten Thousand suspected him of having his own motives for keeping them out of Cotyoran territory, on the grounds of his allegiance. They did, however, follow his advice and went by sea.⁹³

Meiggs, Starr, and Gerolymatos have all recognized the intelligence potential of *proxenoi*; Gerolymatos has gone so far as to propose that they functioned as a comprehensive organization for espionage and fifth-column activities. While the evidence cannot support Gerolymatos' suspicions of espionage networks, it can fairly be claimed that this institution did afford states with agents who had a vested interest in providing timely and reliable information.

Allies, Sympathizers, and Foreign Clients

Allies most frequently provided information unbidden, motivated by goodwill or advantage, but there are a number of examples in which their advice was sought. In some cases the duty of an ally to communicate

92. Xen. *Anab.* 5.4.2. A similar story was told of Arthmius son of Pithonax, of Zelea, who was an Athenian *proxenos*. He was believed to have been sent by Artaxerxes to Greece with the intent of conveying gold to the Peloponnese; the gold was to instigate a war against Athens to distract the Athenians from their intervention in Egypt. A *stele* was erected on the acropolis condemning him and his descendants (Dinarchus *Against Aristogeiton* 24–25; Demosth. IX [3 *Phil.*] 42, XIX [*On the embassy*] 271; Plut. *Them.* 6.3; cf. Thuc. 1.109; Diod. Sic. 11.74–75; Aeschines III [*Against Ctes.*] 258; Aristides 2.287 and scholion). This example indicates intelligence activity indirectly—how did the Athenians know of his mission? As an aside, despite the orators' protestations that the Athenians performed a general service to all Greeks by condemning Arthmius, they were only too glad to have the Rhodian Timocrates try to stir up war against the Lacedaemonians on Tithraustes' behalf (Paus. 3.9.8).

Yet another, if less glamorous, example is Nicias, a Cretan from Gortys and an Athenian *proxenos*, who persuaded the Athenians to sail against Cydonia in Crete, promising to bring Cydonia over to their side, but in fact acting on behalf of another people, the Polichnitans, who were hostile to Cydonia. Nicias thereby wasted Athenian time and resources on a fruitless endeavor and prevented a timely reinforcement of Phormio (Thuc. 2.85).

93. Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.7ff.

information was written in stone. A fair number of fourth-century alliance treaties contained clauses that required one party to notify the other when assistance was needed.⁹⁴ Other treaties included provisions for informing one party of economic activity, as did that between Amyntas of Macedon and the Chalcidians, which mandated that the Chalcidians notify Amyntas before exporting timber.⁹⁵ At least some of the subject “allies” of the Athenian empire were required to report signs of insurrection.⁹⁶ Those soliciting alliance on some occasions provided information as a gesture of goodwill or to incite action on their behalf.

More typically, however, allies furnished information on their own initiative. A passage in Arrian tells of Langarus, king of the Agrianians, who accompanied Alexander the Great when the Macedonian was campaigning in his vicinity. When Alexander learned from messengers that the Autariates planned to attack him as he marched, he made inquiries about the nature and numbers of these people. Langarus learned of Alexander’s efforts, approached him, and gave him the information he wanted, adding that the Autariates were unwarlike. He further promised the Macedonian that he would keep them busy so that Alexander could turn his attention to the problems posed by the rebels Clitus and Glaucias. Alexander rewarded him with honor and gifts and promised a marriage alliance, but Langarus died soon after.⁹⁷ There are some noteworthy points here. First, Alexander knew nothing of a people who inhabited an area bordering his line of march, who apparently lived near the Maedi (against whom he had earlier campaigned) and the Agrianians (who had served in his forces).⁹⁸ Second, the Autariates apparently knew of Alexander’s movements, perhaps as a result of survivors from his battles to the north, deserters traveling south toward Pella, or captives taken in skirmishes. Third, Alexander’s immediate reaction to the threat was to seek to learn more about it. Fourth, Alexander’s efforts to get information did not go unnoticed by his ally. While it is possible, it is not probable that Alexander would let news of the threat spread unchecked about the camp, and a public appeal to his soldiers for information on the

94. E.g., Tod nos. 101, 102, 124, 127, 136; cf. Adcock and Mosley 192–93.

95. Tod no. 111 (ca. 393).

96. Fornara nos. 102 (Eretria) and 103 (Chalcis).

97. Arrian *Anab.* 1.5.2ff. For other examples of subjects or allies providing information on local conditions, see Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.2–28, Xen. *Cyr.* 5.2.23; Q. Curtius 9.2.5–6.

98. In Bosworth, *Commentary*, cf. the map facing 52, and see 66 ad loc.

Autariates would have sparked uneasy rumors. It is more probable that Langarus came in response to an appeal circulated among the commanders of northern contingents. In some cases, a person would have to know enough about his ally to know what sort of information he needed—Periander, for instance, had to know that Miletus was besieged by Alyattes to have any inclination to send news of the Lydian's consultation of Delphi to the Milesians.⁹⁹ Fifth and finally, Langarus offered the information freely, and he was rewarded. One could argue that the reward was more for his promise than for his information, but a gift of information was often reciprocated by other gifts.

Private individuals were occasionally motivated by sympathy or *xenia* to provide information to foreign states—these might be distinguished from traitors in that they were working not necessarily to subvert their own state but to advance the interests of a personal ally. Such was the motive of Archias (hierophant of Athens) when he sent a letter to another Archias (the Spartan-backed ruler of Thebes), his *xenos* and *philos*, describing in detail the plot of Pelopidas.¹⁰⁰

In general foreign clients depended for their livelihood on remaining in the good graces of their patrons. One way to achieve this standing was to provide information. All could offer at least a rudimentary outline of the political and social structure of their native lands. Those who possessed extensive social connections, elevated status, or acute intellect and perception could also provide valuable information pertaining to policies,

99. Hdt. 1.20.

100. Plut. *Pelopidas* 10.3–4. The Theban Archias (ξένον ὄντα καὶ φίλον) received the courier bearing the letter but postponed opening it to continue with his party, and so he soon perished. It is possible that the Athenian Archias was also responsible for the earlier, more vague warnings of conspiracy (Plut. *Pelopidas* 9.3). Cf. Thuc. 4.89.1–2; Nicomachus, a Phocian from Phanotis, betrayed an Athenian plot to take Boeotia, informing the Lacedaemonians, who in turn told the Boeotians, who forestalled it.

In a few instances it is unclear whether personal or state alliances are behind the provision of information. During the Archidamian War, the Corinthians got word through Argos of an imminent Athenian offensive and so were able to bring up all their troops to the Isthmus in its defense (Thuc. 4.42.3). Thucydides' use of the phrase ἐξ Ἀργεῶν here is rather odd with προπυθόμενοι—the verb normally takes a genitive for the agent or source (LSJ s.v. πυνθάνομαι I.1, 4). One would expect τῶν Ἀργείων to be used if the information was passed on officially, so this passage might indicate individual Argives or even Corinthian metics, but such is the ambiguity of the Greek that official action cannot be precluded. Gomme presumably assumed the information derived from the government, when he noted (3:490 ad loc.) that “Argos had a foot in each camp,” citing Aristoph. *Peace* 475–77.

individuals, sentiments, political factions, military arrangements, and the like.¹⁰¹ As Macchiavelli once observed, however, the problem with exiles (and the same may apply to hostages) was that their stories were colored by their situations and that their aspirations might not coincide with what would be expedient for their patrons.¹⁰² A rather blatant example can be found in Leandrias, a Spartan exile at Thebes, who told of an old story bandied about in Laconia that one day the Spartans would be defeated at Leuctra.¹⁰³ If Diodorus was not exercising his talents in creative writing here, Leandrias must have been exercising his own poetic license. Would not every other Spartan also have heard the tale? Surely Leandrias contrived such a story to encourage the Thebans to continue the fight. For if the Thebans were victorious, he would be reinstated with their backing; if not, he was no worse off than before. This is not to say that all information available from exiles was calculated to mislead, simply that cautious use by its recipients was warranted.

Like exiles, hostages could serve as sources of information on their native land. But while Polybius learned to be a great admirer of the Romans, many hostages would have feared and resented their masters and, perhaps, their own compatriots who had evaded their unhappy fate. Their cooperation could not be taken for granted and any information they provided would have to be weighed carefully. It is also quite possible that hostages could gather information during their involuntary sojourn and use it against their patrons at a later date—as the Thebans rued the day when Philip II acquainted himself with the tactics of Epaminondas and Pelopidas. While exiles might have a similar capacity, they would not have opportunity to act on it, unless upheavals in their native state first brought them home, then pitched them against their former patrons.

101. See, e.g., [Lysias] XIV (*Against Alcibiades I*) 35; Xen. *Cyr.* 5.2.23ff. For a rather specialized service, see Thuc. 4.75 (of Samian exiles providing Peloponnesian ships with pilots). Information might go two ways if the exiles were reconciled to their former compatriots: Artabazus, a satrap of the Hellespont region, had fled to Philip II after a failed revolt (Diod. Sic. 16.52.3) and might have been of considerable use to Philip, with whom he resided, by providing information for Philip's planned campaign into Asia Minor. Eventually, however, he was pardoned by the Persian king and returned—by that time, perhaps, with much to say about Philip's plans.

102. Macchiavelli *Discorsi* 2.31.

103. Diod. Sic. 15.54.1.

Official Investigations

There was a wide range of resources available to a state to conduct investigations of private and public nature. Officials and military commanders were frequently subject to supervision or investigation by individuals or committees appointed by the state (whether constitutionally, by custom, or on an ad hoc basis). In fourth-century Athens, for example, *strategoï* were accompanied by paymasters (*tamiai*) and auditors (*exetastai*), who oversaw expenditures and verified the *strategoï*'s reports on recruitment.¹⁰⁴ The *strategoï* would undergo reviews of their performance on their return; similar procedures were established for envoys, and officials leaving office had to render accounts to appropriate bodies.¹⁰⁵ Citizens aspiring to public office were subject to preliminary reviews (*dokimasiai*) as to their fitness. Investigations (*zeteseis*) of various types (including inquiries into treachery, and hence espionage) were undertaken by such bodies as the Areopagus.¹⁰⁶ In brief, even in relatively open states such as Athens, there were institutions established to enable governments to gather information on their subjects. These might also be set up on an ad hoc basis. Examples include the obsessive inquisition into the mutilation of the herms and the parody of the Mysteries in Athens in 415, and the commission established by the people of Mylasa (in Caria) to investigate whether Manitas son of Pactyes had accomplices in his attempt to assassinate Mausolus.¹⁰⁷ Decrees might also be passed soliciting information from citizens.¹⁰⁸

Assessments of situations abroad might be undertaken by specially appointed officials, such as the Athenian *kataskopoi* sent to Pylos to establish how matters stood there in 425 or the three men sent by the Lacedaemonians to Asia Minor to check on Dercylidas and to confirm him as commander for another year.¹⁰⁹ Balcer has convincingly detailed

104. See Pritchett 2:38–39, 41.

105. *Euthunai*: Isoc. XV (*Antidosis*) 129; cf. Plut. *Phoc.* 23.4; Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 245. *Presbeis*: Demosth. X (*4 Phil.*) 82.

106. Wallace 113.

107. Andoc. *On the Mysteries* passim; Tod no. 138 (dated to 355/4). Another man, Thyssus, was found to be involved. Quintus Curtius (9.10.21) related that when Astaspes was suspected of plotting against Alexander, Alexander continued to treat him well pending investigation. Astaspes was subsequently executed (9.10.29).

108. E.g., Meiggs and Lewis 85, lines 44–47.

109. Thuc. 4.27.3–4; Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.6 (Aracus, Naubates, and Antisthenes). Cf. Hdt. 3.123ff., 4.151 (also called *kataskopoi*), 7.163–64; Thuc. 1.91.2–3 (cf. Demosth. XX [*Against Leptines*] 73.8), 4.15.1, 6.6.3; Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.8.

a relationship between *episkopoi* and *proxenoi* (both appointed by the Athenian *boulê*), which produced a network conducive to collecting information, monitoring the “allies,” and bringing word back to Athens.¹¹⁰

Oracles

Fontenrose, in assessing the characteristics of recorded oracles given at Delphi, noted that almost a quarter of extant historical responses concerned *res publicae*—questions of rulership, legislation, city foundations, interstate relations, and war.¹¹¹ How illuminating were the insights of Apollo? The extant oracles cannot answer this question, since apologists have synthesized prophecies and outcomes, not a few pronouncements were composed *post eventum*, and discredited responses are more likely to have become lost. As I cannot capably address issues of supernatural or preternatural communication, I can only endeavor to address this problem with a few observations.

Presuming that oracles were limited to temporal sources for information, their attendants would have had every incentive to have an excellent grasp of current events and issues, since their own status and livelihood depended on the oracle’s prestige. Lucian, in his story of Alexander of Abonotichus, painted a delightful portrait of what might happen when an unscrupulous con man took up the lucrative business of running an oracle. This worthy had a large staff of employees, including “investigators [*peuthenai*], oracle makers, oracle keepers, copying clerks, seal experts, and interpreters.”¹¹² He fielded a large number of agents in Rome to report what his clients were like, what questions they were going to ask, and what they particularly wanted, so that he could work out his answers in advance. He also questioned couriers about the contents of sealed messages.¹¹³

While Alexander’s story is somewhat anachronistic and is subjected to a satirical pen, it is suggestive. On a somewhat higher plane, Parke and

110. Balcer *passim*. See also Meiggs, *Athenian Empire*, 215; Gerolymatos, *Espionage*, 93–95; Losada 112. Cf. Meiggs and Lewis no. 40 (= IG I³ 14; Fornara no. 71), 46 (= IG I³ 34; Fornara no. 98).

111. Fontenrose 50, table VII–A. The proportions are somewhat higher for legendary (28.4 percent) and “quasi-historical” (43.4 percent) responses.

112. Lucian *Alexander* 23.

113. Lucian *Alexander* 37, 53ff.

Starr have noted that the temple personnel at Delphi must have had frequent contact with representatives and private individuals from many states and would thereby have insight into current events.¹¹⁴ People came from all over the Greek world not only to consult the oracle but also to attend the Pythian Games. Like the other great panhellenic festivals, the games at Delphi were protected by a divinely sanctioned truce. During the intervening years, Delphi remained open to all comers, even in time of war. One might expect intelligence activity to be intense in this milieu, in a manner analogous to Switzerland during World War II. Such a characterization can be indirectly supported by Thucydides, who mentioned that the Athenians obtained clear information on the secret negotiations between the Chians and Lacedaemonians while participating in the Isthmian games.¹¹⁵ More to the point, Herodotus reports that Periander's knowledge of the plight of the Lydian King Alyattes came about because Periander was present at Delphi when Lydian ambassadors consulted the oracle.¹¹⁶ Lycurgus' rendition of the story of Codrus is yet more suggestive: he related that when in the distant past the Peloponnesians had inquired at Delphi whether they should take Athens, they were told they would succeed if they did not kill the Athenian king, Codrus. Cleomantis, a Delphian, learning of this, secretly informed the Athenians, and Codrus devised a ruse to sacrifice his life.¹¹⁷ Pausanias related that a Delphian tipped off the Lacedaemonians about an oracle received by their Messenian foes, which dictated that the first nation to dedicate a hundred tripods on Ithome would be victorious. The Spartan sent an obscure fellow, by the name of Oebalus, in the guise of a huntsman to sneak into the Messenian camp on Ithome with a hundred miniature cauldrons.¹¹⁸

While hardly historical, these stories admirably illustrate that the Greeks conceived of Delphi as a place to acquire information that was otherwise difficult to access. Why would the Delphians (or the caretakers of other oracles, such as Dodona) not take advantage of their position?

114. Starr 28; Parke and Wormell 50. The latter observe that the extensive knowledge of geography implicit in oracles concerning colonization was probably derived from the inquirers themselves or was a result of oracles composed after the settlement had been made, in order to lend divine legitimacy to the foundation.

115. Thuc. 8.10.1.

116. Hdt. 1.19–22.

117. Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 84ff. This story was told to mark the goodwill of foreigners toward Athens. Cleomantis and his descendants were duly rewarded.

118. Paus. 4.12.8–9.

And why would states not wish to find out what questions their rivals were putting to the gods?

Conjecture aside, it is evident that oracles, such as Delphi, had a place in a state's decision-making process. Hyperides, in defending Euxenippus, spoke of Delphi as the ultimate authority in matters beyond the sphere of reason.¹¹⁹ In some states individuals were commissioned to consult oracles (or other religious sources of knowledge) and accorded an official status. The office could be quite temporary and relatively informal, as with the *theopropoi* habitually sent by Athens. In Sparta, by way of contrast, specially appointed *puthioi* carried on official correspondence with Delphi; two of these were permanently attached to each king's entourage.¹²⁰

Collections of Delphic responses were kept by the Spartan kings and may have been entrusted to the care of the *puthioi*.¹²¹ Besides those of Delphic origin, there were a fair number of oracles derived from other sources in general circulation or collections. In Sparta oracles originating from places other than Delphi were kept in the city archives, while the Athenian archives preserved both Delphic and non-Delphic responses.¹²² There is some evidence—although there are few details—for other collections, public and private, among the states and individuals of the Greek world.¹²³ Parke and Wormell suggested that records were also kept at Delphi, although these have not come to light (perhaps being written on perishable material). It seems implausible, however, that the Delphians would not be motivated, by reverence or expediency, to chronicle their god's words.¹²⁴

119. Hyperides *For Euxenippus* 14: Euxenippus and two others were ordered by the *demos* to sleep in a temple and report their dreams. A while after, in the course of a trial in which Euxenippus was the defendant, the prosecution charged that he had reported his dream falsely. Hyperides answered the charge by claiming that it was the responsibility of the state to verify the dream at Delphi had they thought it or him unreliable. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 4.7.3 (of Olympia and Delphi).

120. Hdt. 6.57; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 15.5. Cf. Anderson 69 n. 14; Fontenrose 164.

121. Hdt. 6.57; Fontenrose 164 and n. 31.

122. Fontenrose 164. He further described consultations carried out through the use of tablets or couriers at various shrines (217–18 n. 27, 219); these would leave material available for records. Herodotus (7.142) mentioned that the Athenians who received the oracle about the wooden walls immediately wrote it down; it is likely that such documents were preserved.

123. For which see Fontenrose 158–65.

124. Parke and Wormell 2:xiii. Fontenrose (165) noted this lack, together with a paucity of references to oracles in Delphic inscriptions.

Chresmologoi (“oracle tellers,” or “oracle gatherers”) collected (and sometimes forged) oracular pronouncements of various derivations.¹²⁵ They enjoyed considerable prestige in the archaic and classical periods and are thought to have retained general favor, although they earned the scorn of the likes of Aristophanes and Thucydides in the fifth century.¹²⁶ They did not function as state officials, although they could exert influence on state policy both through judicious presentation, manipulation, and suppression of oracles in their private collections and through interpretation of oracular responses and oracles in general circulation. The use and abuse of oracles was by no means limited to *chresmologoi*, and there were enough examples of corruption and partisanship to make it possible for statesmen such as Demosthenes to cast doubts on the reliability of oracles that did not favor their position.¹²⁷ It was more common, however, to put forth interpretations that coincided with one’s ambitions. The impact of exegesis on the discussion of policy is visible in such events as the contested succession of Agesilaus and the more famous debate over the significance of “wooden walls” for the course of action Athens should take in view of the Persian menace.¹²⁸

125. Fontenrose 154ff. Unlike *manteis*, they did not engage in the divination of dreams or omens.

126. See, e.g., Thuc. 2.54, 8.1.1 (cf. 5.26.3); Aristoph. *Birds* 959–91; Aristoph. *Peace* 1043–1126.

127. Plut. *Demosth.* 20.1: Demosthenes did not heed oracles about Chaeronea, because he suspected the Pythia of being in sympathy with Philip. There is also a story of Lysander’s failed attempt to bribe the priests at Delphi, Dodona, and Ammon; his attempts were duly communicated by the priests to the Spartan authorities (Plut. *Lys.* 25.3 [and see 26.1ff.], giving Ephorus as his source; Diod. Sic. 14.13.3–7). Cf. Hdt. 5.63; Thuc. 5.16.2; [Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 19.4; Paus. 3.4.3; Plut. *On the malignity of Herodotus* 23.

It is odd that the only attempt to verify the authority of oracles is probably fictional (the tests of Croesus recounted by Hdt. 1.47ff.; cf. 2.174). It is not impossible that tests were made but were not publicized, for fear of charges of impiety (which could carry the death sentence in, e.g., Athens). Lucian gave a detailed account of the tests and tricks to which he subjected Alexander of Abonotichus, but this story is set after the period under discussion in this book.

128. (1) Diopithes, who supported Leotychidas, informed the Spartans of an oracle warning them against a lame kingship (Agesilaus was lame), but Lysander was able to convince them that “lame” was to be taken metaphorically (Leotychidas was reputedly a bastard, hence Lysander argued that Sparta would be “lame” if one of its two kings were unsound). Cf. Fontenrose Q163; he further noted the story’s sources. He also suggested (165) that the oracle was drawn from a Lacedaemonian collection, perhaps the state’s. (2) Hdt. 7.142.3–143.1; see Fontenrose Q147 for the text of the oracle and further sources.

Merchants

Merchants were ubiquitous and welcome in most of the Greek world.¹²⁹ They themselves had need of information on routes, markets, prices, and the like, and hence they had a vested interest in keeping tab on the political climates and activity at home and abroad.¹³⁰ Xenophon compared the skills of merchants and generals, and he noted that a wary eye for potential disaster was common to both.¹³¹ Lysias further remarked—a bit cynically—that merchants either received news of disasters in advance of everyone else or fabricated rumors themselves, since news of disasters entailed higher prices, which in turn yielded larger profits.¹³²

There are examples of important military information (usually concerning naval matters) imparted by merchants who picked up information on their travels. Herodas, a Syracusan, happened to be in Phoenicia with a shipowner at an opportune place and time. Herodas was not specifically called a merchant, but he was at least accompanying one, and it is probable that trade of some sort was the reason he found himself in

129. Xenophon recommended that spies be disguised as merchants for this very reason (Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.7). The freedom of merchants was limited, however, especially during conflicts. Knorringa (128) maintained that Athens restricted trade during war; although he did not provide evidence for this assertion, I have no reason to doubt him, given the way they treated the Megarians. The Athenians did not appreciate Perdiccas' ban on Methonian merchants operating in his territory, and they insisted he lift it (Meiggs and Lewis no. 65; cf. Fornara no. 128, *IG I³* 61; ca. 430 or later). They further justified their killing of Spartan ambassadors by alleging that the Spartans killed Athenian traders when they came on them off the Laconian coasts (Thuc. 2.67ff.).

130. Some of the information collected to this end—particularly that concerning navigation and geography—was recorded and preserved in written form. Starr (22) noted that by the sixth century a survey of the Spanish coast existed and that the *Periegesis* of Hecataeus contained much geographical information of the Mediterranean coasts. McKechnie (200 n. 104) commented that Scylax's *Periplus* (the basis for which goes back at least to the fourth century) represented “a tradition of know-how [that] was probably built up in the context of communities of professional seafarers and traders.”

131. Xen. *Mem.* 3.4.11.

132. Lysias XXII (*Against the grain-sellers*). The examples to which Lysias referred were the losses or capture of ships, blockades, and impending ruptures of truces. Knorringa (35–36) had a fair bit to say in this regard. Besides the preceding Lysias passage, he noted (36 n. 2) Isaeus frag. 15 (ed. Thalheim) and Xen. *Oec.* 20.27, and he added: “it appears that they [merchants] always found the means to get such information as they thought necessary, either by means of agents or in another way.” The agents to whom he referred were fielded by Cleomenes (Berve no. 431), who was appointed governor of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 331. Cleomenes developed an organization with a field headquarters in Athens that was “continually sending quotations of prices to the branches in other places” (Knorringa 126; cf. 99, 100, 125).

Phoenicia.¹³³ At any rate, he saw large numbers of Phoenician warships gathering and being readied. Having learned that there were to be three hundred, he departed on the first boat sailing to Greece to report this to the Lacedaemonians.¹³⁴ His news prompted them to send an expeditionary force to Asia under King Agesilaus.

Less momentous examples include an anonymous trader who tipped off the Peloponnesians on Abydos that the Athenians planned to slip by them and Sinopean merchants who reported Xenophon's intent to found a colony if provisions were not provided for his men.¹³⁵ The value of merchants as sources of information can also be seen from characterizations in speeches and literature and from measures taken against them. An example of the former can be found in Lycurgus' case against Leocrates: he attacked the defendant for fleeing Athens after the defeat at Chaeronea and spreading word of their misfortune in Rhodes, on the grounds that the merchants who frequented that island passed on the ill news about Athens as they sailed about the known world.¹³⁶ Evidence for measures taken to suppress the spread of news by merchants can be seen in the seizure of their boats by Alcibiades to prevent his various enemies from getting wind of his approach.¹³⁷

Official Documents (Both Published and Archived)

Since the political and military leaders of the Greeks used written records (e.g., rosters of men and equipment) for their own purposes, it is unlikely that they would overlook other people's records as potential sources of information. A look at what sort of information was preserved, together with some notes on its availability to foreigners, would therefore be of potential benefit.

A visitor strolling through the Athenian agora and acropolis in the fifth or fourth centuries would come on a large number of freestanding

133. See D. Lewis 60, for evidence for Greek trade with Phoenicia; S. Lewis 1–2, 75–77, 94–95, on this incident.

134. Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.1. According to the story, Herodas did not know what plans Tissaphernes and the king had in mind for this fleet and was honest enough to admit his ignorance.

135. Thuc. 8.102.2; Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.19. One wonders whether the latter example was a deliberate leak on the part of Xenophon and Timasion.

136. Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 14–15. Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 631; Aesch. *Choeph.* 680; Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 447, 756.

137. Plut. *Alc.* 28; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.15.

stone documents, or *stelai*. One could peruse decrees and announcements written on whitened boards affixed to the base supporting the eponymous heroes or displayed at the royal stoa. Here those who were not or could not be present at meetings of the deliberative bodies could learn of their enactments.

Much of the information published was of obvious value to a foreign state.¹³⁸ Extant inscriptions include casualty lists, catalogues of military expenses, and a resolution to launch a major expedition.¹³⁹ Catalogues of military resources available on land and sea were commonly inscribed from the mid-fourth century; catalogues of individuals called up for service were posted on whitewashed boards called *leukomata*.¹⁴⁰ The state of Athens' foreign policy could be determined from treaties and records of embassies sent and received; one might also deduce who was or was not paying tribute to the Athenians at a given time and thereby draw conclusions about the cohesion and resources of Athens' empire (even as scholars do today). Further information on economic capabilities could be had from yearly publications of the accounts of officials and treasuries.¹⁴¹ While the Athenians were especially prolific in publishing doc-

138. The interval of time between decision and publication was probably short. Some time would be necessary for cutting the letters into the stone, but for most documents this would entail hours or days rather than weeks; in any case, the original document, written in ink on a whitened board, would not take long to prepare and post. Some indication of the brevity of time can be seen from a *stèle* giving parameters for the expedition to Sicily, which was inscribed according to the will of the *ekklesia* before changes made a few days later; a second inscription was then needed to record the new information. Whether or not the first was actually displayed in the interval is not certain. Cf. Tod no. 78 A and B; Gomme 4:223–29 on Thuc. 6.8.1–2.

Adcock and Mosley (179) noted that inscriptions were reexamined on occasion, since inscriptions bearing treaties have been found to be supplemented and updated with marginal notations.

139. Casualty lists: e.g., Tod nos. 26 (459/8), 28 (457), 48 (= Meiggs and Lewis no. 48, ca. 447); cf. Meiggs and Lewis no. 35. Expenses: e.g., Tod nos. 55 (433), 75 (418–414), 83. Expedition: e.g., Tod no. 78 (to Sicily). The extant Themistocles decree (Meiggs and Lewis 23), a detailed plan of the Athenian evacuation and strategy established just prior to the Persian sack of Athens in 480, has not—to my mind—been adequately demonstrated to be anything but a later fabrication.

140. Adcock and Mosley 179.

141. Adcock and Mosley 179. This proposition may seem rather fanciful and anachronistic until one asks *how* the Peloponnesians knew that Athens had better financial resources than they did; concerns for economic information can be found, e.g., in Hdt. 3.122–23; Thuc. 6.6.2–3, 6.8.1–2, 6.22, 6.46.1–5, 7.49.1.

uments, a wide range of inscriptions from a wide range of states show that the custom was hardly unique to them.¹⁴²

Our same visitor might amble over to the nearby Metroon (formerly the Old Bouleuterion) and arrange for access to documents kept in the state archives.¹⁴³ Official correspondence was kept there, such as a letter from Philip II of Macedon to the Athenians and documents pertaining to the conduct of embassies.¹⁴⁴ It is possible that copies of publication of correspondence between other states were somehow obtained and preserved, for in his speech *On the Crown*, Demosthenes is found reading aloud a letter from Philip to the Peloponnesians.¹⁴⁵ How had he obtained the letter, and how was it preserved? Given his questionable scruples, it is quite possible that he made it up. Yet if he had, one would have expected a few choice remarks from Aeschines about his practice of forging documents; these are lacking. Such an argument from silence is weak but ought to be considered. Perhaps Demosthenes acquired the letter—or

142. Cf. also inscriptions set up by non-Greek peoples, such as the Behistun Inscription, and the pillars raised by Ramses II in conquered lands (cf. Hdt. 2.102, 103, 106).

143. Aristotle may have used these. Access was apparently readily available. Posner observed (113–14) that “the very combination of archives and sanctuary in a ‘multi-functional’ building may have caused problems of control and safety, for Apellikon of Teos, a collector of books, was able to appropriate some old decrees of the Metroon and would have been brought to trial had he not fled the city.”

144. Philip’s letter: Demosth. VII (*On Halonnesus*) 33. Conduct of embassies: Demosth. XIX (*On the embassy*) 129. Cf. Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 211, 218. Cf. also Starr (38), who plays down the importance of written records to information gathering. His arguments are based on flawed readings of the evidence. E.g., he dismissed (41) the capture of the Syracusan documents containing a catalogue of their citizens by misinterpreting Plutarch (*Nicias* 14.5: αὐται [= the Athenian ships] λαμβάνουσι ναῦν πολεμίαν κανίδας κομίζουσιν, εἰς ἃς ἀπεγράφοντο κατὰ φυλὰς αὐτοῦς οἱ Συρακούσιοι· κείμεναι δ’ ἄπωθεν τῆς πόλεως ἐν ἱερῷ Διὸς Ὀλυμπίου τότε πρὸς ἐξέτασιν καὶ κατάλογον τῶν ἐν ἡλικίᾳ μετεπέμφθησαν. ὥς οὖν ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἀλοῦσαι πρὸς τοὺς στρατηγοὺς ἐκομίσθησαν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ὥφθη τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἠχθέεσθην οἱ μάντιες μὴ ποτε ἄρα τὸ χρεὼν ἐνταῦθα τοῦ χρησμοῦ περαίνειν, λέγοντος ὡς Ἀθηναῖοι λήψονται Συρακούσιους ἅπαντας. οὐ μὴν ἀλλ’ ἐτέρω [MSS, ἕτεροι Coraës and Bekker] φασιν ἔργω τοῦτο τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις γενέσθαι ἐπιτελὲς καθ’ ὃν χρόνον ἀποκτείνας Δίωνα Κάλλιππος ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἔσχε Συρακούσας). Starr read Plutarch as saying that the capture of the ship happened much later: “the report itself may be doubted in view of his own [Plutarch’s] remark that scholars [nowhere mentioned in Plutarch] dated this event to a much later occasion.” The “event” whose date was in question was not the capture of the ship but the fulfillment of an oracle predicting that the Athenians would master the Syracusans; Plutarch said that this *prophecy* was fulfilled later when Callippus the Athenian murdered Dion and set himself up as tyrant over Syracuse.

145. Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 218.

a copy of it—through Peloponnesian friends who had access to it, and then kept it himself.¹⁴⁶ Although such a theory is compatible with the concept of personal networks, it is open to the same objection as above: Aeschines' silence. An alternative is that by the late fourth century Athens preserved in its archives documents of particular import gathered by its agents and sources. If this was indeed the case, these archives in turn should have been made accessible so that actors on the political stage, such as Demosthenes, could make use of them to supplement their own information.¹⁴⁷ Oracular pronouncements, in any event, were preserved for current and future reference. State archives were more generally administered by secretaries (*grammateis*), whose offices were specialized and (at least in Macedonia) subject to a hierarchy of authority.¹⁴⁸ The *strategoï* and the cavalry commanders (in Athens, at any rate) were served by specially appointed secretaries; these men would almost certainly possess a fair bit of valuable information at their fingertips and might conceivably have functioned as advisors or intelligence officers to their military commanders. Such a position would be perfect for a spy, and it is little wonder that Phillidas sought it when the Thebans were plotting to throw off their Spartan-backed government.

It is hopefully self-evident that Greek states of the sixth through fourth centuries would have had much to gain from their neighbors' documents, if they could but have contrived to get possession of them. Persian archives have been found and excavated in the palace at Persepolis—these, the “fortification” and “treasury” tablets, are primarily concerned with payments in food (510–494) and species (492–459), respectively. The recovered tablets do not contain data of immediate political or military value but it is possible that yet unexcavated records contain such information. Herodotus mentioned that catalogues were taken of the forces that marched with Xerxes on his ill-fated expedition in 480, and

146. Lysander was supposed to have preserved his correspondence with states in his private dwelling, rather than in a state archive (Plut. *Lys.* 30.3). A state archive existed in Sparta in Plutarch's day, and in it the biographer found the names of Agesilaus' daughter and wife. Such records were therefore kept as early as the late fifth or early fourth century (Plut. *Ages.* 19.6), unless they were contrived later.

147. Polyaeus (4.6.2) mentioned the uses put to the record system of an Antigonos, perhaps Antigonos Doson (ruled 229–221). Implicitly, these were exceptional enough to be included in a collection of stratagems.

148. For more complete descriptions of these offices, see Posner 111–12 on the Athenians; Berve 54–58 on the Macedonians.

these have not come to light.¹⁴⁹ Yet undiscovered royal archives are attested in Babylon and Ecbatana. Records may also have been kept by satraps in provincial capitals, since Plutarch mentioned an archive at Sardis.¹⁵⁰

Could the Persian archives be a viable information source for the Greeks? The information they contained could be valuable, particularly to the Ionians. The problem was access. There is no evidence (save a boast of Ctesias) that the archives were open to Greek inquiry before Alexander captured Persepolis,¹⁵¹ but the Persians frequently made use of scribes and records clerks of various nationalities—among these were Greeks. One of the aides mentioned in the fortification tablets was called “Yaūna,” which is the ethnic name for a Greek.¹⁵² Among the tablets found was one written in the Greek language, implying that another Greek (or an individual to whom it would be natural to write in Greek) served in another archive center.¹⁵³ There were likely others, as D. Lewis pointed out.¹⁵⁴ It is not improbable that these Greeks retained some contact with their communities of origin and could have passed on pertinent

149. Hdt. 7.100: Xerxes’ scribes (*grammatistai*) recorded the numbers of Xerxes’ forces and the questions he made of their captains. How and Wells (ad loc.) maintained that these lists existed but that they were not made at Doriscus; the commentators did not, unfortunately, indicate how they knew this.

150. Plut. *Demosth.* 20.4–5: “Alexander . . . discovered at Sardis certain letters of Demosthenes and documents of the king’s generals, which revealed the amount of money given to him.” To be sure, Alexander had a motive for framing Demosthenes. D. Lewis (25, citing Ezra 5.17–6.2) has pointed out that this diffused system of archives led to retrieval problems: a search for a twenty-year-old document began in Babylon and ended in Ecbatana.

151. Cf. Diod. Sic. 2.32, where they were called *diphtherai basilikai*.

152. D. Lewis 5–6. Yaūna appears frequently on the tablets, and from December 499 to September 498 he is the only visible aide of Pharnaka, the Persian overseer (D. Lewis 12).

153. D. Lewis 12–13. Before the mid-fifth century, when the use of Aramaic on documents became general, it was necessary to write in the language used by the recipient (Posner 119 and n. 4; cf. Meiggs and Lewis no. 12 [= Tod no. 10, ca. 522–486 B.C.], a letter ostensibly from Darius to Gadatas in Greek, which Meiggs and Lewis thought to be authentic). The tablets at Persepolis were, for the most part, written in Elamite (Posner 123).

154. D. Lewis 14: “If we find Greeks in a secretarial capacity as early as this [ca. 499] and as far east as this [Persepolis], there is no reason to doubt their availability to the King or to other satraps, particularly in the west, in all relevant periods. The line between a secretary or aide and an exiled Greek maintained at the court of the King or of a satrap for his possible usefulness will not be an easy one to draw.” He mentioned Calligeitus of Megara and Timagoras of Cyzicus with Pharnabazus (Thuc. 8.6.1), the bilingual Carian Gaulites (Thuc. 8.85.2), and Praxinus of Zacynthus (Xen. *Anab.* 2.1.7ff., Plut. *Art.* 14.5; Diod. Sic. 14.25.1) with Tissaphernes.

information, however informally. One might speculate on the opportunity such employment would have presented to a spy.

Miscellaneous

Itinerants and Philosophers

There were a variety of people who traveled or held itinerant professions and thus had the opportunity to gather and communicate information in an informal fashion. In surveying the types and natures of outsiders in Greek city-states in the fourth century, McKechnie included specialized builders and craftsmen, doctors, entertainers, actors, musicians, orators, soothsayers, and cooks.¹⁵⁵ While there is no evidence that most of these groups of people consciously collected information for city-states, it is inevitable that the experiences they gained on their travels would influence their indigenous communities. A few examples of specific information are available; among them is the news obtained in Sparta of the Athenian effort to rebuild their walls immediately after the Persian Wars, which was provided by travelers.¹⁵⁶

Philosophers were likewise known to travel and to obtain posts as teachers or advisors of the ruling classes. Aristotle collected a fair amount of information of a political (and hence military) nature by sending his students out to learn about the history and constitutions of a large number of Greek poleis. While one might argue that his interest was purely academic, one might also note that he was directing such research at a time when Philip II was trying to work out a political arrangement in Greece with himself as *hegemon*, and such information would have been of great value to the Macedonians.¹⁵⁷

By the early fourth century there were men who marketed themselves as teachers of strategy and tactics. While the impression of these obtained from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* does not inspire confidence in their capabilities, they could have been good sources of information on how various peoples trained and prepared for war.¹⁵⁸ Tissaphernes thought

155. McKechnie 143–57.

156. Thuc. 1.91; cf. Hdt. 1.27 (Diod. Sic. 9.25.1–2).

157. It is also worth noting that Aristotle had close connections with Philip and Alexander and further that he thought it expedient to flee Athens on at least two occasions (cf. McKechnie 150–52).

158. Xen. *Mem.* 3.1.1; cf. 3.5.21–22.

highly enough of a Greek military expert, Phalinus by name, to retain him as an advisor in military matters. This was only sensible, considering that he, as satrap, was faced with continual battles with the Greeks in the late fifth and early fourth centuries.¹⁵⁹ Plato stated, with some irony, that drillmasters seemed to have regarded Sparta as a place too holy to enter and did not practice there—it is highly unlikely that the Lacedaemonians would have suffered their presence.¹⁶⁰

Geographers

It would have been possible for interested parties to obtain geographic or ethnographic information from historians and geographers. Strabo mentioned the existence of a number of geographical works by the first century, including *Limenai*, *Periploi*, *Periodoi*, and the like. Xenophon's *Hellenica* and *Anabasis* might have been of some service to Alexander, though there is no mention of Alexander's having read them.¹⁶¹ It has been noted that Alexander's entourage included geographers and scholars and further that Alexander maintained a group of men, called *bematistai*, whose duty was to survey the country through which he was passing.¹⁶²

Hired Agents, Sycophants

Sycophants had the reputation for an overindulged ability to discover or fabricate misdeeds of the wealthy. They profited materially from this skill, and in Athens they were perceived as a plague that was endured but never cured. In the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon portrayed a treatment for this ailment: an agent hired by a wealthy man to investigate sycophants persecuting him. The agent, Archidamus, uncovered their dirty secrets and sought out their enemies to help him in his counterattack. The

159. Xen. *Anab.* 2.1.7—Xenophon called Phalinus a man who represented himself as one learned in matters concerning both tactical formations and hoplite warfare.

160. Plato *Laches* 183a–b.

161. D. Lewis (144 nn. 56–57) remarked that when Pharnabazus captured and garrisoned Cythera in the spring of 393 (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.8; Diod. Sic. 14.84.5), he might have been acting on “good sense,” or under the influence of a passage in Herodotus (Hdt. 7.235) that calls attention to the vulnerability of Laconia to such a move.

162. Tod no. 188 (SIG 303; Harding no. 110; post-334) recorded a dedication of a Cretan, Philonides son of Zoites, at Olympia, which refers to the dedicator as both *bematistes* and *hemerodromes/os*, suggesting a link between surveying and communication. For a more detailed description, see Berve 51–52.

patron, Criton, paid him in goods and honor and retained him in his service, occasionally lending his talents out to friends who had need of them.¹⁶³

In his life of Demosthenes, Plutarch mentioned a bounty hunter by the name of Archias. This man was engaged by Antipater to discover the whereabouts of the Macedonian's enemies and arrest them. To this end Archias directed a group of men known as "fugitive hunters" (*phugotheres*). Archias was apparently quite successful at his job, which no doubt involved investigation in the course of his pursuits. Among his victims was Demosthenes, who escaped him only by committing suicide in 322.¹⁶⁴

Aside from these two men, the evidence is scanty: there is some suggestion that information pertaining to legal cases might be purchased from sycophants, and an allusion to an overseer engaged by merchants.¹⁶⁵

Survivors and Escapees

News of disasters was at times brought back by those who had survived them, as when the Arcadian Nicarchus stumbled wounded into the camp of the Ten Thousand to tell of the treachery of Tissaphernes.¹⁶⁶ In a number of instances their news was so shocking as to strain their credibility (the Athenian reaction to the survivors of the Sicilian disaster is a case in point),¹⁶⁷ but when measures could yet be taken to avert peril, these were generally done.¹⁶⁸

Servants and Slaves

Servants and slaves might have made inquiries or communicated information on their masters' behalf, but most references to them in the context of information portray them giving information against their current or former masters. The reliability of slaves as informants was open to some question (this problem is treated in chapter 4 in the context of tor-

163. Xen. *Mem.* 2.9.1–8.

164. Plut. *Demosth.* 28.2–4.

165. Overseer: Demosth. XXXIV (*Against Phormio*) 8. Purchase of information: Demosth. XXI (*Against Meidias*) 36; cf. Lofberg 57, 59.

166. Xen. *Anab.* 2.5.33.

167. Thuc. 8.1.1. Cf. Plut. *De garrul.* 509.

168. See, e.g., Thuc. 3.3.5ff.

ture). Aristotle remarked that tyrants looked to slaves as allies in informing against their masters; the same might be said of leaders in other forms of government.¹⁶⁹

Others

There are a large number of informants of types so varied and singular as to defy meaningful categorization. Many of these obtained or imparted information through a fortuitous combination of chance and the knowledge that a prospective recipient of a piece of news would be interested to learn of it. Although it would be tedious to enumerate the plethora of examples available, I cannot resist an anecdote illustrating the preceding statement. Dionysius I, tyrant of Syracuse, had delusions of grandeur as a poet and in 368/7 was fortunate enough to win a victory for one of his pieces that had been performed at the Lenaea in Athens. A member of the chorus hastened to Corinth as soon as the victory was announced and thence took the first boat to Syracuse, in hopes of being the first to inform Dionysius. He succeeded and obtained the expected reward for his good news.¹⁷⁰

Sources and Agents of Unspecified Nature and Provenance

Our sources are often negligent or vague when it comes to providing details of how information was obtained before actions were taken. Reference to agents and sources might be relegated to an indefinite pronoun (e.g., Alcibiades learned of secret arrangements between the Lacedaemonians and Cyrus *διὰ τίνων*) or to a relative pronoun in conjunction with a participle (e.g., *οἱ ἀπαγγελλόντες* the defeat at Leuctra who came to Sparta with the names of the dead).¹⁷¹ Quite often verbs of learning in participial form or in subordinate clauses governed by *ὥς* or *ἐπειδὴ* are the only record that intelligence was involved. Passive forms of the verb *ἀγγέλλω* are frequently used, and occasionally we find the use of *λανθάνω* with a negative. In many other cases, even such rudimentary

169. Aristotle *Politics* 1313b; one might recall, e.g., the information given by slaves on the parodies of the mysteries. Cf. Lysias V (*For Callias*) 5, who warns that the precedent given by trusting slaves will encourage others to obtain freedom by falsely informing against their masters.

170. Diod. Sic. 15.74.1–2.

171. Diod. Sic. 14.11.2ff.; Plut. *Ages.* 29.2.

notations are lacking, although the receipt of information must have, or probably did, precede an action. Again, it would be tedious to go through even a fraction of such examples, but a single incident might demonstrate how even important information, obtained in advance of an event, might rate no more than a passing mention. Thucydides reported that Demosthenes (the *strategos*, not the orator) was preparing a force to invade the Aetolians in 426; this did not escape their notice from the time he first formed the plan.¹⁷² It is apparent that some form of information gathering went on; perhaps one of the Acarnanians to whom Demosthenes communicated his intent passed news of it on to the Aetolians out of bitterness, when Demosthenes failed to support an Acarnanian plan to invest Leucas.¹⁷³ It is possible that the Aetolians learned of it still earlier through an anonymous traitor, deserter, or spy.

172. Thuc. 3.96.3.

173. Cf. Thuc. 3.95.2.

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* Phrynias, discussed shortly); mounted scouts at 6.63.3; and official investigators at 4.27.3–4 (Cleón 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 innuocuity. 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 [*protagogides*] 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 “Proma-langes.” 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 Proma-langes, 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 ἄνθρωποις (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. 'Οφθαλμὸς 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. 'Οφθ.; 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 preconquest Egypt, it is conceivable that the Persians borrowed it from there.

19. LSJ s.v. *ἄναξ* II, III; Harpocration s.v. *ἄνακτες καὶ ἀνακταί*: "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 [*adelphai*] and wives [*gunaikēs*] "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 whisperm: "Look out! Look everywhere, Mnesippus, lest some *prosagogos* 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: ἑφορος is derived from ἐπι + ὁράω (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 *krupeteia*). 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 πρεσβύτεροι 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: ἡβώντας; 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 Doson'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, "Krypteia," *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 τῷ φιλοσόφῳ [= *Laus* 763b, regarding the Spartan *krypteia*] 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 ["Beggar"]—ἄλλω δ'αὐτὸν φωτὶ κατακρύπτων ἦσκε, δέκτη). 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 πολέμιων.

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 ὥς το 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 ἐπενείκαντες 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 [Demos-thenes] 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 κατασκοπῆς 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 *strategoi* 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; Polyaeus 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 Σιωπῆς.

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 *strategieon*—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 *strategoi* 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 Nikias, 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 συντίθοντο 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 *strategoí*), 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 Achaea, 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 ὥς ἐγὼ ἀκούω, and Thuc. 6.33.1: πείθων ἑμαυτὸν καφέστερόν τι ἑτέρου 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.

Chapter 4

Conveying the Message

The efforts of the sources and agents described in the preceding chapters would be for naught if they were unable to communicate the information they had collected. But the conveyance of information is a tricky thing, involving a number of filters that determine which information makes the transition from collector to recipient. In its most simple form, the filter is one of time, for example, condensing the experiences of a two-day reconnaissance patrol into a five-minute briefing. But even such apparently straightforward reports were and are highly complex, involving an interplay of semantics, motivations, personalities, and expectations with the various media of communication.

Thus, before describing how the Greeks transmitted information, it must first be noted that sources and agents convey the information that they feel is newsworthy. There is an editing process intrinsic to human interpretation of data provided by the environment, and this is extended to the information provided by one individual to another. Would a scout, for instance, think it worthy of notice or mention that many of the enemy had brown hair? That a contingent wore red cloaks? That some carried bows and slings? That they were men? The information provided is based on what the informant thinks is pertinent, and the informant may neglect details whose consequence he or she does not recognize. Red cloaks, for example, were typical of the Spartans, and if a commander did not know whether or not the Spartans were committing troops to the aid of his enemy, information about the color of garments would be of importance to him. If the scout was aware of neither the custom nor the political situation, he might not report this detail. If the commander did not think to ask this specific question, he might then underestimate his opponent or misjudge the political impact of an engagement.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that different people have interest and expertise in different fields. While some topics may be of general interest to all and thus readily passed on as newsworthy, all

information gatherers may not be equally capable in differentiating the pertinent from the peripheral.¹ A scout would be more likely to pick up relevant details about the aforementioned contingent than would, for instance, a merchant. But a merchant or envoy would be far more useful when economic or political information was sought. Thus it was necessary to employ as agents individuals best suited to gathering information of a given sort. Aeneas Tacticus recommended that *skopoi* be men experienced in war, both to ensure that information would be reported accurately and to prevent false alarms made in ignorance.² In the ideal military practice of Cyrus, a subordinate officer selected for his experience and wisdom determined what information was to be passed back by the scouts to the commander of the vanguard.³ As was mentioned in the second chapter, there sometimes existed a degree of specialization among other types of intelligence agents as well.

An obvious solution to problems of information relevance was for the commander himself to gather the information, providing, of course, that the commander was better equipped to interpret data than his agents. This was, in fact, advised by Xenophon and Onasander, with the sensible proviso that the commander should not expose himself unnecessarily to danger.⁴ Alexander often took the advice and ignored the proviso, and his actions found precedent on the Attic stage.⁵ There is mention of participants in trials embarking on research themselves, as Lysias claimed to have done, traveling to Decelea to make inquiries regarding Panceleon's

1. Lee (*Information and Frontiers*, 153–55) provided a good discussion on diffusion of information and considerations of what comprised newsworthy information, citing Stephens, *A History of News: From the Drum to the Satellite* (New York, 1988), 33, for items of general applicability: "reports of accidents, earthquakes, military expeditions, sports, weather, death and violations of the law."

2. Aen. Tact. 6.2.

3. Xen. Cyr. 6.3.6, 12.

4. Xen. Cav. Com. 4.16: "It has long been said that it is good to try, by the use of *kataskopoi*, to know the affairs of the enemy. But best of all is for the commander himself to watch from some safe vantage." Cf. [Nicephorus] 14.

5. See, e.g., Arrian *Anab.* 1.20.5; Q. Curtius 8.10.27–30; Demophon in Eur. *Children of Heracles* 390–97. Cf. Aesch. *Seven Against Thebes* 36ff., in which Eteocles relies entirely on the eyes of the *kataskopos*. Contrast Rommel (38: "Aus Meldungen von Dritten kann man meist nicht das entnehmen, was für den eigenen Entschluß wesentlich ist. Man muß selbst hinfahren und selbst beobachten") with Handel (*Intelligence and Military Operations*, 26, ad loc.), who criticized focus on the tactical level as dysfunctional at higher levels, since commanders such as Rommel were liable to be trapped in details. In an Aristotelian manner, Handel (68) thought that for commanders virtue lay in a mean between the extremes of remote control and personal involvement.

claims to the status of a Plataean.⁶ Political leaders could and at times did investigate matters for themselves, as Demosthenes ascertained the Theban sentiment while acting as an ambassador in Thebes prior to Chaeronea, but generally the decision makers—whether ephors, kings, tyrants, or a collective body—received information rather than sought it. Reasons are easily called to mind, a monarch simply did not have the time to see everything everywhere, even if he were reckless enough to face the risk involved.⁷ A similar problem applied to small governing bodies, and large groups could neither feasibly travel together nor reasonably depend on their members to witness matters outside their normal sphere of activity. Thus information was normally filtered through the minds of agents and sources.

Related to the problem of editing is the selection of intelligence goals. If agents are asked to gather every detail about a people, irrespective of relevance to an issue, they will spend much time and effort, with consequent risks and delays, on a task without end. If they are told to pay attention only to matters within strict parameters (a possible example might be to ascertain the quantity of baggage attached to a company, so as to obtain an idea of its range and rate of movement), they might overlook matters not apparently relevant but nevertheless important to the problem they are investigating (e.g., if the company commander was ill, his force might move more slowly or not at all).⁸ A commander cannot hope to learn or assimilate every minute detail about his foes—instead, he must have a degree of detail adequate to his task. To avoid irrelevant “static” he concentrates on those details that he thinks are important. In effect, he sets intelligence goals corresponding to his needs and allocates resources to meet his goals. When Agesilaus fought to defend his city and Laconia from Epaminondas, he had no need to send scouts to discover features of terrain since this was his native land. When he campaigned in Asia Minor, such information was vital. Many intelligence needs, however, were more or less constant, and a sensible commander would be able to direct his attention to these needs through reason and experience.

Having determined what information was to be sought and passed on, the agent or source then had to determine how to effect its transmission. The following methods were available.

6. Lysias XXIII (*Against Pancleon*) 2ff. Cf. Demosth. XXI (*Against Meidias*) 36.

7. Cf. Xen. *Hiero* 1.11–12.

8. Such was the case when Darius misinterpreted Alexander's delay in Cilicia, the cause of which was actually Alexander's illness (Plut. *Alex.* 29.1).

Overt Methods of Communication

Messengers

Angeloi, or messengers, were ubiquitous in the Greek world yet were a rather nebulous lot.⁹ In not a few cases envoys (*presbeis*) and even heralds (*kerukes*) are called *angeloi* when delivering information. More often the identities of *angeloi* were obscure because the act of communication was thought more important than the actor, so that passive forms of verbs (e.g., “when it was announced”) were sufficient to explain the movement of information. In a number of cases arrangements might be made for specific types of individuals (such as horsemen or sailors of light craft) to act as messengers in an ad hoc manner; exceptionally they might be appointed to long-term duty as couriers within the structure of a surveillance or reconnaissance detachment or be attached to the staffs of military commanders.¹⁰

The speed with which *angeloi* could transmit messages was, of course, far slower than fire signals over long distances. Over very short distances, however, *angeloi* might make up for lack of swiftness with convenience of use, especially since a commander would not need to prepare a fire or hoist a flag (assuming that high ground was available) and hope that the intended recipient noticed it in time. They were also useful over very long distances, when lines of sight were obstructed by geographical features and when relay stations for visual signals were neither available nor practical. *Angeloi* were more flexible than visual signals, in that prior arrangements to establish recognizable signals were not necessary. They could provide superior detail and range of information. They could clarify a message that was not completely understood, or they could furnish supplementary details.¹¹ They also offered more confidentiality than visual or audible signals, which could be noticed by enemies as well as

9. A proper discussion of *angeloi* is a subject fit for a detailed study in its own right—only a few brief notes are given here.

10. For horsemen, see Bugh 11–12, 99. Cf. also Thuc. 8.11; Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.20, 4.5.7; Diod. Sic. 15.82.6 (Plut. *Ages.* 34.4); Diod. Sic. 17.60.7; Arrian *Anab.* 3.15.1, 5.18.6. For light vessels, see Plut. *Lys.* 10.2; Isoc. *Epist.* VII (*To Tim.*) 10ff.; Plut. *Ages.* 15.2. For long-term duty, see Aen. *Tact.* 6.6.

11. Aeneas Tacticus (6.4–5) was quite cognizant of the relative merits of visual signaling and couriers and thought swift or horsed messengers were a necessary supplement to *semeia*, so that *hemeroskopoi* could communicate matters which did not lend themselves well to visual signaling; cf. Isoc. *Epist.* I (*To Dionys.*) 3 for comments on clarification.

recipients. Their operation might be impeded by adverse weather conditions, but it would not be precluded altogether, as might happen with signals in heavy fog or precipitation or with shouts in the din of battle.¹²

But *angeloi* needed physical access to their recipients and might be unable to slip through a blockade or siege; seas controlled by enemies were also hazardous. They were susceptible to interception and capture, in which case information not only failed to reach its intended recipient but fell into the hands of people who might use it to the disadvantage of the sender.¹³ Being only human, *angeloi* were liable to misunderstanding, dishonesty, and all the other foibles to which agents and sources were susceptible; they might even be impersonated.

In light of such fallibility, some states and commanders had recourse to the written word. Thucydides treated Nicias' decision to entrust a messenger with a letter rather than an oral report as somehow exceptional, at least as far as Athenian practice went in the late fifth century, but dispatches are well attested in the fourth century.¹⁴ The Spartans relied on written messages for official correspondence at least as early as the beginning of the fifth century. During the Peloponnesian War, they appointed secretaries (*epistoleis*) to their naval commanders to handle correspondence with authorities at home and with other commanders.¹⁵ Secretaries

12. For problems arising from vocal commands, see Q. Curtius 4.9.20; Aelian *Tactica* 25.1–5; Anon. Byz. *Peri Strat.* 30. Shouting was a resort of necessity when other methods failed, as when the Syracusans communicated by shouting to each other during the Athenian night attack on Epipolae, there being no other way to signal in the night (Thuc. 7.44.4; cf. the Tyrians at Arrian *Anab.* 2.22.4). In what must have been quieter moments, the passing of commands and watchwords along a chain of command, or through the ranks, was practiced and advocated—the contexts are before battle or by surveillance agents separated from their enemies by a river: e.g., Onasander 25.1–3; Arrian *Anab.* 5.11.2.

13. A picturesque tale in Plutarch's life of Dion (26.5–10) well illustrates the hazards chance can throw into the paths of couriers. When Timocrates, Dionysius' second in command, learned that Dion had landed in Sicily, he sent an *angelos* to bear letters to Dionysius at Caulonia. This man took meat (for a meal en route) in the same wallet in which he carried the letters. The smell of the meat attracted a wolf, who carried off the wallet as the man slept. When he awoke and realized he had lost the wallet, the *angelos* feared to go to the tyrant and fled. Thus Dionysius did not learn until later, through other sources, of the threat that Dion posed. Cf. also Demosth. XXXIV (*Against Phormio*) 8, on the hazards arising from entrusting a message to a dishonest courier.

14. Thuc. 7.8–10, 7.11.1.

15. Pritchett 2:46; Szanto “Ἐπιστολέυς,” *RE* 6 (1909): 202–3; Michell 279–80; Anderson 67–68 and 68 n. 7. Anderson noted that Hippocrates, called an *epistoleus* at Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.23, reappeared as a harmost at 1.3.5; he is also found at Thuc. 8.99, sending information on the prospects of (not) receiving aid from the Phoenician ships.

(*grammateis*) are attested serving military commanders in the fourth and following centuries and had cameo appearances earlier—in the case of Polycrates' secretary Maeandrius, as an investigator in his own right.¹⁶

Signaling

In his *Tactica*, Aelian noted the relative advantages and disadvantages of visual and auditory transmission of commands.¹⁷ Further comments on their strengths and weaknesses in transmitting information in other contexts follow.

Fire and Smoke (Pursoi, Phruktoi)

Legend has it that Palamedes invented signal fires and that his father was the first to manipulate them to deceive an enemy.¹⁸ Fire signals first appear in a simile in the *Iliad*, which describes smoke and fire (*pursoi*) signals sent up by a beleaguered island town to its neighbors, the former by day and the latter by night.¹⁹ Walbank thought that the earliest evidence of the use of fire signals among the Greeks could be dated to 489, when the Parians, besieged by Miltiades, pretended that the gleam from a fire on Mykonos (not actually intentionally sparked) was a signal from Datis.²⁰ Technically, the signal was supposed to be from a Persian, but he is surely correct that signals were in use at the time. The first tangible historical example of fire signaling between Greeks is actually that sent from Sciathus to Artemisium in 480, regarding a skirmish between Greek and Persian forces.²¹

16. Hdt. 3.123ff. *Grammateis* might also serve as envoys—see, e.g., Arrian *Anab.* 3.16.6, 5.24.6.

17. Aelian *Tactica* 25.1–5. Cf. Anon. Byz. *Peri Strat.* 30.

18. Hyg. *Fab.* 105

19. *Iliad* 18.207–13. Aristarchus is said by Dionysius Thrax to have altered line 207, ὡς δ' ὅτε καπνὸς ἰὼν ἐξ ἄστεος τοῦ ὡς δ' ὅτε πῦρ ἐπὶ πόντον ἀριπρεπές. Semmett (41–42) noted a passage in the *Odyssey* (10.30) that appeared in a translation as “beacon fires.” The Greek πυρπολέοντες lends itself better to translation as “tending campfires” than “tending signal fires” when used in this context of shepherds in the hills.

Festivals celebrated with beacon fires might indicate traditions preserved from still earlier times, but myth provides shaky foundations for argument. Those interested may, however, refer to Pausanias (2.25.4–5), who mentioned an Argive festival of bonfires commemorating mythical signals sent to and from two lovers; Frazer (in Pausanias, 3:216–17 ad loc.) observed that the festival might well have other origins.

20. F.W. Walbank 2:258 on Polyb. 10.42.7, citing Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70F63).

21. Hdt. 7.183.

Fire signals were used extensively by watchers and scouts.²² Unlike other signal types, they did not normally serve to transmit orders but were instead used to convey simple messages, and they were considered to be quite valuable in this role.²³ Polybius observed that they enabled a swift response to events and were of great utility in internal security and warfare. Although he added that signals were less developed in earlier times (i.e., before the second century), extant examples show that even then signals served often and well.²⁴

In most cases the presence or lack of a fire at an appointed point sufficed to convey a prearranged message (e.g., Memnon's troops were to light fires when they had scaled the acropolis of Methymne).²⁵ There are examples of varied signals, each with a specific significance, but often the arrangement is ambiguous. According to a scholiast, movements of hostile forces were indicated by moving a flame—presumably a torch—back and forth, those of friendly forces by holding a torch steady.²⁶ All such signals were limited (in the range of information that they could convey) to predetermined messages, since there is no indication before the second century B.C. that signalers could represent letter characters (in the fashion, for instance, of Morse code), which would permit the flexibility required for conveying complex or unforeseen events.²⁷ In the first half of

22. Hershbell (82ff.) maintained that they were used almost exclusively in war, and I see no reason to disagree with his assessment.

23. The line between information and command becomes somewhat blurred in some circumstances (as when a city under attack signals for help—see, e.g., Aen. Tact. 15.1); what I mean here is that leaders and commanders did not normally issue orders via fire signals to their subordinates. Thuc. 4.111–12 provides a possible (but rather confused) exception: the signal for the attack of Brasidas' light-armed troops is alternately called *σημείον*, *σημείον τοῦ πυρός*, and *ξύθημα*. I think the last word, *xunthema*, provides a solution—it was a prearranged indication that a previously given command (attack) was now to be carried out.

24. Polyb. 10.43.1–2.

25. Polyaeus 5.44.3 (ca. 340).

26. Schol. on Thuc. 2.94. Cf. Riepl 59–60; Hershbell 85–86.

27. Polybius' mechanism (10.45–46) for sending messages (which may never have made the transition from theory to practice) indicated the positions of each desired letter on tablets by means of different combinations of torches. Polybius referred to systems invented after Aeneas by Cleoxenus and Democlitus, which lack other independent attestation. Democlitus has been dated to the third century or early second century B.C. by Hultsch ("Demokleitōs," *RE* 5.1 [1905]: 132); no date is available for Cleoxenus (other than a *terminus ante quem* implicit in Polybius' work). For full descriptions of the signaling systems of Polybius and Aeneas, see Riepl 66–69; Hershbell 86ff.

the fourth century, Aeneas Tacticus devised a scheme for combining a water clock with fire signals to signal predetermined messages.²⁸ The sender and recipient had identical water clocks, marked at various levels with a variety of commonly sent messages. After obtaining the recipients' attention, the sender would unplug the bottom of the water clock and hold up a torch until the water level had sunk to the desired inscription. It is probable that the Greeks had the ability to send a variety of messages by different types of signals (perhaps combinations of fires) by the late fifth century: how could the besieged Plataeans otherwise have expected to be able to confuse Peloponnesian signals by lighting fires of their own?²⁹ There is, furthermore, an appearance of a fair degree of specificity in recorded examples of prearranged fire signals. From torches held up by his blockaded troops, for instance, Alexander of Pherae was able to learn numbers of Athenian ships setting sail.³⁰

It is not always so easy, however, to separate the historian's explanation from the imparted message. Did the Peloponnesians learn from fire signals that Athenian ships were approaching from Leucas, or was their origin a detail assumed by the Peloponnesians or included by Thucydides by way of explanation?³¹ In general, Polybius' criticism of the inflexibility of the fire systems of his precursors seems reasonable enough, although perhaps exaggerated to establish a contrast to and a need for his own scheme.³² While systems like those just described could encompass a wider variety of subjects than the Boolean variable of a simple pyre, they could not serve to convey news of events for which a prior arrangement had not been made.³³ It is likely that they were also unable to convey precise details or large numbers—such information was probably filled in by historians.

The advantage of fire signals is their relatively swift operation over long distances. While Aeschylus' image of flames flaring in a swift dance from Troy to Mycenae is poetic, there is no doubt that the more prosaic

28. For a more complete description, see Polyb. 10.44.

29. Thuc. 3.22.7–8.

30. Polyaeus 6.2.1 (Alexander of Pherae, son of Jason, was tyrant from 369 to 358). Cf. Anon. Byz. *Peri Strat.* 8.

31. Thuc. 3.80.2.

32. Polyb. 10.43.6–10.

33. Polyb. 10.45.1. In 43.7–9 he provided an example: if an arrangement had been made that a fire would be lit to indicate the approach of an enemy fleet, how could one send a message telling of a rebellion that was unanticipated?

fires on Salamis, glowing red with warning of a Peloponnesian surprise attack, were seen in Athens long before it would have been possible for a weary runner to stumble up to the *prytaneis*.³⁴ Basic information could therefore be had very quickly, and although the Athenian reaction to Brasidas' advent resembled panic more than preparation, the Peloponnesians withdrew because they hesitated to attack an alerted enemy. The range of fire signals could be considerable: Polybius said they could convey information at distances beyond a four days' march.³⁵ The fires lit by the Peloponnesians laying siege to Plataea could be seen in Thebes even on a stormy night, while the flashes of *pursoi* in Boeotia and Phocis were visible from Mount Tisaion in Thessaly.³⁶ Greek use of relays after the Aeschylean and Persian fashion is a matter of conjecture in the fifth century and earlier, but by the fourth century the Athenians possessed an extensive system of signal and relay towers for effective frontier defense.³⁷ Alexander of Pherae was likewise said to have had a fire-signaling system, in which the aforementioned Mount Tisaion was an important link.³⁸

Another benefit of fire signals (and signals in general) was that they provided a means of communication when siege or other such circumstance precluded the use of channels necessitating physical delivery of a message. Thus fifth columns found them suitable for conveying messages

34. Thuc. 2.94.1. Cf. Aeschylus *Ag.* 288–313; Riepl 51; Fraenkel 2:156–66. Note also a tale told by R. Coleman of Emmanuel College, Cambridge (preserved in C. Stray, "Ideology and Institution: English Classical Scholarship in Transition," *Annals of Scholarship* 10 (1993): 119 and 130 n. 15; this article was brought to my attention by P.G. Naiditch): "A colonial officer stationed on the farther reaches of the empire, suspecting an imminent attack by hostile natives in part of his territory, remembered the opening of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, where the watchman sits on the palace roof at Mycenae waiting for the line of signal beacons to tell of the sack of Troy and his master Agamemnon's return home. Accordingly he ordered his native subordinates to prepare a line of beacons. Unfortunately, this was at the beginning of the rainy season, and when the enemy attacked, the beacon fires could not be lit."

35. Polyb. 10.43.3.

36. Thuc. 3.22.7–8; Polyaeus 6.19.2; Polyb. 10.42.7–8, of Philip V (ca. 209 B.C.). F.W. Walbank (2:258 on Polyb. 10.42.7) noted that Mount Tisaion has been identified with the modern Mount Bardhazia, a hill only 130 meters high; Eliot (30–31) preferred Mount Chronon, a somewhat higher hill nearby.

37. Ober (196–97) envisioned messages relayed between forts and city by fire or smoke signals; the Limiko Tower apparently included a signaling platform (Ober 147, citing Vanderpool 242).

38. Polyaeus 6.2.1. Cf. Aen. *Tact.* 22.2–3; Aristoph. *Birds* 1158–62.

from within city walls to their allies without.³⁹ But such signals could also be seen by people other than their intended recipients, who would therefore be made alert to the traffic, even if they did not yet know the content of the messages.

Most examples of the Greeks using fire signals are of communication by night, and hence fires were valued for the visibility of their glow from afar rather than for their ability to send smoke signals in the manner of, for instance, some Native American peoples. There are comparatively few references to smoke signals used by Greeks; they were, naturally enough, employed only during daylight.⁴⁰ It seems, however, that long-distance communication during the day was normally done through other devices.

Other Signaling Devices (Semeia)

Although other signaling devices, such as flags, lack the range and efficacy of fire by night, they served well in daylight and in places where signal fires were impractical (e.g., contexts where mobility was demanded) or dangerous (especially on ships). Flags were the most common device and were used on both sea and land.⁴¹ There are also a couple of famous instances in which shields were used: once allegedly by an Alcmaeonid to the Persians after the battle of Marathon, once by a scout ship to Lysander at the opening of the battle of Aegospotami. Both times the flash of a brazen shield indicated an opportunity to attack.⁴²

Semeia of unspecified types were employed by *hemeroskopoi* to pass information swiftly to their commanders, either directly or in relays.⁴³

39. Thuc. 4.111.1–2; Plut. *Alc.* 30.2. Note that Aeneas Tacticus (10.26) warned against allowing people to carry lights at night while their city was besieged, lest somebody signal to the enemy. Cf. also Hdt. 9.118: when Sestus was besieged by the Athenians, its people communicated with their besiegers via *purgoi* upon Artayctes' flight.

40. *Iliad* 18.207–13. Herodotus (4.196) relates a story he ascribes to the Carchedonians, of traders landing on the shores of Libya using smoke to alert the inhabitants living near the sea that they had wares available. Quintus Curtius (5.2.7) related that sometime after the battle of Arbela, Alexander no longer signaled his soldiers to move camp by trumpet (since it was not always heard) but instead had a pole set up, on which he had a fire lit to convey his orders—by light during the night, by smoke during the day.

41. Hence, the verb most often used for signaling with *semeia* is αἶρω, which means “to raise” (LSJ s.vv. αἶρω I.1, σημεῖον I.3).

42. Marathon: Hdt. 6.115, 121, 123 (cf. How and Wells 116 ad loc.); Aegospotami: Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.27; Plut. *Lys.* 10.3, 11.1–2; Polyaeus 1.45.2.

43. Aen. Tact. 6.4: “If there are no places available to scouts where signals can be seen from the city, there must be relays to receive the signals as raised and pass them on.”

The information conveyed was quite restricted—commonly a warning of enemy approach—since *semeia* normally conveyed their message by their presence or absence rather than by variations in manner of presentation.⁴⁴ There is no indication of a semaphore system or record of flexibility more complex than three alternate messages: Iphicrates arranged signals with his scouts to differentiate the approach of an enemy fleet from its anchoring.⁴⁵ More frequently, commanders used *semeia* to convey simple, prearranged orders—usually to attack—to their ships and occasionally to land forces when distance did not permit the use of trumpets (*salpinges*).⁴⁶ *Semeia* also served to convey by their presence a pre-determined message to detached military units.⁴⁷

Trumpets (Salpinges) and Horns (Kerata)

Trumpets are found in military contexts, where they were nearly always used for conveying commands.⁴⁸ In one instance Xenophon arranged for specific meanings for successive signals (and it was not unheard of for commanders to reassign meanings to signals to deceive a nearby enemy), but most examples give the impression that commands (e.g., to attack or to break camp) were represented by generally recognizable patterns.⁴⁹ Given such a function, it is no surprise that Aeneas Tacticus recommended that the trumpeters camp near the *strategoî*. It is decidedly odd to find a trumpeter up in a tree serving as a lookout.⁵⁰

Covert Methods of Communication

Allusions to the conveyance of concealed and secret messages date back to myths of Bellerophon and Palamedes found in epic. There are a few references, made by historians, to events set in the sixth and fifth cen-

44. Thuc. 4.42.4; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.2, 7.2.5.

45. Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.34. The third message is implicit (“all clear”) and can generally be assumed to be denoted by the absence of the *semeion*. In this example, Iphicrates arranged for heralds to watch for the signals and announce them in the city.

46. By land: Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.3. By sea: Thuc. 1.49.1, 2.84.1, 2.84.3, 2.90.4, 7.34.4; Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.28; Arrian *Indica* 28.3–4 (Nearchus, shore to sea); Polyaeus 1.48.2. In Persian use: Hdt. 9.59. Polyaeus (1.48.2) specifies the *kubernetai* as the recipients of naval signals.

47. By land: Thuc. 1.63.2; Q. Curtius 7.11.11; Arrian *Anab.* 4.19.3; cf. Thuc. 8.95.4. By sea: Hdt. 8.11; Thuc. 3.91.4; Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.28, 6.2.30. In Persian use: Hdt. 7.128, 8.7.

48. Save for Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.8–9, all examples are found in land, rather than sea, warfare.

49. Successive signals: Xen. *Anab.* 2.2.4. Altered meanings: Polyaeus 5.16.4; cf. Hdt. 6.77, 78; Polyaeus 1.14.1.

50. Aen. Tact. 22.3; Polyaeus 5.39.1.

turies, as well as the third through second, but the bulk of extant examples is derived from Aeneas Tacticus' work on the defense of a city under siege. This distribution does not indicate that the fourth century was the zenith of the art of secret communication in antiquity; it is rather the result of the happy chance that some small part of Aeneas' writing has been preserved. The reader should keep in mind that Aeneas, however much he was caught up by a fascination for his subject, was writing for the benefit of those who must detect and thwart such communication.⁵¹ His advice, therefore, might not represent secret state-of-the-art techniques.

Before I embark on a consideration of selections from Aeneas' treatise, it is worth mentioning one method of keeping messages from being discovered that he neglected, perhaps because it was self-evident: this is, quite simply, not to write them down. The Greeks were by no means ignorant of the security advantages of a message quietly passed verbally over one committed to writing: Xenophon himself explicitly makes the comparison in the *Cavalry Commander*.⁵² Short messages that could be scratched onto surfaces as small as some of those mentioned could hardly have been difficult to memorize. A courier was needed in either case. Why add to the risk of compromise by sending objects that could be detected?⁵³

Despite the risk involved, there is frequent mention of the conveyance of secret information in written form. There were some advantages to this: it reduced the duration of contact between courier and recipient to the amount of time necessary to pass over the physical form of a message (in comparison, a verbal briefing would take longer and might be overheard). This reduced the likelihood of either or both parties being compromised. Better yet, contact might be rendered unnecessary by the drops described later in this chapter. Written dispatches ensured that the recipient read the actual words of the informant, rather than a courier's paraphrase, which would be subject to omission or variation due to forgetfulness or motive. It also enabled a message to be sent without the bearer knowing its contents, hence reducing the chance of a breach of security.

A major disadvantage to written text was the possibility of discovery.

51. Aeneas Tacticus (31.1–35) recorded many more than the few examples here offered to the reader.

52. Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.9. Cf. Macchiavelli *Discorsi* 3.6.

53. Mention of messages committed to memory can be found at Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.9–10 and Q. Curtius 7.2.17–19. Cf. [Plato] 2 *Epist.* 314b–c.

To circumvent this danger, the Greeks contrived ingenious ways of disguising and concealing documents. Demaratus is said to have informed the Lacedaemonians of the imminent Persian invasion early in the fifth century by writing his message in ink on wooden tablets and then covering them with wax, in which messages were normally written.⁵⁴ Other incidents predating the mid-fourth century include messages disguised in the form of wound dressings, earrings, and votive tablets.⁵⁵ A tattoo hidden under a slave's hair and a bladder bearing ink characters (while serving to carry oil within a flask) were imaginative (and possibly imaginary) innovations.⁵⁶ More conventional letters could be concealed in apparel and sandals.⁵⁷ Other hiding places are suggested in tales of smuggling and subterfuge, such as the story that poison to be used on Alexander was conveyed in a mule's hoof.⁵⁸

The above stratagems served to make discovery of communication difficult but they did not conceal the content of a message should it be found. Aeneas Tacticus recommended a number of ways of making writing intelligible only to its desired recipient. Two of them are ciphers of a sort; the others are codes. A simple cipher substitutes one symbol for another (e.g., one letter for another), in effect producing an alternate alphabet. In very simple ciphers, such as those described by Aeneas, the relationship between the symbols is constant: a fixed, unchanging pattern of dots represents each of the vowels in his cipher described at 31.30–31 (“.” for alpha, “:” for epsilon, etc.). Such a cipher is not difficult to break, given enough text, even for those who know nothing of cryptography—it may be meant as a simple, easily understood example, rather than as a recommendation for actual

54. Hdt. 7.239; Polyaeus 2.20.1; Justin 2.10.13f. (who attributed the invention to Hannibal Barcas, 21.6.6); Gellius 17.9.16f. Cf. Aen. Tact. 31.14.

55. Respectively, Aen. Tact. 31.6 (written on leaves, conveyed to Ephesus; cf. Whitehead, *Aineias the Tactician*, 184 ad loc.), 31.7 (on beaten lead), 31.15 (written in ink on a votive tablet, which was then whitewashed, painted with an appropriate figure, and placed at a hero's shrine; the recipient would remove the paint and the wash by dipping the tablet in oil).

56. Histiaeus shaved his slave's head and tattooed his message thereon (Hdt. 5.35; Aen. Tact. 31.28–29; Polyaeus 1.24.1); the bladder contrivance was described by Aeneas Tacticus at 31.10. Cf. Hdt. 1.123; Polyaeus 7.7.1; Leo Byz. 1.4.

57. Aen. Tact. 31.23, 24; see also Leo Byz. 1.7, 10. T.E. Lawrence (25) mentioned the use of messages sewn into the sandals of couriers in the correspondence between Feisal and his father during the Arab revolt.

58. Arrian *Anab.* 7.27.2. Cf. Q. Curtius 10.10.14; Plut. *Alex.* 77.2; Paus. 8.18.4.

employment.⁵⁹ Should symbols be devised for every letter, as suggested in 31.31, finding the key might be much more difficult for a people unfamiliar with letter frequency or other such deciphering tools.⁶⁰ Hellenistic papyri have been found in Egypt bearing ciphers of this sort—some of which were accompanied by their keys. Some were sophisticated enough to have evolved from sequential substitution (which was the basis for Julius Caesar’s famous cipher).⁶¹ A problem, however, is immediately apparent: if you were a guard and noticed a papyrus written with strange symbols or illegible letter combinations among the baggage of a traveler, would you not suspect some subterfuge? A letter written in such ciphers would therefore have to be concealed.

Aeneas also describes positional ciphers; these had problems as well. It has been observed that messages based on the Lacedaemonian *skutale* can be made legible by anyone with sufficient imagination to try wrapping the lettered strip around rods of various diameters.⁶² Aeneas’ astr-

59. I have tested Aeneas’ sample passages (in English) on friends and relatives who know nothing of cryptography. Five required help; four were successful without assistance. I must note, however, that this passage is not without problems for editors, and readings of the message vary—cf. Whitehead, *Aineias the Tactician*, 190–91 ad loc.

60. Or, I must admit, for myself (although I have done some reading and practice). When applying for a position in the Special Collections of the UCLA University Research Library, I was interviewed by Mr. P.G. Naiditch. Some knowledge of Greek was required, and I was given a copy of an “Antike Inschrift gefunden bei Olympia am 7 Mai 1880” (cf. Joan Evans, *Time and Chance: The Story of Arthur Evans and His Forebears* [London, 1943] 231). To my frustration and embarrassment, I found it unintelligible. As Mr. Naiditch was looking on, I confessed my bewilderment to him, and he advised me to read the passage aloud. It quickly became clear that the passage was written in English using the Greek alphabet. The document was a letter of warning sent by Felix von Luschan to the “spy” Arthur Evans.

61. Gardthausen *Griechische Palaeographie* II.305–6; A.S. Hunt, “A Greek Cryptogram,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 15 (1929): 127–34. I owe these citations to Leighton 153.

62. Plutarch’s description of a *skutale* (*Lys.* 19.5–7; see also Aulus Gellius 17.9) is as good as any.

When the ephors send out an admiral or a general, they make two round pieces of wood exactly alike in length and thickness, so that each corresponds to the other in its dimensions, and keep one themselves, while they give the other to their envoy. These pieces of wood they call “scytalae.” Whenever, then, they wish to send some secret and important message, they make a scroll of parchment long and narrow, like a leathern strap, and wind it round their “scytale,” leaving no vacant space thereon, but covering its surface all round with the parchment. After doing this, they write what they wish on the parchment, just as it lies wrapped about the “scytale”; and when they have written their message, they take the parchment off, and send it,

gals and disk are difficult to recognize as encryption devices and afford somewhat better security due to the abstract nature of the cipher, which does not rely on written characters.⁶³ A simpler method outlined in his study calls for marking letters of an ordinary text with tiny dots to indicate which were part of the secret message.⁶⁴ Thus the message is hidden from casual observation, while its form is not such as to arouse suspicion and so requires no further disguise or concealment. The employment of acrostics (*akrostikhidia*), in which the first letter of each line of poetry spells out a message, is attributed by Diogenes Laertius to a certain Dionysius Metathemenus ("the Renegade"), a contemporary of Heraclides Ponticus (fl. 360).⁶⁵

While ciphers substitute alternate symbols for those symbols that normally compose words, codes replace words or thoughts with symbols or other words of different or no meaning (e.g., the code word "Torch" was used to indicate the 1942 invasion of North Africa). Evidence for the use of codes by the Greeks rests on a single example, which is a small collection of signals of limited flexibility: a treacherous gatekeeper communicated with his city's foes by means of the arrangement and number of stones by a watering hole that he was accustomed to visit. In this way he could convey the watch, detachment, and position to which he had been assigned.⁶⁶

without the piece of wood, to the commander. He, when he has received it, cannot otherwise get any meaning out of it,—since the letters have no connection, but are disarranged,—unless he takes his own "scytale" and winds the strip of parchment about it, so that, when its spiral course is restored perfectly, and that which follows is joined to that which precedes, he reads around the staff, and so discovers the continuity of the message. And the parchment, like the staff, is called "scytale," as the thing measured bears the name of the measure. (Perrin, trans.)

It is a matter of some contention whether the *skutale* served to render messages decipherable or merely as a token of authenticity for the message and its bearer. The present consensus favors the latter purpose. See, e.g., Michell 273–74; Leopold *passim*; J. Oehler, "σκυτάλη," *RE* 3, no. A.1 (1927): 691–92. For the contrary opinion, see Reinke 115–16; Leighton 150–52. There is no adequate explanation, however, why this particular method would be considered appropriate if confidentiality was not a consideration.

63. I.e., a piece of wood with holes denoting letters, through which string was threaded successively according to the sequence of letters in the message (Aen. Tact. 31.16–22).

64. Aen. Tact. 31.2; his idea has endured into the twentieth century.

65. Diog. Laert. 5.93; he also mentions *parastikhidia* in reference to the dramatist Epicharmus (ca. 550–460), at 8.78. I owe my knowledge of these incidents to Margoliouth (an intriguing and bizarre article) 2.

66. Aen. Tact. 18.20–21; cf. 18.19, where the presence or absence of a flock of wool indicated whether Temenus ought to attack.

Allusions that require a common background or acquaintance can—and did—serve to conceal meanings.⁶⁷ When the Lacedaemonian Hippodamus was blockaded by Arcadians in Prasiae, a herald came from Sparta to speak with him. The Arcadians refused to allow the herald into Prasiae, but Hippodamus hailed him from the walls. Knowing that the Arcadians were listening, Hippodamus told the herald to bid the Spartans to deliver his garrison from the woman bound in the temple. The Arcadians present were puzzled, but the Lacedaemonian herald understood the reference. There hung in a temple in Sparta a picture of famine personified and enchained; Hippodamus was telling him that the garrison was starving and immediate relief was imperative.⁶⁸ The letter written by Plato to Dionysius (concerning the exiled Dion and his wife) probably relied on this form of private circumlocution in those passages “clear to Dionysius alone.”⁶⁹

Modes of Delivery

There are a few examples of covert communication by signaling, whether by fire or some other device. These suffered from the same defects, and benefited from the same advantages, as their overt counterparts. However, signaling by fire or other signs catches the eye, and although the content of a message might not be apparent, the fact that a message was sent would be. Attendant on this was a danger that the signaler could be discovered and captured, as was the case with the Athenian Agoratus’ unnamed elder brother.⁷⁰ More often, therefore, the agents themselves or couriers enlisted by them brought covert messages; occasionally arrangements were made for places at which secret messages could be dropped off or picked up.

67. Cf. Q. Curtius 6.9.15; Paus. 1.37.3, in which he addressed those who were initiated into mystery rites as knowing his meaning.

68. Polyaeus 2.15.1 (ca. 364); cf. Athen. 452a.

69. Plato was sent by Dionysius to Dion (then exiled in Athens) to learn whether Dion would object if he gave Dion’s wife to another man. Not surprisingly, Dion took this ill. Plato sent a letter that was open in other respects but that was clear to Dionysius alone in this particular. Plut. *Dion* 21.1, 21.4; cf. [Plato] 2 *Epist.* 312d. Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 7.4–9. Cf. also the tale about Periander’s response to Thrasybulus’ herald (the roles of the two tyrants are given variously in Hdt. 5.92 and Aristotle *Politics* 1284a [3.8.3]).

70. Lysias XIII (*Against Agoratus*) 65/67.

Agent

Unless one proposes that Demaratus was a spy (which is rather unlikely), there are no examples before the Peloponnesian War of spies sending back information while still operating. Instead, they reported once they had returned home and their mission was over. This practice enabled them to give comprehensive information and enabled the recipient of the news to pose questions and get immediate clarification. There was no need to have physical evidence of secret communication in the form of letters and the like, unless by chance the agent needed to supplement his memory. Since other forms of communication that possessed a similar capacity for detail were not likely to be more rapid than the agent traveling in person, the information would be relatively timely if the spy returned immediately after he collected it. The disadvantage to this practice was that the spy either was not in place for an extended period of time or, if so, delayed communication until the end of his sojourn.

Traitors at times communicated directly with their new allies. There is a fragmentary but exciting account of a clandestine meeting in the Florence fragment of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*.

. . . in the temple of Demeter and Kore, which is near the walls . . . through the wood, he was keeping watch inside. And during this time he kept silent hidden in the wood. But the Athenian, when he stood guard, would let down a rope over the wall and make a sign that he had assumed the watch, either by calling or throwing a stone. The Myndian, having come out of the wood, would first take and keep any note that might have been let down by him; then he himself would attach another to the rope.⁷¹

Courier

Although some of those betraying information to the enemy communicated in person, many (from at least the sixth century) had recourse to

71. *Hell. Oxy.* 5.2 (Chambers' reconstruction of the text): [line 5] [τῷ νε]ῷ τῷ τῆς Δήμητρος καὶ Κόρης. ὅ[ς] ἐγγύς τοῖς τεῖχεσιν) ἐστὶ [. . .]ου διὰ τὴν [ῥ]ῆν ἐγγόνει τῇ [ρέων εἰ]ς. ὁ [δ]ὲ κατα [τοῦ]τον μὲν χρόνον ἤσυχον εἶχεν [ἐγκρ]ύψας αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ῥῆν· ὅτε δὲ ἸΙΟ [κατασ]ταίη φύλαξ ὁ Ἀθηναῖος, ἐκεῖνος μὲν καθεὶς ὑπὲρ τοῦ τείχους] σπάρτον | ἐποίησεν ἄν τι σημεῖον ὅτ[ι] παρέιληφεν τῇ[ν] φύλακῆν. ἢ φθεγξάμενος ἢ λίθω βαλὼν. ὁ δὲ Μύνδ[ι]ος ἐξελη[θ]ὼν ἐκ τῆς ἸΙ5 ῥῆς πρῶτον μὲν εἴ τι γραμματεῖον | εἶη παρ' ἐκείνου καθεῖμενον [[τε]] ἐλάβ[ε]ν καὶ διεφύλατ[τε]ν. ἔ[πειτ]α δὲ προ[σ]ῆλθεν αὐτὸς ἄν ἕτερον [τῷ] σπάρτῳ γ[ραμμ]α. There is some debate over whether Μύνδ[ι]ος is a name or an ethnic and over the location of the city to be betrayed: see Bruce 45–49 on 5.2; McKechnie and Kern; in *Hell. Oxy.* 131.

couriers or drops while they remained in their city or in their ranks, as did the spies of Nicias in the late fifth century. The category of couriers can be further divided into those who knew they were conveying secret information and those who did not.

Couriers aware of their role were chosen from among those wishing to send the information or from trusted subordinates. In the former case, the context was usually treachery; in the latter, it could be treachery or sensitive official business (either military or political). The degree of knowledge possessed by such couriers varied. Accomplices of traitors would often know a great deal, and the information could be imparted verbally, as in the case of a man sent by the Theban exiles to Charon regarding the overthrow of Archias.⁷² A cavalryman of a besieged city, who was a member of a fifth column intending to betray his people, sewed a letter into his breastplate and allowed himself to be captured in a raid outside the walls. In this example, the letter would serve more to indicate to his captors that he came to them deliberately (rather than making up a story on the spot that he was on their side all along) than to fill in gaps in his own knowledge, as he was privy to the intended treachery.⁷³ The men purportedly coming from Nicias' spies in Syracuse called out their message indiscriminately to Athenian soldiers, who then relayed it to their generals. This cannot be accepted as indicative of normal procedure, since at other points it is apparent that Nicias had information not available to his fellow generals, implying a more limited and secure channel of communication. Instead, this practice no doubt resulted from Hermocrates' fear lest someone realize that his men were not who they pretended to be.⁷⁴

Some subordinates would be cognizant of the news they bore. When Alexander sent Amphoterus to Parmenio in response to information about Amyntas' plot, he did not entrust the message to a letter; instead, Amphoterus memorized it (moreover, he traveled disguised as a native).⁷⁵ Sicinnus delivered Themistocles' message verbally as well. Other couriers might not know the content of the message they were carrying but would be aware that it was of a secret nature. In this camp

72. Plut. *Mor.* 516cd; *Pelopidas* 7.2. This man was personally known to Charon, which would further aid in both communication and recognition.

73. Aen. *Tact.* 31.8.

74. Thuc. 7.73.3–4; Plut. *Nicias* 26.1–2; Diod. Sic. 13.18.4–5. In fairness, it must be noted that the mode of delivery of Hermocrates' agents was not considered so outlandish as to provoke Nicias' suspicions enough to verify their information by other means.

75. Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.1ff.

belong the slave of Histiaeus and the couriers who handled Pausanias' correspondence with the Persians.⁷⁶

There is no hard evidence that covert couriers were a professional or even specialized breed, but it is not impossible, since the art of smuggling was not unfamiliar to the Greeks. Besides the usual clandestine importation of merchandise and arms, there is reference to "a few men" who yearly deceived the people of Ilium by smuggling in Locrian maidens despite Ilium's every precaution.⁷⁷

It was also possible to dupe an unsuspecting individual to carry messages without his or her knowledge or consent. Pharnabazus deceived Lysander in this way, by agreeing to write a letter absolving him from charges of misconduct, permitting him to read the letter, and then substituting another document (identical in form, but damning, rather than absolving, the Spartan) before Lysander returned to Lacedaemon.⁷⁸ Aeneas suggested sewing a letter written on thin tin into the sandals of a messenger and then openly sending him with an innocent letter to the intended recipient. After delivering his missive, the courier would be asked to spend the night. While he slept his sandals would be unstitched, the message retrieved, and a reply enclosed. Later he would return bearing another innocent letter.⁷⁹

Not all Greek couriers were male; indeed, not all were human. Aeneas suggested employing women for transporting messages written on metal strips and disguised as earrings.⁸⁰ He further noted that dogs carried mes-

76. One presumes that the message was tattooed on Histiaeus' slave's head to keep him from knowing the message he carried—if not, why not give it verbally (unless he was thought too stupid to memorize the amount of text that could be written on his skull)? This story, which embodies the sum of all Greek intelligence activity before Alexander in many histories of espionage (more on account of its bizarre nature than its pertinence), seems to me rather suspect, since it entails a considerable delay while the slave's hair grew back, during which somebody might catch sight of the message; more important, Histiaeus' precarious position might have collapsed in the interval. Cf. Hdt. 5.35; Aen. Tact. 31.28–29; Polyaeus 1.24.1

Pausanias' couriers must have had an inkling that treachery was in the cards if the regent thought it necessary to have them killed on delivery of their message (i.e., he feared loose tongues). See Thuc. 1.132.5.

77. Aen. Tact. 31.24. Since this custom went on yearly for centuries and the women faced death if caught, there is every likelihood that the Locrians depended on those smugglers who were successful and spurned those who were not.

78. Plut. *Lys.* 20.1–4; Polyaeus 7.19.1; Cornelius Nepos *Lys.* 4.

79. Aen. Tact. 31.4; cf. Leo Byz. 1.5.

80. One wonders, however, whether most women would have been afforded ample opportunity for travel between city-states.

sages in Epirus and Thessaly.⁸¹ Aelian mentions a pigeon used to carry a note from Elis to Aegina, albeit in a private context.⁸²

Drops

Among the Greeks, drops were originally conceived to meet the demands of physical access. The earliest example is an ongoing correspondence between Timoxenus of Scione, the commander of a contingent sent by Scione to help defend Potidaea, and Artabazus, who was commanding the Persian forces besieging that city in the early fifth century.⁸³ Timoxenus was working to betray Potidea, and the two communicated via letters wrapped around arrows, which were fired into predetermined spots. The matter was exposed, however, when Artabazus' arrow missed its mark and wounded a man; the letter was discovered and brought to the *strategoi*. Given this context, the idea may have been of Persian origin, but it must be noted that a bit earlier Themistocles had left messages on rocks for the Ionians and their Persian masters to find.⁸⁴ Certainly the Greeks used arrows to carry notes between besieger and besieged from the time of Cimon, but without the notion of a prearranged drop.⁸⁵

Aeneas Tacticus developed the idea of drops in the fourth century, but with a different focus: his primary concern was security. There are problems inherent in a communication system that calls for personal contact between agent, courier (if employed), and recipient. The transaction might be seen, for instance, and suspicion might fall on the parties involved. Couriers could, and did, betray those who relied on them. Aeneas showed how the drop method could avoid such dangers.

The letter should be sent to a certain place [. . . by a man known to the recipient] and it should be indicated to him that a message has come for him and is in the appointed spot, by the fact that the man comes into the city and buys or sells something. And by this

81. Aen. Tact. 31.32.

82. The pigeon bore a message from a victorious competitor at the Olympic Games to the athlete's father in Aegina (Aelian *VH* 9.2; the citation is owed to S. Lewis 42 and 168 n. 104). See also Athenaeus 9.395 and, for Roman uses, Pliny *NH* 10.53 and Front. *Strat.* 3.13.7–8.

83. Hdt. 8.128. Cf. Aen. Tact. 31.25–27; Polyaeus 7.33.1.

84. Hdt. 8.19; Plut. *Them.* 9.2.

85. Plut. *Cimon* 12.3. In terms of fourth-century perceptions, Aeneas Tacticus did not link the Timoxenus-Artabazus correspondence (at 31.25–27) directly to his discussion of drops at 31.14 and 31.31. Cf. Caesar *Bell. Gall.* 5.48.

method neither does the bearer know to whom the message has been brought nor will the recipient be known as having the letter.⁸⁶

The omnipresent shrines to heroes also provided ready receptacles for messages disguised as votive tablets. This method is quite clever: the intentions of a foreigner asking directions to a local shrine would not be suspect. Likewise, frequent trips of a citizen to a shrine would appear quite innocent. If remarked on, those sending messages in this manner would be noteworthy only for their apparent piety. Their cover might be still stronger if the chosen shrine was dedicated to a hero connected with (or reputedly connected with) their families.⁸⁷ The danger of this practice would lie in the possibility that dedications concealing messages might be stolen and hence never received or, still worse, perceived for what they were.

Unfortunately, once again the specter of theory versus practice confronts us—we cannot be certain that drops in fact existed or were employed in the manner described by Aeneas. However, it is certain that an awareness of the potential of the practice existed in the fourth century, and such knowledge begs to be put into use.⁸⁸

Unspecified

As is typical in the history of intelligence, there are examples of covert communication that lack indication of method and manner. Among them is the secret correspondence between Phrynichus and Astyochus. How did Phrynichus know where to get in touch with Astyochus? What conveyance did he use for his letters? How did he expect Astyochus to reply? From the preceding discussion, one would expect that a trusted

86. Aen. Tact. 31.31, Loeb reconstruction and translation; the text may have a lacuna: τὰ πεμπόμενα γράμματα εἰς τινὰ τόπον . . . [ὑπ' ἀνθρώπου γνωτοῦ] τῷ πεμπομένῳ δῆλον γίγνεσθαι ἐλθόντος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ πωλοῦντός τι ἢ ὠνούμενου, ὅτι ἤκει αὐτῷ γράμματα καὶ κεῖται ἐν τῷ προρρηθέντι τόπῳ.

87. It is possible that some degree of impiety might be attached to using shrines for these purposes (cf. Whitehead, *Aineias the Tactician*, 187 ad loc.). The degree to which this would bother the pragmatic (but superstitious) Greeks probably varied according to individual nature.

88. Bankers (*trapeziteis*), with whom documents might be deposited to be recovered by another person, might have provided convenient opportunities for drops. A perusal of private law cases, however, affords the realization that third parties who accepted documents were not always above taking advantage of their position for their own ends. Thus they may have been considered unreliable for covert communication. Yet an individual who became a banker, either as a profession or as a temporary cover, would be in an excellent position to aid covert communication by providing a drop.

courier was employed, but the details of such questions drift, unanswered and lost, on the shoals of the eighth book of Thucydides.⁸⁹

The Effect of Communication on Intelligence

It is readily apparent that the highest quality intelligence is of no use unless it can be communicated to those who have need of it. Yet while theorists such as Xenophon realized that even the most trustworthy intelligence agents could be thwarted in their attempts to pass on information, there is little indication that backup or alternate channels were prepared for agents to ensure that their reports were received. When these are attested, it is in the context of complementary types of communication—most often signals and couriers, with the former serving to get a basic message across swiftly, while the latter provided details when they arrived later. Instead, the Greeks seem to have trusted receipt of messages to Hermes, or to have relied on more than one agent, presumably reckoning that at least one would manage to get word back in time. While this might seem indicative of incompetence or negligence and might lead one to think that the Greeks placed little value on intelligence, one must remember that the lack of effective fallback communication channels plagued military operations as late as World War II, when intelligence was not neglected by most commanders.⁹⁰

In an age before the “real-time” communication of television, radar, radio, and the like, there was necessarily a lag between event and report.⁹¹ This lag was potentially dangerous.⁹² This is particularly true of military intelligence at tactical and operational levels, when a given piece

89. Thuc. 8.50–51; see also Plut. *Alc.* 25.5–10.

90. Handel (*Intelligence and Military Operations*, 62) noted that the British suffered from this malady in the earlier campaigns in the North African theater.

91. While there are allusions to cledomancy (news traveling more quickly than technological means allow), these cannot be taken seriously in discussing the effect of communication on intelligence. See Pritchett 3:132 for some interesting observations and examples.

92. It has been observed (Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, 163 and n. 67, citing M. Van Creveld, *Command in War* [Cambridge, Mass., 1985], 22), with some justification, that the timeliness of information is dependent on the speed of information relative to its subject matter, as opposed to its absolute speed. Yet it is apparent that the speed of electronic transmissions is proportionately far greater to that of the fastest jet than that of a courier to a marching army. The speed of an army's advance over long distances has not increased astronomically over that shown in the ancient world—Alexander's pace in Asia Minor was not all that much slower than the Allied breakout through France in 1944. Likewise, the time necessary to effect political decisions has not necessarily been reduced. While fire signals did convey a message at the speed of light (once they were set up), it has been shown that these messages were limited in range and utility.

of information might be obsolete by the time of arrival or might have arrived too late to allow an effective response. When Brasidas was pressuring the people of Amphipolis to surrender their city to him, for example, Thucydides was a half day's sail away. By the time a messenger had informed Thucydides and he could hasten to the rescue, Brasidas had persuaded the people to admit him, and so Thucydides missed the opportunity to thwart the Spartan's ambitions by a narrow margin.⁹³ For this reason, the Lacedaemonians declined an alliance with Plataea, since they realized that they were too far away to be able to respond in time to requests for aid.⁹⁴ A cynic might retort that this was a pretense covering an unwillingness due to other reasons, but in any case the point was acceptable enough to be proffered as an excuse.

The deleterious effect of slow communication channels might be alleviated in military contexts by a commander's presence among his troops, where his own senses might afford him information, and where his own voice could convey his wish. Not a few commanders made their decisions in this context, but the reduction of reaction time was paid for with the loss of a coherent picture and by a distraction with immediate detail.

Strategic intelligence was less affected by communication time than were other types of information, since it tended to retain its value over a longer period of time. The Athenian dependency on imported grain, for instance, was well known to the Peloponnesians and remained a constant factor in their conduct of the war in the Aegean.

While a lack of technology has been shown to be an impediment to swift and accurate communication, it does have a curious compensation. Studies in the business world have shown that the use of the telephone and of other faceless electronic devices has led to a degree of dislocation and uncertainty in conversants, since they are cut off from nonverbal cues and kinesics. In a world in which most political and many military messages were conveyed face-to-face, these signals would have been available for recipients to interpret (however unconsciously) when receiving news. Isocrates would have us believe that more trust was put in the spoken word than in the written, since there was more scope for empha-

93. Thuc. 4.104.4–106.4. Gomme 3:579 on Thuc. 4.106.4 maintained that Thucydides must have arranged a signaling system, since a messenger would not have been able to get the news to Thucydides so quickly over a distance of fifty miles. He added: "If this is correct, the fact that signaling is not expressly mentioned is of some importance; for it implies that the use of signals was commoner, and more elaborate, than is generally supposed."

94. Hdt. 6.108.

sis in delivery, yet his characterization may have been influenced more by rhetoric and excuses for his medium (i.e., letters) than by a desire to reflect reality.⁹⁵

Contextualizing the Message

Receiving the Message

Yet another factor influencing the reception of information is the nature of the political process within a state. There is some variation in detail, but recipients can be generally classified according to whether a single person can make policy decisions or whether such a capability is accorded to a collective body.⁹⁶

There is a tendency for agents and sources to be brought directly to military commanders, tyrants, and kings, after an initial reception by guards or pickets. This tendency may in part be a result of a simplification on the part of our sources, especially in cases where the name of the commander was used with a verb of learning and where no further details were provided. Xenophon's casual commendation of Agesilaus' personal interview of deserters both provides evidence for the practice and implies the existence of contrary custom.⁹⁷ The guidelines provided to sentries regarding when the commander may or may not be disturbed for news probably varied according to individual, but it appears that a competent leader was expected to be generally available.⁹⁸ Xenophon with some pride brought attention to his own practice of receiving any who had news for him, no matter what his personal cir-

95. Isoc. *Epist.* 1 (*To Dionys.*) 2: "everyone puts more faith in the spoken word than the written"; cf. V (*To Phil.*) 25ff.

96. Cf. Starr 32ff.; Riepl 430–31.

97. Xen. *Ages.* 1.19. Cf. Cyrus personally questioning captives (Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.9).

98. This might not be true of the Greeks' less egalitarian neighbors. Herodotus told how Deioces was not easy of access, and it is possible that his story has foundations in fifth-century Persian practice, at least in times of peace (Hdt. 1.99; cf. Plut. *Them.* 27.2). The ruler probably did not normally personally interview most sources (e.g., the tale of Xerxes' interrogation of the captured Greek spies appears to have been contrary to customary procedure), although he might have been more approachable on campaign. Herodotus' account (4.96) of Coes son of Erxander is suggestive: Coes was in command of the contingent from Mytilene accompanying Darius on his expedition into Scythia and had information he wished to impart to the king. He did not do so, however, until he had satisfied himself that Darius was receptive to others' suggestions. Charidemus was bolder and less fortunate (Q. Curtius 3.2.10–19; Diod. Sic. 17.30.4).

cumstances.⁹⁹ Aeneas Tacticus also warned leaders against postponing attention to news, and his examples—including the fall of the Cadmeia, Lampsacus and of Mytilene—are of interest not only in that they censure the leaders' failure to respond promptly but also in that they provide evidence that guards and attendants felt free to admit messengers to their leaders at all times.¹⁰⁰

Alexander appears to have been somewhat distanced from informants by his officers and guards. These men decided whether or not to disturb the king so that he might hear tidings. When Eurylochus and Epimenes came with information pertaining to a threat to the king's life, Ptolemy and Leonnatus ushered them in and awoke Alexander.¹⁰¹ But Philotas did not communicate Cebalinus' report of an assassination plot to the king, perhaps (as he claimed) because neither it nor the source seemed credible, or perhaps (as his prosecutors claimed) because he was a participant in the plot. He paid for his decision with his life.¹⁰² Cebalinus still hesitated to go directly to Alexander after Philotas put him off, and he eventually sought Metron as an intermediary. It is evident from the latter instance that there was a real danger that a king or tyrant might lack critical information because of precautions taken for his person and because of the consequent reliance on subordinate agents.

There were three main routes by which information came into a governing body: through state channels, through the private information resources possessed by leaders, and through the personal experience and common knowledge of those possessing a vote. These three routes intersected in one or more governing bodies, and the process resulting in their synthesis was, in effect, a process of interpretation and evaluation.

99. Xen. *Anab.* 4.3.10: "Two youths ran up to Xenophon while he was having breakfast; for all knew that it was possible to approach him breaking fast or dining, or wake him up if he was sleeping, to speak with him if anyone had something to say regarding the war." If Diodorus' account is to be believed, Alexander received news of Philotas' plot while in the bath; he reacted at once (Diod. 17.79.5). Cf. Onas. 11.6: "Let [the general] admit everyone who wants to report anything, whether slave or free, night or day, on the march or in camp, when resting, bathing, or eating; for those who put things off and are difficult of access, and bid their subordinates refuse those who come to see them, consequently fail in many and important matters or are ruined by their neglect; for often informants come at critical moments, when it is possible to avert something in the nick of time." See also the practice and comments of T.E. Lawrence (553).

100. Aen. Tact. 31.33–34, citing Astyanax, tyrant of Lampsacus, and Archias at Thebes, and alluding to the capture of Mytilene. Cf. Plut. *Pelopidas* 10.3–4 (not mentioned in Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.6–7); Plut. *Mor.* 596e–f.

101. Q. Curtius 8.6.22ff.

102. Q. Curtius 6.7.16ff.; Diod. Sic. 17.79.1; Arrian *Anab.* 3.26.2; Plut. *Alex.* 49.3.

Information appears to have been received by collective bodies according to standing parameters of more or less complexity. It is not my task to attempt reconstructions of the governmental processes of the many states of the Greek world. Such studies would be most important for assessments of given states' mechanisms for evaluation and hence of their use of intelligence, but they would properly be the scope of whole books. Here, I will confine myself to a few generalities.

In states governed by collective bodies, procedures existed for receiving news from representatives of other states, from their own envoys and agents, and from other informants, domestic or foreign. These were not confined to ad hoc usages of customary channels but were sometimes based on established agendas for discussion of continuing concerns.¹⁰³ In many states there existed more than one deliberating body, so that initial reception of information, deliberation, proposals, and decisions might take place in various bodies depending on the nature of the issue, might be repeated in more than one body, or might be divided between bodies. In states such as Sparta, this system might have existed to ensure that initial evaluation was undertaken by men experienced in politics before the matter was referred to the *Apella* for a yes-or-no vote, but in states such as Athens, in which the membership of the *boulé* was little more expert than their counterparts in the *ekklesia*, the division might have offered little advantage from the standpoint of evaluation.

Before I go further, the input of the voting citizens, particularly in those states governed by democracy, ought to be described. It has been argued, not without reason, that the average citizen of a democratic polis (like his contemporary counterpart) did not possess an adequate depth or breadth of knowledge for making decisions on foreign policy.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, his vote was elicited through persuasive oratory rather than factual presentation. This scenario is generally accurate but needs some qualification. First, the plays of Aristophanes demand from their audi-

103. In fourth-century Athens, the defense of the *khora* was customarily included on the agenda of the *kuria*, as was border defense on that of the *ekklesia* ([Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 43.4; Aristotle *Rhet.* 360a).

104. Cf. Starr 37 and n. 2, citing Demosth. X (4 *Phil.*) 1 and Thuc. 3.38—good examples, but I am somewhat wary of the speakers (Demosthenes and Cleon), who had every motive both to assert the superiority of their own views and to maintain (perhaps falsely, certainly with bias) that the current policy of the citizens was due to ignorance rather than prudence. Similar charges might be made of the voting public in the United States and Canada today; “packaging” and “image” are still quite important in deciding issues. Cf. Handel, *Intelligence and Military Operations*, 28–29, on the difficulties faced by Montgomery's intelligence officers when presenting information to him.

ence a far deeper political awareness than modern popular humor and at least as much as that found on the editorial pages of newspapers. General knowledge of the political world would have been absorbed from one's own and others' experiences (including past sessions of the assembly) and crystallized in a pattern of factual detail, beliefs, and prejudices. Current information was probably derived from casual conversations, especially in the agora or at symposia. Second, *presbeis*, heralds, and messengers were often introduced to the *ekklesia* (at least in Athens, and most probably in other democratic states), which indicates not only that citizens could listen to information directly from its source but that such an opportunity was perceived to be valuable.¹⁰⁵ Finally, the ability of an orator to persuade the average citizen must be set against the citizen's frequent exposure to oratory in assembly and in the courts. The analogy of a television commercial might be helpful: commercials are effective, and the more credible or clever or entertaining a commercial is, the more well-disposed one may feel toward the product it advertises. But the consumer viewing a commercial, while no doubt influenced, does not necessarily divorce reason altogether when making a final decision to spend hard-earned money. The Greek citizen sitting in assembly had a further advantage over the modern consumer: he heard arguments both for and against proposals. One should not expect his actions to be dictated solely by susceptibility to persuasion. Let the model stand, then, with the above provisions.

The intersection of the three routes, and the beginning of the process of interpretation, occurred when an official response to a piece of information was called for. At this point individuals of differing points of view—unless, by strange chance, all were unanimous in their opinion—argued for different responses. With respect to the information at issue, they could argue in two ways: first, that the information was true, false, or incomplete; second, that the information ought to be interpreted in a certain way. Both means could, of course, be used in conjunction; the second was more common than the first.

Arguments for the veracity of information generally consisted of affirmations of the credibility of the source. For example, when discussing the quality of Philip's troops, Demosthenes said, "As I myself have heard from one of those who lived in that very land [Macedonia]—

105. Such seems to have been the case in Chios, at Thuc. 8.14.2 (cf. Meiggs and Lewis no. 8).

a man who would never be the sort to lie—they are no better than anyone else.”¹⁰⁶ Those who argued that information was false attempted to demonstrate the opposite—that the source was not trustworthy or that the content was improbable (the treatment of the latter often degenerated into the former). Thucydides portrayed Athenagoras doing both, when arguing that the Athenian expedition was a myth: “So now that is what these reports mean—reports that did not arise uncontrived but were fabricated by men who always stir things up. But you, if you consider well, will reckon the probabilities not looking to what these men report but from what clever and widely experienced men—as I deem the Athenians to be—would do.”¹⁰⁷ Contradictory reports could also be found, as when Cleon proclaimed that the situation in Pylos was other than a messenger reported, and as when Nicias and Alcibiades used different, and sometimes incompatible, items of information to portray contradictory views of the feasibility of an expedition in Sicily.¹⁰⁸ The states of health of Philip and Alexander were not infrequently subject to contrary rumors.¹⁰⁹

Information depicted as incomplete was handled in a number of ways. The most popular was to supplement it with facts gleaned from a private source, as Demosthenes did with his anonymous informant from Macedonia.¹¹⁰ This tactic both allowed the speaker to reinforce his case with further facts (real or imagined) and also gave him a claim to special authority. It is in this role that those who had private networks functioned best, especially when their claim was recognized. Demosthenes, for instance, when evaluating Philip’s strength before the assembly, differentiated the understanding of a casual observer from his own expert knowledge: he claimed privileged information that the Thessalians had resolved on actions indicating a break with Philip.¹¹¹

The same device was also of utility when presenting an interpretation of an item of information. An excellent example is provided by Brasidas, who saw his foes’ manner of comportment and called out to his own

106. Demosth. II (2 *Olynth.*) 17.

107. Thuc. 6.36.3.

108. Thuc. 4.27.3, 6.9–19.

109. See, e.g., Arrian *Anab.* 1.7.3–6.

110. Demosth. II (2 *Olynth.*) 17. Cf. Lysias VIII (*Accusation of calumny*) 8–9.

111. Demosth. I (1 *Olynth.*) 21–22; cf. XVIII (*On the crown*) 172. Isocrates, when writing an oration to Philip (V [*To Philip*] 75), denied that Demosthenes and Philip’s other detractors had a right to claim exact knowledge; it is evident, however, that Isocrates here had a motive for so depicting them.

men: "These men will not withstand us—they show it in the movement of their spears and heads; when that occurs among men, they rarely withstand attackers."¹¹² Brasidas took a detail observed by all and attached a meaning to it. He did this to hearten his troops, one suspects, rather than based on specialized knowledge (in effect, the Athenians did stand up to the attack, if only for a short while). He was, however, perceived as credible, being both experienced and valorous. In the event, the perception was justified, since he led his men to his death and their victory.

It often happened that the same information was presented with different interpretations by two parties: in the debates of rival embassies—such as those of the Corinthians and Corcyrans at Athens or those of the Corinthians and Athenians at Sparta—there was little or no quibbling over whether or not events occurred; instead, the significance and pertinence of the events was hotly contested.¹¹³ In such cases, the democratic assembly acted more as a jury in a court case than as a body deliberating information. In such contexts emotional appeals are most powerful, and consideration of information was perhaps less a concern than was sympathy with those interpreting it.

Interrogation

Not all informants were willing, and even those who were could be moved to suppress, alter, or otherwise influence the information they imparted. The interrogator had to develop both a skill enabling him to sense when another person was withholding information and an ability to motivate the person to provide it. The first attribute is difficult to quantify and seems to be a function of reason and intuition developed through personal experience. It should be noted, however, that the intelligence evaluator of ancient Greece would often be able to check his source's words against his nonverbal communication (e.g., posture, eye contact), since information was frequently conveyed orally rather than through writing. The ability to effectively motivate an informant was and remains the product of keen study of psychology, but often interrogators resorted to less subtle but effective stimuli, including torture, threats of torture or violence, rewards or promised rewards, blackmail, and psychological manipulation to loosen the tongues of recalcitrant individuals.

112. Thuc. 5.10.5. The context is in a military, rather than democratic, setting but the intent and effect is relevant.

113. Thuc. 1.32–43, 1.68–78.

Torture or threats of death were employed to compel information, to ensure its accuracy, or to accomplish both these ends. Obviously torture would only be feasible for sources over which the interrogator had power of life and death (such as slaves, captives, deserters, and suspected traitors) and would not be applicable to those who could not be harmed due to law, consequence, or relative power (heralds, allied leaders, etc.). Agents employed by the interrogator (such as scouts or watchers) could be punished or even killed for suppressing information or failing to perform their duties.¹¹⁴

In Athenian legal practice slaves were forced to undergo torture before their testimony was admissible in some types of court cases.¹¹⁵ Consequently the efficacy of torture was upheld or questioned by prosecutors and defendants depending on whether testimony was advantageous or deleterious to their position. In different contexts Antiphon provided arguments for both sides: “torture forces people to tell the truth, even if the result will be death, since the compulsion of the moment overrides all else”;¹¹⁶ “I need not remind you, I think, that witnesses under torture are biased in favor of those doing the torturing.”¹¹⁷ In his work on rhetoric, Aristotle illustrated ways in which evidence obtained from torture could be upheld or attacked.¹¹⁸

Psychological manipulation was more broadly applicable and often equally effective. Methods were as varied and enduring as human nature. For example, the technique of eliciting information while pretending to

114. Alexander is reported to have had the *phulakes* guarding the tomb of Cyrus tortured when he learned that the grave had been plundered. He released them when he had established that they had not been privy to the theft (Arrian *Anab.* 6.2.11). In this instance, the torture was applied in the context of a criminal investigation rather than in that of receiving guards' reports; hence the example must be taken as exceptional.

115. Slaves were tortured for evidence in those types of trial in which “they deny a theft or conspire with their masters” (Antiphon 1 *Tetr.* 3.4). In theory, free citizens could not be tortured and were protected by a decree passed in the archonship of Scamandrius (Andoc. *On the mysteries* 43; cf. Antiphon 1 *Tetr.* 3.4; Demosth. XXIX [*Against Aphobus III*] 14, 39). Andocides mentioned (loc. cit.) that this decree was suspended on the motion of a certain Pisander in the panics concerning the herms and profanations, and examples of its neglect in other crises are not lacking (see, e.g., Antiphon *Murd. Her.* 30, 49–50; Plut. *Mor.* 509a). Cf. Bushala and DuBois on this subject.

116. Antiphon VI (*On the choreutes*) 25. See also Antiphon I (*Against the stepmother*) 10; Antiphon 1 *Tetr.* 2.7; Demosth. XXIX (*Against Aphobus III*) 5, 11, 37; Lysias *On a wound by premeditation* 10, 14; Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 28–30.

117. Antiphon V (*On the murder of Herodas*) 31—the prosecution alone could release a slave from torture. For the ambiguity see also Q. Curtius 7.2.34 on the confessions of Philotas.

118. Aristot. *Rhet.* 1376b–1377a.

be fully informed (called “show of knowledge”) is attested in both the ancient and modern worlds. An example from a legal case might be instructive. In the course of investigating his wife’s infidelity, a certain Euphiletus took aside his wife’s servant and threatened her with torture if she did not confess that his wife was having an affair. She refused to admit that his wife was guilty. But Euphiletus had earlier been told that Eratosthenes might have been involved, so he pretended he knew the whole story, mentioning Eratosthenes by name, and gave out that he was merely establishing corroborating evidence. At this the servant thought the game was up and provided full details in her confession.¹¹⁹

Examples of interrogation of voluntary informants can be found in law cases and in literature as well, but Xenophon provided the most detailed outline of a debriefing in a scene depicting the return of the spy Araspas in the *Education of Cyrus*.¹²⁰ As previously described in chapter 3, this debriefing was rather straightforward: there was an admonition not to conceal or neglect anything, a statement professing the agent’s integrity and the means by which he accomplished his mission and gained access to the information, and a question-and-answer session in which information was both volunteered and demanded. Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* provides a similar, if more stylized, reconstruction of a debriefing, in this case of an anonymous *kataskopos* by Eteocles.¹²¹ Examples of interrogation of unwilling (or at least involuntary) subjects are not uncommon but are not generally detailed. The most elaborate is the poetic account of the questioning of the captive Dolon by Odysseus in the *Iliad*. It is roughly similar to the accounts already mentioned. One might compare briefer anecdotes in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, such as captives questioned about routes and geography.¹²²

119. Lysias I (*On the murder of Eratosthenes*) 19. The same device was also used when interrogating German prisoners of war in World War II. American intelligence officers would have at their disposal both background information from other sources and identity documents taken from prisoners (the abbreviations and codes of which they understood better than the captives). They used these to impress the Germans with remarks on their past histories and so give them the impression that in all cases they were merely confirming that which was already known. A variation was to make leading statements, saying, e.g., “We have learned that your unit was responsible for the execution of ten civilians,” when there was a suspicion that something of this sort had occurred, to which a prisoner of war might reply: “Oh no, sir—only five” (P. Levine, conversation with the author, 13 June 1993).

120. Cf. *Od.* 4.630ff., 13.232ff., 16.235ff., 16.460ff.

121. Aeschylus *Seven Against Thebes* 369–676. This passage has recently been discussed by H. Roisman (17–36), but in a literary context.

122. *Iliad* 10.370–459; Xen. *Anab.* 3.5.14–15, 4.1.22–23. Cf. Hdt. 7.146; Thuc. 8.33.4; Plut. *Nic.* 30.1.

With some skill, intelligence could be derived from people who did not realize that they were providing substance of material value—even from those imparting misinformation. At one point in the odyssey of the Ten Thousand, the Greeks were encamped by a city on a fertile and lush tract between the Tigris and a canal. Here a messenger came to Clearchus from Ariaeus and Artaozus, who were Persians who had formerly fought for Cyrus (and hence claimed goodwill to the Greeks) but were now in the army of the Persian king Artaxerxes. The messenger warned Clearchus to guard the bridge over the Tigris, since Artaxerxes intended to burn it and thereby cut the Greeks off. At the same time he warned of a night attack. Clearchus was alarmed, but a young man present pointed out to him that the stories were inconsistent, since it was in the Persians' interest to preserve the bridge for their own use if they were to attack. Clearchus then inquired of the messenger how large the "island" was. On being told it was extensive, he evaluated what he had been told and perceived the true intent of the Persians: they wished to prevent him from firing the bridge himself and establishing himself in a defensible area in which he could easily provide for his men.¹²³

Interpreting Messages

Interpretation has more than one denotation, paralleling, if you will, the problems the Greeks faced when trying to understand information. In one sense, interpretation refers to the verbal translation of an informant's report into language comprehensible to its recipient (e.g., Persian to Greek). In another, it refers to conveying the significance of observed or reported information (e.g., the significance of an envoy's demand for earth and water).

Verbal Translation

Verbal translation is not easy. Abstract concepts can be particularly difficult to convey, as the Greeks found out to their cost when they equated *libertas* and ἐλευθερία. Both words can be roughly translated as "liberty," but liberty had different parameters to a Roman and a Greek. Concepts and terms such as hegemony (ἡγεμονία) and democracy (δημοκρατία) might well have lacked easy equivalents in other tongues, and Greek might equally have lacked words for foreign concepts. In the

123. Xen. *Anab.* 2.4.14–24. To be on the safe side, Clearchus still stationed a guard at the bridge.

world of diplomacy, this represented a potential problem. It may also have led to misapprehension in the military sphere (what *is* a Lacedaemonian λόχος?). One can only imagine how exacerbated the problem was when Alexander was campaigning far to the east and probably had to make inquiries through two interpreters—one to translate Greek and Persian, another to translate the local language and Persian—since it was unlikely that a local could speak Greek.¹²⁴ Imperfect knowledge of a language can only make understanding more difficult. Trivial differences in syntax can lead to major differences in meaning. There is a story that when a priest at the oracle of Zeus Ammon intended to address Alexander as “my son” (ὦ παίδιον), he mistook a neuter for a masculine and so hailed him as “son of Zeus” (ὦ παίδιος = ὦ παῖ Δίος).¹²⁵

The problem of understanding might not have only applied to foreign tongues: Greek was not uniformly spoken through space or time.¹²⁶ Besides potential misunderstanding due to dialect, words themselves could and did change their connotation, as Thucydides described in the context of stasis.¹²⁷ Finally, one can no doubt draw from one’s own personal experience examples of miscommunication between two fluent speakers of the same language raised in the same culture.

Those who attempted to bridge language barriers were called *hermeneis*. Curiously, their use is not often mentioned in the sources, even when they would logically have been needed. When present, they are usually found attached to rulers of considerable status, such as Darius, Cyrus, Seuthes, and Alexander, or in the service of military commanders abroad, as in the case of the Ten Thousand. They are not found employed by states with collective governments, although there is implicit evidence that they were available. The letters sent by the Persian

124. Cf. Engels 339; Arrian *Anab.* 7.1.5; Arrian *Indica* 28.5.

125. Plut. *Alex.* 27.9, an anecdote too good to be true.

126. S. Lattimore has brought to my attention the possibility of cognitive dissonance in speeches of (1) foreign-born statesmen, such as Dinarchus, who would have been born to a Doric dialect, speaking Attic Greek (at least, Attic Greek is what we find in their preserved speeches) and (2) speakers in court who either delivered speeches composed by a more gifted orator, or spoke in an Attic dialect when they themselves were of foreign extraction (e.g., Euxitheus, who probably spoke in the Aeolic dialect yet delivered Antiphon’s *On the Murder of Herodes* in fine Attic). I have not been able to find any indication that suppression of dialect marred credibility, but certainly orators tried to adapt speeches to their speakers. In his *Rhetoric* (1405a8, 1406a15), Aristotle said that one of the benefits of metaphors and epithets was that they gave a pleasing “exotic air” (τὸ ξενικόν and ξενικὴν ποιεῖ τὴν λέξιν) to a speaker’s words.

127. Thuc. 3.82.4.

king to the Lacedaemonians in 425 were not written in Greek, as Thucydides recorded that they were translated by the Athenians when they were intercepted.¹²⁸ Gomme has suggested that metics might have served the Athenians as interpreters, but one must also realize that the Persian king expected the Lacedaemonians to be able to translate the documents. When Plutarch described the advent of Persian envoys demanding earth and water, he included among them a man bilingual in Persian and Greek.¹²⁹ It may be, therefore, that embassies were accompanied when necessary by their own interpreter—motives for this practice, such as independence, security, and reliability, come to mind easily enough, if this was in fact the case. Some interpreters attached to rulers are named in the sources and were individuals of consequence, with a more or less permanent and professional office. Those serving generals or private individuals are not named and were employed on a less official and more temporary basis.¹³⁰ Interpreters must also have been available to merchants and travelers, as they were for Herodotus when he was in Egypt.¹³¹ In a pinch, Greeks could try to convey meanings with gestures or mien.¹³²

Most interpreters were not ethnic Greeks. Indeed, the Greeks seemed to have a reluctance to learn a tongue other than their own—Peuces might have been the only Macedonian in Alexander's force to learn Persian, and he did so only after his appointment as satrap.¹³³ Such sentiment was not

128. Thuc. 4.50.1–3.

129. Plut. *Them.* 6.2.

130. Interpreters in Herodotus' stories of the Persian kings, however, tend to be anonymous, perhaps because of the ahistorical nature of many of the tales. See, e. g., 1.86, 3.38, 3.140.

131. Hdt. 2.125.

132. At *Anab.* 4.5.33 Xenophon records that Greek soldiers communicated with Armenian boys by signs as if the boys were deaf and dumb; cf. Hdt. 4.113 (Scythians and Amazons). Quintus Curtius (8.12.9) painted an amusing picture of Alexander encountering the Indian ruler Omphis. The two were unable to communicate in speech and attempted to convey goodwill through their countenance (an interpreter was soon found).

133. Arrian *Anab.* 6.30.3. It is not certain that Arrian meant that Peuces was unique. He might have been the only Macedonian considered worthy of mention, and the passage reads *μόνος τῶν ἄλλων Μακεδόνων μεταβαλὼν τὴν Μηδικὴν καὶ φωνὴν τὴν Περσικὴν ἐκμαθὼν καὶ τὰλλα ξύμπαντα ἐς τρόπον τὸν Περσικὸν κατασκευασάμενος*, so that it is possible (although not probable) that the combination is what was singular. In any case, "going native" drew disapproval (cf. Arrian *Anab.* 7.6.3). Quintus Curtius (3.12.12) described Leonnatus speaking with Darius' mother, apparently with no translator present, but the account seems fictitious, and in any case mechanics might have been omitted for the sake of drama.

evident among their neighbors.¹³⁴ Consequently Greeks coming into contact with people of other languages were often forced to rely on an interpreter who differed from them in ethnic origin.¹³⁵ This might have been a disadvantage with respect to availability or fidelity and security (though perhaps not, as Greeks seem to have betrayed Greeks as often as anyone else did). It did have a positive aspect: foreign interpreters could provide their patrons with additional information about unfamiliar lands and people. When an embassy of Persians, formerly allies in Cyrus' cause, came up to the Greek leaders, the man interpreting for the Greeks recognized the brother of their enemy Tissaphernes among them and communicated his realization that the embassy was not to be trusted.¹³⁶

There are some instances in which the credibility or loyalty of an interpreter was dubious,¹³⁷ but how could those speaking through him discern this? Seuthes knew some Greek already and so had some measure of control over Abrozelmēs, but he was probably exceptional in this regard.¹³⁸

Explanation of Significance

On Herodotus' canvas, the Spartans at Thermopylae—sitting in clusters or alone, combing their long hair, and lounging at ease on the edge of ruin—are juxtaposed by a look of perplexity on the face of a Persian scout. The tidings were no less strange to Xerxes. Numbers and defenses both scout and king could reckon and despise, but Herodotus' vignette demands that Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, be present in the king's train, so that Xerxes might know (if never really understand) what these actions meant: his delay was futile, since his opponents would never surrender but were preparing themselves for death in battle.¹³⁹

134. Cf. Hdt. 9.16; Diod. Sic. 17.67.1. Herodotus (2.154) related a story of Psammetichus, ruler of Egypt, wherein he gave Egyptian boys to those Greeks who helped him gain his throne, so that the boys would learn Greek—Herodotus supposed these were the ancestors of the Egyptian interpreters, who formed a class in Egypt (Hdt. 2.164).

135. The Greek colonists in Asia Minor, Italy, and Sicily must surely have faced difficulties communicating with the indigenous peoples, but no record is left of their solutions to this problem, which, if not overcome, would have rendered most types of information sources useless. Instead, most examples come from Xenophon's account of the Ten Thousand, while the remainder are derived from the campaigns of Alexander and the travels of Herodotus.

136. Xen. *Anab.* 2.5.35.

137. Xen. *Anab.* 7.6.43; Arrian *Indica* 28.5.

138. Xen. *Anab.* 7.6.8–9.

139. Hdt. 7.209–10. The incident is referred to in the *Suda* s.v. (oddly enough) 'Ἀλογία.

Interpretation serves to make information accessible to its recipient. It is a major step in the progression of information to intelligence. Needless to say, not all examples are so dramatic, and many acts of interpretation are unconscious—a yellow sign with a bent arrow, for example, is immediately interpreted by a driver to signify a curve in the road ahead. There is a danger, however, in misinterpreting things that resemble things familiar to us—Americans driving in Canada have been known to mistake speed limits posted in kilometers per hour for limits in miles per hour. In the meeting between Alexander and Omphis, Alexander had at first thought Omphis came to offer battle, since the Indian led his troops, as a formal reception, arrayed as if for war. The Macedonian at once set about preparing for an onslaught, whereupon Omphis rightly diagnosed Alexander's misinterpretation and rode forward alone.¹⁴⁰

More generally, the meaning of a piece of information is not always clear when treated in isolation. If a scout returned to tell his commander that a company carried few provisions in its baggage train, this piece of news could be open to several interpretations. The troops might have planned a short march that they would complete quickly, since they would be relatively unencumbered. Another possibility is that they would march far but slowly, due to the need to forage. A third is that they expected to find supplies furnished by friends and sympathizers along their route and would therefore travel quickly and far. If the commander knew that the people of a nearby city were friendly to the company's men, he might favor the third interpretation. He might also see an opportunity: a delay would cause the company to become vulnerable to shortages, so he might send peltasts to slow their progress, or he might contrive obstacles across their expected route. He might arouse false suspicions and fears among the people of the city supplying provisions, or he might undertake some other action to exploit the information.

The above collation and interpretation of information is a crude and simple example of intelligence. Not surprisingly, most matters were far more complex in both number of variables and possible interpretations. Perhaps in consequence the Greeks invested considerable time and energy in interpretation and evaluation.

140. Q. Curtius 8.12.8.

Verisimilitude and Validation

Credibility in classical Greece was governed by perceptions of individuals, rather than by a fixed hierarchy of agents or sources. Demosthenes once said that captives were more trustworthy than other sources, since they had no interests of their own to further.¹⁴¹ While it is true that captives were taken or questioned to verify information provided by other sources and that they were especially vulnerable to retribution if they were proved deceitful, one might well imagine Demosthenes saying otherwise if it was in his interest to speak contrary to the testimony of a captive. More indicative of ancient practice is the sentiment attributed to Agesilaus, who claimed that when he heard praise or blame spoken of a man, he sought information on the speaker before believing the words.¹⁴² The criteria for credibility were essentially threefold: character, access, and motive.

Perceptions of the character of the informant were crucial, as is illustrated in efforts to uphold or demolish on this basis the testimony of witnesses in law cases.¹⁴³ Sian Lewis has already done an admirable job of delineating the various factors influencing assessment of character, such as social class, ethnicity, gender, and reputation, leaving me only the task of adding that white hair also led an air of authority to words. For example, Lysias noted that he sought the eldest Plataean when making inquiries about the status of a certain Panceleon, who claimed to be from that polis.¹⁴⁴

Access to information was also important and could mitigate antipathy aroused by less than desirable character traits, at least for a while. Alcibiades, for instance, was valued by the Spartans because of his intimacy with Athenian capabilities and machinations; hence his previous excesses were for a time overlooked. Eyewitnesses were, sensibly enough, thought more trustworthy than those who had heard of events by hearsay. Iphicrates, for example, was suspicious of reports of the death of Mnasippus that came to him en route to Corcyra in 373, since they were not from eyewitnesses. He thought the reports were meant to deceive

141. Demosth. X (4 *Phil.*) 32.

142. Plut. *Mor.* 208d; cf. Xen. *Ages.* 11.4.

143. See, e.g., Lysias XXVI (*On the scrutiny of Evander*) 21ff.

144. Lysias XXIII (*Against Panceleon*) 5. Cf. *Iliad* 1.250–74; Isoc. VI (*Archidamus*) 4.

him.¹⁴⁵ Similar assessments can be found in the programmatic statements of Thucydides, who further points out that even those present at the same event remember things differently.¹⁴⁶ Alexander and Xenophon also perceived the need to establish *how* the source or agent obtained information. Alexander questioned a prisoner as to whether he knew of a path around the Susian Rocks by hearsay or personal observation; the latter was esteemed as the more certain type of knowledge.¹⁴⁷ Xenophon's methods are probably reflected in his descriptions of Cyrus, who asked of his ally how he knew that a large force of the enemy was afield against him, and who was pleased to learn that his ally's information was confirmed by many people coming with different versions of the same story.¹⁴⁸ Knowledge about the source was especially of use when dealing with people of limited experience. On his trek back from India, Alexander sent men ahead to find out how far distant the ocean lay. His men questioned some locals downriver, who told them they had never heard of such a body of water, but who mentioned that on the third day of their voyage downstream the Macedonians would reach bitter water. The scouts correctly deduced that the bitter water was saltwater and that the ocean was close. They recognized that the knowledge of the people they had encountered was incomplete due to isolation.¹⁴⁹

While agents entrusted with information gathering rarely had need to justify their communication of information, the motivations of sources were usually carefully considered. People with interests at stake demanded cautious treatment. If you were seeking to purchase a home, you would be more likely to believe what your sister tells you of a house she visited than what you hear from its owner, even though the latter's knowledge would be far more comprehensive. So, too, the Greeks normally exercised caution in the cases of exiles appealing for aid or traitors

145. Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.31. Cf. Thuc. 3.29.1–2: Prof. Lattimore (conversation with the author, 27 May 1994) observed that in this passage Thucydides seems to mock Alcidas for his tardy efforts to verify reports of the fall of Mytilene. Cf. also Hutchinson (48 on Aesch. *Seven Against Thebes* 41), who noted that in drama personal observation on the part of messengers heightened their claim to veracity, citing also Aesch. *Persians* 266 (cf. 513) and Soph. *Antigone* 1192f.; he further distinguished autopsy from report, citing Eur. *Heracles* 847f.

146. Thuc. 1.22.3. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.45.

147. Q. Curtius 5.4.10.

148. Xen. *Cyr.* 2.1.3–4.

149. Q. Curtius 9.9.6.

rationalizing their treachery. Those allies thought to be serving the interest of their state at another's expense might also be suspect, as Nicias bitterly observed of the Egestaeans.¹⁵⁰ While the Greeks at Salamis thought Aristides more trustworthy than Themistocles, they were still not convinced of the Persian encirclement until told by non-Athenian sources, when a Tenian ship deserted to them with the news.¹⁵¹ In the legal arena, motives, or lack thereof, of the participants in court cases were of constant concern. In one instance, Lysias alleged that Agoratus adopted the pretense of being an unwilling informer so that he might appear more trustworthy.¹⁵²

Besides unconscious editing or bias due to self-interest, outright fabrication and misinformation had to be reckoned with. Misinformation and fake deserters were largely successful, not because the Greeks were ignorant of the possibility that informants could deceive them (quite the contrary), but because most were less than systematic in verifying information. Xenophon and Alexander were exceptions—albeit not infallible ones—to this rule; the Lacedaemonians were better than most.¹⁵³ Other states and individuals were not always negligent, but they were not consistently prudent.

How did the Greeks distinguish fact from fiction? One method used well by Xenophon and Alexander was to seek the same information from more than one individual.¹⁵⁴ These commanders habitually questioned a number of prisoners at once or in succession and furnished themselves with two or more guides when possible.¹⁵⁵ More than one *type* of source or agent was sometimes sought—Xenophon, for example, mentioned that information on the king's army provided by deserters was confirmed

150. Thuc. 6.12.1, cf. 6.8.2.

151. Hdt. 7.80–82; Plut. *Them.* 12.7.

152. Lysias XIII (*Against Agoratus*) 19.

153. Some examples: Hdt. 1.152; Thuc. 6.46. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.7ff.: Praxitas, the Lacedaemonian polemarch at Sicyon, was approached by Pasimelus and Alcimenes, both Corinthians whom he had previously known and trusted, regarding secretly admitting his troops into Corinth. Upon his arrival, he had doubts and sent a man ahead to check out affairs inside the gates; the man was shown that all was as promised. Cf. the Corinthians' allegation that it was in the Lacedaemonian character to mistrust even that which seems certain (Thuc. 1.70.3).

154. Cf. Kautiliya's acceptance of an item of information if the same report was derived from three sources (Chakraborty 44).

155. See, e.g., Q. Curtius 9.2.5–6. Pompiscus was said to have sent spies out separately from each other to get independent reports for the same reason (Polyaenus 5.33.6). Cf. Polyb. 14.3.7: Scipio questioned his *kataskopoi* and compared their reports.

by prisoners after battle.¹⁵⁶ Likewise information provided by indigenous peoples was checked against those of prisoners (and found wanting) by Alexander. Other cases include the confirmation of reports from scouts by captives, from captives by scouts, from spies by captives, from envoys by state investigations, and from deserters by personal investigation. In court, the weight of evidence could be increased by appeals to independent corroboration through investigation.¹⁵⁷ It must be noted that two or more sources could at once be false or mistaken and that while comparison of reports was conducive to better intelligence, it was not a guarantee of it. Neglect of the practice, however, left a commander or ruler vulnerable, as Nicias became when he did not bother to confirm information ostensibly from his spies by the employment of scouts.

Another method was to undertake an independent investigation. Such investigations were carried out in response to information that either derived from a source that was in some way dubious or demanded action of especially serious consequence. When Nicias learned from his Sicilian foes of the fate of Demosthenes' contingent, he found the news incredible and asked for a truce to send back a horseman to verify it.¹⁵⁸ Alexander had a similar reaction when he heard (the source is unspecified) that Darius' army was behind him, but he nevertheless sent companions to Issus in a thirty-oar ship to investigate the report and found it to be true.¹⁵⁹ Investigations could also be commissioned by a state either before it committed itself to an enterprise or to settle disputed information. Curiously, there is no mention of any official investigation finding matters different from those reported, even when, as in the case of the Athenians sent to check on the stories of the Egestaeans, the first source had imparted false information.¹⁶⁰

The price of investigation is time. Although the Lacedaemonians were not often deceived by false information, their habit of investigating information frequently caused delays and led to missed opportunities. Passage of time also increased the chance of Sparta's opponents discovering and countering matters held suspended until verification. Such was the case when the Athenians learned of secret negotiations between the

156. Xen. *Anab.* 1.7.13; see also Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1.25.

157. See, e.g., [Lysias] *Accusation of calumny* 8.9.

158. Thuc. 7.83.1.

159. Arrian *Anab.* 2.7.2; cf. Arrian *Anab.* 4.24.9. See also Plut. *Phocion* 25; Plut. *Mor.* 188d.

160. Thuc. 6.8.2.

Lacedaemonians and Chians (regarding the latter's revolt from Athens) during the interval necessary for the Spartan agent Phrynīs to ascertain whether the Chian negotiators had accurately represented the situation on their island.¹⁶¹

The Greeks evaluated reports in light of their own expectations, which were influenced not only by general knowledge arising from previous experience and observation but also by prejudice and sentiment. By way of example, David Lewis' analysis of influences on the Spartan assembly might be summarized. He noted a hostility to commanders (and possibly ambassadors) who stepped out of line, impatience with diplomatic maneuvering in cases that seemed straightforward, and a tendency to bear grudges and maintain prejudices. The Spartans could also be influenced by sentiment and appeals to uphold liberty and to fulfill their duties.¹⁶² Such characteristics were not atypical of other poleis, though there is some variation: in Athens, for instance, one could try to discredit an opponent by depicting him as rich, having oligarchic leanings, and thus hostile to the democracy.

We mortals are reluctant to believe that which we do not wish to believe, and the Greeks were no exception to this malady. The Athenians were more vulnerable than most: when news came to them—from a number of independent sources—that Mytilene was planning to revolt, they at first refused to acknowledge such a possibility, putting their faith, as Thucydides said, in the wish that it might not be true.¹⁶³ Likewise the fate of the Sicilian expedition met with incredulity at Athens, even though soldiers who had themselves escaped told the story in grim detail.¹⁶⁴ The *ekklesia's* enduring capacity for this sort of self-deception was a theme harped on by Demosthenes and Aristophanes (although the orator's assessment might be based more on petulance than observation, since the Athenians were reluctant to believe what *he* wanted them to believe).¹⁶⁵ Individuals suffered from similar delusion: since Phocion trusted Nicanor, he did not believe reports against him until Nicanor was actually running trenches around the Piraeus.¹⁶⁶

161. Thuc. 8.6.4.

162. D. Lewis 111–12; his nn. 25–35 provide a number of examples drawn from Thucydides and Xenophon.

163. Thuc. 3.3.1.

164. Thuc. 8.1.1.

165. Demosth. XIX (*On the embassy*) 23–24; Aristoph. *Knights*, e.g., *passim*.

166. Plut. *Phoc.* 32.5. Alexander disbelieved messengers telling him of Harpalus' flight (Plut. *Alex.* 41.8) and, apparently, of Philotas' treason (Arrian *Anab.* 3.26.1).

The effect of such reluctance was to increase the time interval between information and action. In the case of the Mytilene revolt, the delay prevented any opportunity to forestall the revolt or nip it in the bud. By the time the Athenians opened their eyes to the situation, the Mytilenaeans had prepared themselves for a conflict. The eventual suppression of the revolt cost the Athenians lives and resources.

While wishful thinking and cautious investigation caused delays in processing information, fear and insecurity could lead to a state of irrationality in which people precipitously acted on unconfirmed reports. It has been generally noted that people tend to believe reports that confirm their fears and that these reports are often exaggerated.¹⁶⁷ The witch-hunt arising from popular reaction to the mutilation of the herms is a case in point—Thucydides remarked with some bitterness that the Athenians, in their state of suspicion, did not test informers, and that in their trust of rascals, they imprisoned good men.¹⁶⁸ Individuals could also be susceptible to paranoia, especially tyrants and kings. Arrian noted that even Alexander became quick to credit accusations toward the end of his life, and the deaths of Clitus and Parmenio arose from passion based on insecurity.¹⁶⁹ One would expect the Lacedaemonians, who lived in constant dread of a helot revolt, to be particularly subject to precipitous actions, but the evidence that exists contradicts this notion. When Pausanias was charged by a helot informer of plotting rebellion, the allegations were not considered sufficient in themselves to bring action against a regent of royal blood.¹⁷⁰ The conspiracies of Cinadon and the Neodamades were handled with efficiency rather than the panics and furors characteristic of Athens. Perhaps such emotional restraint reflects the Spartan character; perhaps they possessed a degree of practice and proficiency in dealing with threats to their security; perhaps the influence of fear was countered by their customary caution and attention to verification.

167. Cf. Q. Curtius 9.2.12ff., in which passage Alexander was depicted as warning his men of a tendency to exaggerate in reports regarding enemy and terrain. A parallel can be found in the tales of Chaeras, who, having escaped the Four Hundred and come to Samos, exaggerated and falsified the situation in Athens (Thuc. 8.74.3), playing on the fears of the sailors.

168. Thuc. 6.53.2.

169. Arrian *Anab.* 7.4.3.

170. Thuc. 1.132.5.

Identity and Recognition

A major factor in evaluating information was the perceived character of the source, and Sian Lewis has made a convincing case for the importance of recognition as a criterion for credibility.¹⁷¹ She discusses at some length how an individual's identity—personal, social, political, or ethnic—is intertwined with the news the individual bears. It remains here, then, to take up some points to complement her discussion, specifically how an unknown or unremarked individual, as many of the sources of information were, was recognized and so assumed an identity. A brief survey of some mechanical means to afford recognition, licitly or not, follows.

Military Devices

Recognition devices used in military contexts tended to be visual—for example, emblems on shields, whitened helmets, or flags on ships.¹⁷² Like any other device, they were susceptible to imitation or misinterpretation. On one occasion, a Messenian force deceived the Elians (who were friendly with Sparta at the time) by bearing shields marked with Lacedaemonian lambdas and so gained admittance into their city.¹⁷³ In rare instances, the lack of a device could signify identity to those aware of its significance, while causing confusion to an opponent relying on recognizing accustomed markings.¹⁷⁴

Military Watchwords or Passwords (Sunthemata)

Sunthemata,¹⁷⁵ broadly speaking, were agreed on signals. More specifically, they were short verbal or nonverbal signs contrived by commanders to enable their men to recognize friendly troops and be recognized in turn. Consequently they enabled men to prepare for action against an enemy and refrain from action against a friend, and in turn they prevented panics.¹⁷⁶ They were particularly valuable when men of

171. S. Lewis 81ff.

172. According to Anderson (18, including a range of examples), national emblems replaced personal ones in the fifth and fourth centuries. When the Phocians painted themselves white with gypsum, they may have done so to make themselves recognizable to their friends by night as much as to inspire terror in their foes (Hdt. 8.27).

173. Paus. 4.28.5–6.

174. Polyaeus 3.11.11 (of Chabrias).

175. Variants of different dialects include *συνθήματα*, *συσσήματα*, and *ξυνθήματα*.

176. Aen. Tact. 4.5–6, 25.1. Although all examples are found in the context of military operations, they do have potential application to clandestine activity.

varied dialects or backgrounds were operating together or when men of similar dialects and backgrounds were on opposing sides of a conflict. The lack of such a sign could hamper—or even prevent—coherent action, as in the mythical case of the Messenians who, since they lacked a *sunthema*, were unable to recognize each other and therefore failed to counter a Lacedaemonian infiltration by night. They were forced to await dawn, and by then the Lacedaemonians had consolidated their position.¹⁷⁷

A name of a deity or hero was often chosen as a *sunthema*. Sometimes the name had a meaning applicable to the participants (e.g., “Athena” was chosen on account of Athena’s common connection to Seuthes and Xenophon) or the context (e.g., Aeneas suggested “Hermes Dolios” for a mission involving craft).¹⁷⁸ In this way the *sunthema* would be easily remembered. Aeneas further warned against using a word or name that might be misremembered in another form (as in the case of “Dioskouroi” and “Tyndaridai”) and against using one peculiar to a dialect when troops of varied backgrounds were present.¹⁷⁹ The *sunthema* was passed twice (going, then returning—almost certainly to ensure that it was correctly communicated) along a line of soldiers after they were drawn up, before battle was joined.¹⁸⁰ Guards in a city were informed of the night’s watchword after the gates were locked.¹⁸¹ No doubt the timing was determined in both cases by the realization that earlier publication would afford deserters an opportunity to impart the *sunthema* to the enemy.

177. Paus. 4.21.4.

178. Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.39; Aen. Tact. 24.15. The deities mentioned are (1) Ares/Enualios (Aen. Tact. 24.2); (2) Apollo Huperdexios, Phoibos ([Eur.] *Rhesus* 521, 573); (3) Artemis Agroteras (Aen. Tact. 24.15); (4) Athene (Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.39), Athene/Pallas (Aen. Tact. 24.2); (5) Hebe [MSS, Roscher: Hera] (Hdt. 9.98); (6) Helios (Aen. Tact. 24.15); (7) Hermes Dolios (Aen. Tact. 24.15), Hermes Philios (Polyaenus 3.9.21); (8) Nike (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.16—possibly not the deity); (9) Poseidon (Aen. Tact. 24.16); (10) Selene (Aen. Tact. 24.15); and (11) Zeus Soter (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.16, 6.5.25, [7.3.34]; Aen. Tact. 24.16). The heroes are (1) Herakles (Aen. Tact. 24.15), Herakles Hegemon (Xen. *Anab.* 6.5.25; cf. 4.8.25); (2) Dioskouroi/Tyndaridai (Aen. Tact. 24.1, 14). Other words include *xiphos/enkheridion* and *lampas/phos* (Aen. Tact. 24.2).

Aeneas Tacticus referred to “common names, which all use” at 24.15, implying widespread, if not conventional, practice in the fourth century, an odd indication of lack of imagination on the part of the frequently inventive Greeks.

179. Aen. Tact. 24.1–2. Cf. the example of Athenodorus, who erred in this respect (Aen. Tact. 24.14).

180. For the double trip down the lines, see Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.16; Xen. *Cyr.* 3.3.58, 7.1.10.

181. Aen. Tact. 20.5; cf. Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.34. Aeneas tantalizes us with the promise of further information in his lost *Stratopedeutike* and *Paraskeuastike*.

Sunthemata are first attested at the battle of Mycale in 479.¹⁸² By the fourth century their use had developed considerably, probably as a result of measures to repair their weaknesses. Passwords were liable to be overheard by the enemy, especially when bandied about in a confused situation. During their night attack on Epipolae, the Athenians fell into disorder and called out their password to each other with enough frequency and volume that the Syracusans caught on and used their knowledge to their advantage.¹⁸³ With fiascoes such as this in mind, later commanders used countersigns (*parasunthemata*). Aeneas recommended that these be other words, a noise in conjunction with a question, or merely a gesture (visibility permitting), such as taking off a cap or shifting the position of a spear.¹⁸⁴

Naturally enough, *sunthemata* were the object of information gathering. Patrols and scouts could be captured and interrogated by an enemy—for this reason Aeneas, apparently following the practice of Iphicrates, suggested that they be given different passwords.¹⁸⁵ The

182. Hdt. 9.98. One wonders whether Leotychidas gave out the true password, since he could have no confidence that at least one Ionian would not communicate it to his Persian masters. The example in the *Rhesus* ("Phoibos" at 521, 573) is no doubt indicative of classical practice rather than Mycenaean, and no password is mentioned in the tenth book of the *Iliad*. The use of *sunthemata* may have been peculiarly Greek. It is noteworthy that Cyrus did not know what his Greek troops were doing when they passed along their *sunthema* (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.16). Diodorus (11.10.2) links the Persian confusion at Thermopylae to their inability to recognize each other or use a password. The passage is ambiguous: it is not clear whether they were hampered by being unable to use a password they possessed or by not having a password to use. In any case, Herodotus makes no mention of this and it is hard to see how a password would have helped in the melee.

183. Thuc. 7.44.4. Athenian confusion was exacerbated by their Argive (i.e., Dorian) allies striking up a paean as they entered battle, since the Athenians imagined the singers were Syracusans (who were also of Dorian extraction).

184. Aen. Tact. 25.2–4; cf. 24.17 and Whitehead, *Aineias the Tactician*, 168–69 on 24.13. Note the doffing (or donning) of a cap as a signal to begin the revolt of the Parthenii. Onasander (26) went further and advocated the reliance on gestures to the exclusion of words; he found this especially useful in the case of allies speaking different languages. Onasander also observed that passwords should be given even when the possibility of combat was remote, to prevent confusion.

Since *sunthemata* could also be discovered by foes in the guise of friendly patrols, Aeneas Tacticus (24.19) recommended that each party should be able to demand a recognition signal from the other. It might still have been possible in an open area for a disguised patrol to learn the password and either flee or kill the guards, but in a besieged city (the context for Aeneas' work) guards atop the walls could not be easily killed and would be able to notify their commander and change the *sunthema* by the time a fleeing enemy could return in force.

185. Aen. Tact. 6.7, 24.16; cf. 26.1.

Messenians were said to have captured and tortured one Nikon of Pherae, a pirate, and extracted from him a promise to betray Pherae to them, which he did by gaining them admittance by the *sunthema*.¹⁸⁶ As I noted earlier, deserters were no doubt a concern, as were spies: Pammenes of Thebes sent a spy disguised as a fake deserter to learn his enemies' *sunthema*.¹⁸⁷

Given the Greek capacity for inventiveness, it should come as no surprise to find that *sunthemata* were manipulated in other ways. There is a story of a certain Akoues having a *sunthema* that was no *sunthema*—his men were to kill anybody who asked for one, since by asking he unwittingly revealed that he was an enemy.¹⁸⁸ On another occasion, the Spartan Cleandridas, to sow suspicion in his enemy's ranks, had his herald announce that any enemy who knew his *sunthema* would be spared.¹⁸⁹ Iphicrates told his men to spare any opponent offering their *sunthema*, so that they would be enheartened by the expectation of aid from a (imaginary) fifth column.¹⁹⁰ Finally, Diocles constantly changed his *sunthema* so that his men would stay in their ranks, thinking the enemy nearby.¹⁹¹

Tokens (Sumbola) and Seals (Sphagides)

Sumbola, or tokens, are attested in mercantile transactions and in diplomacy.¹⁹² They served as credentials, allowing any bearer of the token to be recognized as operating on behalf of one of the parties agreeing to the arrangement. There is no evidence for their use in covert operations, but it would not be surprising if the Greeks realized their applications to this field. Stolen or forged *sumbola* might also be useful in support of covers.

Sphagides, or seals, were employed as marks of authenticity and provenance on letters and documents, incidentally preserving their con-

186. Polyaeus 2.35.1.

187. Polyaeus 5.16.5. Cf. Polyaeus 3.13.1 (of Chares), in which spies were caught since they were unable to give the correct *sunthema* on demand.

188. Polyaeus 1.11.1.

189. Polyaeus 2.10.1; cf. Hdt. 9.98.

190. Polyaeus 3.9.21.

191. Polyaeus 5.29.1.

192. For an example of a mercantile transaction, see Hdt. 6.86, and How and Wells 98–99 ad loc. For the use of *sumbola* in diplomacy, see Tod no. 139 (ca. 367), lines 18–25: “Let the *boulé* also make *sumbola* for use with the king of the Sidonians, so that the *demos* of the Athenians might recognize them if the king of the Sidonians should send somebody when he needed something of our city, and so that the king of the Sidonians might recognize them whenever the *demos* of the Athenians should send somebody to him.” A similar provision was made for Orontes, in IG II² 207b–c (ca. 348).

tents from prying eyes. Lucian of Samasota outlined a couple of methods (and hinted at many more) used in antiquity for defeating the efficacy of seals, which may have occurred to the Greeks of the era under study. The first was to heat a needle, remove the seal by melting the wax underneath it with the needle's point, then reseal the document after reading it.¹⁹³ The second was to make an impression of the seal, using a type of plaster (*kollurion*) made from Bruttian pitch, asphalt, ground gypsum, wax, and *mastich*. This concoction was warmed and then applied to a seal previously wetted with saliva, to take a mold. The mixture hardened rapidly and could be used to duplicate the seal. A similar result could apparently be obtained from a mixture of marble dust and paper glue. Although the methods may have varied, the Greeks of the fifth century could likewise defeat seals, since Pausanias' courier made a counterfeit seal so that he could investigate the documents he carried without fear of being caught.¹⁹⁴ An ability to defeat seals in this manner could be of considerable use not only to those seeking information but also in the realms of counterintelligence and misinformation.¹⁹⁵

Disguise, Covers, and Pretense

While there are examples of people engaged in secret dealings resorting to recognition devices, these devices were hardly covert and could hardly have been reasonably expected not to arouse suspicions. In one example, a party preparing to betray Megara anointed themselves with oil so that their Athenian accomplices would recognize them. The plot did not run as smoothly as planned, and the anointed ones were rather conspicuous among their fellow citizens.¹⁹⁶ In another instance, reeds were carried as tokens of support for a conspiracy among mutinous Peloponnesian soldiers stationed on Chios. When their commander, Eteonicus, saw what

193. Lucian *Alexander of Abonoteichus* 21; the following examples are taken from the same section. He alluded to Celsus' descriptions of other means, and Harmon (204–5 n. 1 ad loc.) observed that Hippolytus' *Refutation* 4.34 also contained material on this subject, evidently drawn from earlier sources. See also Demosth. XXXII (*Against Zenothemis*) 28.

194. Thuc. 1.132.5; Thucydides uses the form παρασημνόμενος for his act. Σημεῖα παρασημεία (counterfeit seals) are attested in Plato *Comicus* (s. V/IV) 77; see LSJ s.v. παρασημείον.

195. Cf. Diod. Sic. 16.52.6–7; Polyaeus 6.48.1: when Mentor (probably Mentor of Rhodes, fl. med. s. IV) got Hermaeus under his control, he wrote letters in Hermaeus' name using his captive's signet ring.

196. Thuc. 4.68.4.

was going on, he slew a man carrying a reed and let it be known that the man perished because of his token.¹⁹⁷

It is not unreasonable to propose that covert devices or signals were used at some time or other by covert agents, since in the *Education of Cyrus* Xenophon gave an example of how a returning spy might signal his true allegiance to his master's troops. In this case, he merely extended his right hand—perhaps in the manner of the *parasunthemata* previously mentioned.¹⁹⁸

Since Athena did not deign to alter the appearances of Odysseus' distant heirs, they tended to rely more on wits than physical disguise. This is not to say that disguises were never used, but usually they were props designed to lend credence to a cover, rather than attempts to render an individual's identity unrecognizable.¹⁹⁹ There are stories of people donning the garb of beggars, hunters, peasants, or foreign peoples when engaged in some crafty enterprise or another.²⁰⁰ Generally, however, the use of material disguises does not overlap with the gathering of information. There are no exceptions to this rule that can make claims to historicity, although Xenophon's allusions to scouts disguised as brigands and to spies disguised as runaway slaves are worth noting as indications of a potential link.²⁰¹ There is no reliable evidence of a long-term impersonation of another person by a Greek.²⁰²

Of more concern to Greek covert agents was the establishment and maintenance of credibility through a cover story. Sometimes a basic cover could be implicit in an assumed role—that of an envoy or merchant, for example. Those agents assuming such covers would be obliged to know about the trade they professed, but to some extent the pretext

197. Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.1.

198. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.13.

199. Exceptions to this general rule occur in cases in which a wanted fugitive tried to conceal his identity lest he be recognized and arrested (see, e.g., Polyaeus 5.42.1, of Charimenes). Cf. Paus. 5.4.7–8.

200. Beggars: *Od.* 4.244ff., etc.; Parke and Wormell no. 527 (legend of Temo); Lycurgus *Against Leocrat.* 86 (legend of Codrus, who is also alluded to as being in peasant's dress). Hunters: Paus. 4.12.9; cf. Hdt. 1.123 (Polyaeus 7.7.1; Leo Byz. 1.4). Peasants/farmers: Plut. *Pelopidas* 9.1. Locals: Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.9 (of Amphoterus); cf. Q. Curtius 7.2.17–19 (of Polydamas). Prisoners: Aen. Tact. 24.4. Stratagems involving donning foreign apparel: Polyaeus 2.16.1 (cf. Front. *Strat.* 2.3.13), 3.9.59, 5.44.5; Front. *Strat.* 2.5.15, 3.2.3. Stratagems using foreign ships: Polyaeus 2.11.1 (cf. Front. *Strat.* 1.4.12).

201. Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.23, 6.2.11.

202. Cf. Hdt. 3.61–69 (of the false Smerdis).

for their presence was supplied by the cover: the Bithynian *kataskopoi* on embassy to the Ten Thousand, for instance, were ostensibly present to arrange for a truce and thus were permitted into the Greek camp.²⁰³ Those agents wishing to pose as deserters needed more individualized explanations for their motives. These explanations seem to have been derived, sensibly enough, from justifications made by real deserters and traitors for their defection and championship of their new allies (one might recall the manipulative and rather tedious list presented by Alcibiades to the Spartans).²⁰⁴ These include persecution, penalties, and other assorted grievances. When done well, the covers were backed up by prior arrangements on the part of a state or commander. There are tales of the Spartan ephors arranging sham trials and exiles of individuals, who would thenceforth act secretly on their behalf.²⁰⁵ The most effective covers were no doubt ones that could use as much of the agent's real-life story as possible. Odysseus was a skillful liar in part because he managed to intertwine a mix of reality with fantasy when weaving his fantastic tales.²⁰⁶ Xenophon applied Homer's example to his own guidelines for espionage. He portrayed Cyrus taking advantage of real circumstances and real grievances against his subordinate Araspas, by making a secret reconciliation and sending Araspas out in the guise of a fugitive from Cyrus' wrath.²⁰⁷ Ad hoc exploitations of mistaken identity are occasionally found (e.g., Macedonian guards stationed on Chios pretended to be Pharnabazus' guards when they realized that his ally, their enemy, Aris-tonicus had not heard of Pharnabazus' defeat),²⁰⁸ but our only examples belong to the realm of stratagems rather than to intelligence.

In some such instances there was no need to pretend to be anyone else—the cover was effected by a judicious presentation of misinformation. When Artaxerxes' captain Mithradates rode up to Clearchus, he did not attempt to conceal his identity or the fact that he was a Persian—such would be a futile task. Instead he pretended to be sympathetic to their plight and to be concerned lest he be seen speaking with them.²⁰⁹ Thus he tried to establish an identity which would accord him credibility. In this

203. Xen. *Anab.* 7.4.13.

204. Thuc. 6.92.1–3. Cf. Thuc. 8.50.2–5; Xen. *Cyr.* 4.6.2–4.

205. Hdt. 1.68 (of Lichas), Polyaeus 2.26.1 (of Sthenippus).

206. *Od.* passim, esp. 13.256, 14.199, 19.165, 24.266, 24.303.

207. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1.31ff.

208. Q. Curtius 4.5.19–21.

209. Xen. *Anab.* 3.3.2. Cf. Thuc. 4.67.3; Paus. 2.26.3; Plut. *Ages.* 24.4; Arrian *Anab.* 1.25.3.

he failed, but his method was essentially sound and widely practiced, in his day and ours.

The preceding comments cannot and do not pretend to adequately present a whole field of study. They are, if you will, an attempt to communicate some of the problems the Greeks faced when communicating, and the effect these must have had on intelligence.

Chapter 5

Counterintelligence

As the shield is a practical response to the spear, so counterintelligence is to intelligence. Just as it is in the interest of a state to enhance its ability to influence events through the use of intelligence, it is in its interest to deny a similar ability to its opponents. The measures taken to accomplish this end fall within the nebulous boundaries of the discipline now known as counterintelligence.¹

Was such a shield employed by the ancients? In general, yes—although, as with intelligence, this response must be qualified in degree according to state, circumstance, and era. Assessments are, however, somewhat complicated by the use of stereotypes and propaganda by the ancients. Members of democratic states (i.e., the Athenians, who have left us a lion's share of evidence) tended then—and still tend—to wish to conceive of their societies as open and free and of subjects of other forms of government as liable to scrutiny and censorship. In his funeral oration, Pericles declared that the Athenians “hold our city open to all and never withhold, by the use of expulsion decrees, any fact or sight that might be exposed to the sight and profit of an enemy. For on the whole we trust in our own courage and readiness to the task, rather than in contrivance and deception.”² Demosthenes similarly characterized the Athenians: “You think that freedom of speech, in every other case, ought to be shared by everyone in the polis, to such an extent that you grant it even to foreigners and slaves, and one might see many servants among us able to say whatever they wish with more freedom than citizens in some other

1. Some definitions of counterintelligence follow. R. Godson (1): “At a minimum, however, CI can be defined as the identification and neutralization of the threat posed by foreign intelligence services, and the manipulation of these services for the manipulator's benefit.” Dulles (123): “The classical aims of counterespionage are ‘to locate, identify and neutralize’ the opposition.” U.S. Marine Corps art. 104c: “Counterintelligence is that aspect of intelligence activity which is devoted to destroying the effectiveness of inimical foreign intelligence activities and to protection of information against espionage, individuals against subversion, and installations or materiel against sabotage.”

2. Thuc. 2.39.

states.”³ Other comments by Nicias, Demosthenes, and Demades have characterized the Athenian democracy as less adept than other forms of government in detecting traitors and spies.⁴

Adcock and Mosley thought it unlikely that the democracies of the ancient Greeks were able to deliberate in secret, because of the nature of their decision-making process.⁵ Their observation has merit (and may be applicable to oligarchies as well), and there is no doubt that democracies were not able to keep secret all things that they might wish. Faction and accident, if nothing else, were sufficient to ensure that matters raised in the *boulé*, much less the *ekklesia*, would not be discussed only within the borders of Attica. But attempts were made to circumvent this problem, some of which were successful. The real problem here is that the values inherent to democracies and the premises on which rest a determination of policy by a vote of informed citizens demand an idealized society that keeps no secrets. Such societies did not and do not exist on any large scale, however democratic the societies may aspire to be. A parallel might be found in the United States, which tries to balance personal freedom against national security, while upholding the image of a free and open society. Although there are striking examples of display and ingenuousness on the part of individuals and states, such claims to a society untainted by the shadow of Big Brother rest more on political machina-

3. Demosth. IX (3 *Phil.*) 3.

4. Thuc. 6.11.7; Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 149; Demades *On the twelve years* frag. 46.

5. Adcock and Mosley 170. Cf. Dulles 8. It appears, e.g., that no attempt was made to keep metics or strangers from witnessing the departure of the Athenian expeditionary force when it set out for Sicily (Thuc. 6.30.2). One might conjecture that the Athenians saw the futility of trying to keep quiet an expedition of this magnitude, especially since it required calling up men from the *katalogos*—a lengthy process in fifth-century Athens (see Ober 96)—and the concentration of many ships and much material in areas that could not be conveniently shut off from the eyes of merchants coming into the city. However, the Athenians may have *wanted* the Syracusans to know too well the magnitude of the force being brought to bear on them. Similar motives may apply to the congress of Peloponnesian allies at Lacedaemon, if indeed Thucydides' account bears resemblance to reality and is not a piece of drama (Thuc. 1.72; but cf. 1.79). It is possible that the Lacedaemonians *wanted* the Athenians to learn that many of the Peloponnesians desired war and so realize that the Lacedaemonians were also willing to contest the Athenian bid for supremacy with force of arms. In a related passage, Archidamus voiced his hopes that when the Athenians learned of the Peloponnesian preparations, they might be more willing to back down (Thuc. 1.82.3; possibly also at Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.33). Cf. Isoc. VI (*Archidamus*) 77. Wright (108) alleged that a similar game was played by the Russians with the British during the Suez crisis.

tions and idealized self-perceptions than on the realities indicated by example, as will be seen in this chapter.

Subjects

The following does not purport to be a comprehensive list of types of information that were concealed in classical Greece, as it neglects private matters for the sake of public and does not treat such secrets as those associated with religious ritual or mystery cults. The three subjects described here are those best attested in the sources. The first two, incidentally, correspond to the types of information most frequently sought.

Military Plans and Movements

Xenophon included in topics for consideration by a military commander “how you might learn your enemy’s affairs and how he might least be able to learn yours.”⁶ Examples of counterintelligence in military operations are numerous, and it was widely if tacitly acknowledged that counterintelligence was an integral part of military practice, even though some paid more heed to its importance than others.

Recorded efforts to protect information are most commonly associated with military movements (and hence intentions to make movements), especially those of a tactical nature aimed at achieving advantage through surprise. Most examples come from the fifth century and later, although the use of ambushes and surprise attacks in archaic and earlier times necessitates at least some measures to conceal the presence of troops.⁷ The practice of protecting information about military dispositions and numbers is widely attested among the Greek peoples.⁸

6. Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.43.

7. See, e.g., *Iliad* 1.227, 13.277; *Odyssey* 14.217; Polyaeus 1.15; Paus. 4.5.8. Cf. Pritchett 2:161, 164–69, 180–83 (tables 3–5, 7). Ambushes depended either on a lack of enemy information-gathering efforts or on counterintelligence efforts, in the form of concealment or other devices or both. Pritchett (2:188) has argued that the first option is to be preferred. He is quite right in some particular examples, but see the discussion of reconnaissance in chap. 1.

8. The following are a small sample. Athenians: e.g., Alcibiades (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.15), Iphicrates (Polyaeus 3.9.8, 3.9.19), Phocion (Plut. *Phoc.* 15.1ff.), and Thrasyllus (Polyaeus 1.47.1). Corinthians: see, e.g., Thuc. 4.8. Lacedaemonians: e.g., Agesilaus (Xen. *Ages.* 6.6), Alcotas (Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.56), Chalcideus (Thuc. 8.14.1), Mindarus (Thuc. 8.99.1). Macedonians: e.g., Alexander (Arrian *Anab.* 2.9.1, 6.6.4; Q. Curtius 3.10.3). Syracusans: e.g., Dionysius (Polyaeus 5.2.12; Leo Byz. 7.1); cf. Hermocrates (Thuc. 6.72.5). Thebans: e.g.,

Preparations for large-scale expeditions, which employed allied contingents, were most difficult to conceal and did not normally go unnoticed, since a summons would have to be sent to the allied states, and since the time elapsed for muster and travel would be adequate for news to arrive well before the troops. The invasions of Sicily by the Athenians, of Attica by the Peloponnesians, of Boeotia by the Lacedaemonians, and of Laconia by the Boeotians (in all examples accompanied by allies) did not achieve complete surprise, and it does not appear that any measures were taken to conceal report of their advent—quite the contrary, in some instances. The objectives of the expeditions might be obscured through disinformation (e.g., by Agesilaus in Asia Minor), but in most instances deception on this scale was simply not feasible.

Expeditions undertaken by a single state, independent of its allies, are another matter. Since no publication beyond the borders of the state was required, and since the time needed for muster was considerably less, a state could hope to achieve surprise and therefore might make efforts to realize its hope. The Athenians, for example, tried to launch a surprise attack on the rebellious Mytilene and, to prevent news of their intent preceding them, incarcerated the crews of Mytilenaeen ships in the Piraeus. Their hopes were disappointed, however, when a sailor escaped and hastened home to tell of their plans. A more successful outcome may be found in Phocion's march on Megara.

Sparta, in this field at least, proved more adept than its contemporaries. Not for naught did Thucydides complain that he was unable to learn the numbers of Lacedaemonian troops at the (first) battle of Mantinea because of the secrecy inherent to their constitution.⁹ Information concerning military plans, losses, and numbers was handled carefully. Thucydides mentioned that when the Lacedaemonians sent an army afield under Agis in 419, their allies, although they supplied substantial contingents, were not aware of their destination. Indeed, even Thucydides was unable to discover what Agis' intent was, since the king turned

Neocles (Paus. 9.1.6); cf. Epaminondas (Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.8) and the decree concerning the Athenian exiles under arms (Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.2; Dinarchus *Against Demosthenes* 25; Plut. *Pelopidas* 6.4), Thracians: e.g., Seuthes (Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.36).

9. Thuc. 5.68.2. Thucydides' observation is more or less applicable to Spartan policy in the era under study and perhaps derives from the character instilled in their youths. From childhood, Spartans heard such sayings as "Out through these doors no word travels" at their *sussitia* (Plut. *Lyc.* 12.5; *Mor.* 236f) and such anecdotes as that of a boy who allowed a fox to rip open his stomach rather than reveal its presence (Plut. *Mor.* 234a–b). They spent time in the *krupeteia*, the secrets of which are still preserved.

back at the Laconian frontier when the omens were not favorable.¹⁰ According to Pausanias, the Spartans habitually concealed the numbers of their dead by collecting them together with those of their allies. Epaminondas compelled them to gather their fallen separately after the battle of Leuctra, so that the magnitude of their loss would be apparent to all.¹¹ The fate of two thousand helots who were allegedly killed by the Spartans is still not known.¹²

Secret Negotiations, Plots, and Betrayals

Plots and betrayals demand secrecy by their very nature—the punishment for treason among the Greeks was death, and hence conspirators staked all on secrecy. At times individual traitors or a fifth column within a city sought to enter into negotiations with another polis hostile to their government, since outside aid was often required to accomplish a coup d'état. The invoked polis often (but not always) perceived that it was to its own interest to keep negotiations secret, since their revelation risked the failure of the plot, possible loss of face, and at times the danger of open war.¹³ States also tried to conceal the existence or the content of diplomatic activity from other states when acting contrary to existing agreements.¹⁴

Information Affecting Morale

It seems to have been accepted practice, extending back at least as far as the *Odyssey*, for a commander to withhold from his men foreshadowings of danger when he feared the knowledge would turn them from his will.¹⁵ Andocides expressed the sentiment thus: “to lead most men into dangers,

10. Thuc. 5.54.1.

11. Pausanias 9.13.11–12. Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 193b.

12. We do not know whether the story is true or based on Athenian propaganda—Thucydides (4.80.3–4) is vague on details and date. But cf. Hdt. 4.146.2; How and Wells 347 ad loc.

13. E.g., the Lacedaemonians negotiated with the Thasians, unbeknownst to the Athenians, in time of peace, ca. 464 (Thuc. 1.101.1–2), and with the Chians (Thuc. 8.7.1; of which only a few Chians were cognizant at Thuc. 8.9.3) during the Peloponnesian War. Relations between a fifth column and its external patron could be revealed by either party for the sake of advantage: cf. Diod. Sic. 11.48.6–8, 15.3.5.

14. Thuc. 4.22.3; 5.27.2.

15. *Od.* 12.165, 223.

[a general] must keep them in the dark or deceive them.”¹⁶ Eteonicus and Agesilaus withheld news of the defeats at Arginusae and Cnidus from their troops lest they be disheartened, and they claimed victory instead. Nicias wanted neither his own men nor the enemy to learn that he contemplated retreat after the final disastrous harbor battle.¹⁷ Such policies naturally extended to a concern lest the enemy be enheartened: Pericles advised the Athenians, who were suffering plague and confinement as a result of his policies, to conceal their troubles from the Lacedaemonians. At a later date, the Spartans did not want the Athenians to learn the extent of their unease after their men were captured at Pylos.¹⁸

Methods

Information was protected in a number of ways: by limiting the number of people handling matters best kept secret; by acting on decisions before report of them could reach an opponent; by maintaining some control over the movement of citizens, metics, and foreigners; by instituting measures and legislation to monitor suspect elements of one's own populace, while discouraging and frustrating efforts of enemy agents and sources through counterintelligence agents; by disrupting enemy communication; and by disseminating false information.

Limiting Access to Information

Macchiavelli once commented that “when the number of accomplices in a conspiracy exceeds three or four, it is almost impossible for it not to be discovered, either through treason, imprudence, or carelessness.”¹⁹ In the Greek world, in which the fidelity of an ally or compatriot was all too often ephemeral, there was a realization that the greater the number of people who knew any given piece of information was, the more likely it was that an enemy would know of it also. This problem was especially prevalent in democracies and oligarchies, since many people participated

16. Andocides *On the Peace* 34; cf. 33.

17. Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.36, 4.3.14; Thuc. 7.48.1. Cf. Alexander's suppression of reports of the ambush and slaughter of Menedemus' force (including threats directed against any survivor who spoke of the defeat); see Q. Curtius 7.7.39. Word of the death of Cimon seems also to have been suppressed (Plut. *Cimon* 19.1).

18. Thuc. 2.64.6, 4.41.3.

19. Macchiavelli *Discorsi* 3.6.

in the decisions of such governments. A solution was to select a few individuals who would have full authority to act on behalf of the state without the need to refer matters to the *demos* or to other oligarchs. As obvious as this solution appears, it was not one that sat comfortably among peoples who lived in fear of tyrants and who attempted to prevent any one individual from obtaining too much power. Nevertheless, it was enacted at times. When Corinthian envoys, dissatisfied with the state of affairs following the Peace of Nicias, went behind the backs of the Lacedaemonians to Argos, they advised the Argives to select a few men with whom other states might negotiate alliances. The purpose of this selection was to enable matters to be considered without the people's cognizance, lest the Lacedaemonians learn of the dealings from an individual who did not favor the alliances.²⁰ The Argives took the Corinthians' advice and appointed twelve men with whom a state might make a treaty. This measure did not entirely conceal their machinations from the Lacedaemonians, since it was necessary to generally publish the measure to the Greek states who might wish alliance.²¹ But their arrangement apparently succeeded in keeping under wraps specific details of, for example, the Argive treaty with the Mantineans.²²

In Athens sensitive matters might be handled by the *boulé* rather than the *ekklesia* to enhance the security of information by restricting dissemination. Although there is some evidence for this practice, there are not sufficient grounds to argue that it was general policy.²³ Examples pertinent to the problem are limited to the fifth and fourth centuries. Diodorus spoke of secret meetings of the *boulé* to hear Themistocles' schemes to rebuild Athens' walls and, on a later occasion, to consider the disposition of Sicily should it be conquered. His accounts are not elsewhere confirmed.²⁴ Andocides told the Athenians that his efforts on their

20. Thuc. 5.27.2.

21. Thuc. 5.28.1; at 5.30.1 the Spartans were also aware that the Corinthians had been the instigators of the device.

22. Thuc. 5.29.1–2: its efficacy is suggested by Thucydides' characterization of other Peloponnesian states, who seem to have felt incompletely informed and to have thought that the Mantineans knew something they did not.

23. Wallace (109) proposed that the knowledge of the location of secret tombs (one might recall that of Oedipus mentioned in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*) was confined to the Areopagites; this body did not, however, determine policy in the manner of the *boulé* and *ekklesia*.

24. Diod. Sic. 11.39.4–5, 13.2.6. Such meetings are not mentioned in Thuc. 1.90ff. or 6.8ff. (although it might be argued that Nicias' wish to deliberate matters privately reflected a concern for security, it is more likely that he was equivocating). Cf. Plut. *Arist.* 22.2; *Them.* 20.1–2.

behalf were not to be discussed openly in the *ekklesia*, but he assured them that his measures were approved of by the *boulé*.²⁵ In another speech, he refers to the *boulé*'s secret decision to make arrests in the witch-hunt of 415.²⁶ Demaenetus made a secret agreement with the Athenian *boulé* to take a trireme and visit Conon at the time when Conon was fighting for the king of Persia against the Lacedaemonians, to whom Athens owed obligations under their treaty. The populace soon learned of this arrangement, no doubt through a leak from the *boulé*. The *bouletai* feigned ignorance in the face of outrage, while the people, fearing the risk of war with Sparta, sent word of the affair to Milon, the Lacedaemonian harmost on Aegina.²⁷ The Athenians attempted to limit to the *boulé* and ambassadors knowledge of their negotiations with Philip II regarding Amphipolis and Pydna. As Demosthenes noted, their efforts were unsuccessful.²⁸

The last two examples illustrate that the security derived from limiting the number of parties to confidential information to five hundred would be minimal, since among such a large number of individuals (chosen by lot, at that) would be at least one who would let slip the secret. As Aristophanes joked about his fellow Athenians: "And he said that the women don't reveal the least of the secrets of the Thesmophoria, but you and I always do this when we sit in council."²⁹

Commanders serving most Greek states did not normally feel an obligation to give advance notice of their plans to their men. Indeed, the contrary seems likely to have been general practice.³⁰ An open vote on whether to retreat was apparently a real possibility for the Athenian expeditionary force in Sicily, but this was exceptional, even among the Athenians.³¹ Alexander habitually restricted to trusted commanders those admitted to his councils—only in exceptional cases were matters

25. Andocides *On His Return* 21; see also 3, 19, 20.

26. Andocides *On the Mysteries* 45; cf. MacDowell 94 ad loc.

27. *Hell. Oxy.* 9.1–3. McKechnie and Kern (in *Hell. Oxy.* 132 ad loc.) observed, "the narrative reveals that secret diplomatic dealings could take place in Athens in spite of the democratic government." Cf. Aristoph. *Knights* 647–50.

28. Scholion on Demosth. II (2 *Olynth.*) 6; cf. Harding 61–62.

29. Aristoph. *Assemblywomen* 442–44.

30. Cf. Onas. 10.22: if a general has secret plans, he must not tell anyone, only a few high commanders if necessary, before he is on the scene of action. Cf. also Xen. *Anab.* 1.3.6, 21.

31. The general meeting of the Ten Thousand after the murder of their commanders is another exception, hardly to be taken as typical (Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.15ff.).

handled openly before his men.³² Not only were the ranks kept in the dark, but the number of officers cognizant of future operations could be limited for security. Among the reasons given by Hermocrates to the Syracusans for entrusting the command of their troops to fewer generals was that whatever ought to be kept secret would be better concealed by a few than by fifteen.³³ Miltiades asked the Athenians for resources to carry out a military expedition without telling them his intent, and at the time the request was not seen as unreasonable. The most sensible explanation for such a reaction was a recognition of a need for information security.³⁴

Anticipating Reports

In some circumstances the ancients realized that an information leak was bound to occur despite attempts to prevent it. The assemblies of the democracies and oligarchies, in particular, were vulnerable in this way, as I mentioned earlier. In such cases, a state could try to deny its opponent time to respond effectively to the news they would certainly receive. When the Megarians made a secret appeal to Athens for help against a faction that would betray them to Philip II, Phocion feared that the Boeotians would anticipate the Athenians in sending aid if they knew the circumstances in time. He therefore called the *ekklesia* early in the morning, announced the message, and led the Athenians to Megara immediately after a decree was passed.³⁵ The Boeotians were not always on the receiving end of other peoples' devices: the Theban Neocles acted similarly. He knew that the Plataeans watched for general assemblies of the Boeotians, since they were familiar with the Boeotian habit of doing business in long meetings of the whole people. Wishing to take Plataea by surprise, he called the Thebans to come to assembly in arms and marched out at once.³⁶

32. See, e.g., Q. Curtius 6.8.1. Cf. Q. Curtius 4.13.3; Arrian *Anab.* 2.6.1, 3.9.3; Plut. *Alex.* 39 (= Plut. *Mor.* 180d, 332f, 340a).

33. Thuc. 6.72.5. The Syracusans approved his proposal. Polyaeus (1.42.1) gave an analogous story of Gylippus, who arranged to have his plans leaked to the enemy so that he could pretend outrage and demand sole command on the grounds that more than one general made security untenable. Cf. also Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.18; Thuc. 8.9.2.

34. Hdt. 6.132. Another alternative, practiced by the Argives when they wished to support the Messenians without arousing Lacedaemonian ire, was to avoid a public decision and leave a course of action available to private citizens (Paus. 4.10.1).

35. Plut. *Phocion* 15.1.

36. Paus. 9.1.6.

This measure of going immediately from decision to action, while successful in both of the preceding examples, has a defect: if anyone saw the citizens of a city going to assembly armed, he would realize something was afoot, even if he lacked details. Perhaps it was effective in the first case since Boeotian intelligence agents or sources would have been likely to await the results of an assembly to learn these details, as they would be at a loss as to why the Athenians were preparing a military force (had they not waited, they might have drawn the erroneous conclusion that the Athenians were intending to march north against Boeotia). In the second case, it was combined with a successful attempt to circumvent Plataean lookouts. In any event, rapid movement of military forces, as was typical of great commanders such as Jason of Pherae and Alexander, served a similar purpose, in that an army might be on hand before news of its advent.

Hence military commanders delayed transmission of orders until the last minute, as Onasander suggested: “[the general] must tell no one beforehand against what place or for what purpose he is leading his army, unless he considers it necessary to warn some of the higher officers in advance.”³⁷ Mindarus, a half millennium earlier, was following the same tenets when he waited until the last minute before giving his men orders to put to sea, so that his move would not be known to the Athenians on Samos.³⁸

Conversely, a delay between decision and action, even in clandestine arrangements, increased the chances of word reaching the wrong ears. The protracted nature of the secret negotiations between the Chians and the Lacedaemonians, for example, allowed the Athenians ample opportunity to become aware of them. Although the Athenians were unable to forestall the Chian revolt, they were at least able to harass and delay Peloponnesian naval forces that were to be sent east.³⁹

Controls on Contact with Foreigners

States attempted to regulate foreigners and travel to a degree varying according to polity and circumstance. Generally speaking, the less secure a state felt, because of external or internal threats, the more it tended to be strict in applying controls. It is not always easy, however, to discern to

37. Onas. 10.22, Loeb (Illinois Greek Club) translation and text.

38. Thuc. 8.99.1.

39. Thuc. 8.9–10.

what extent this security was for the sake of moral or constitutional health and to what extent it was for the sake of protecting information.

Restrictions on Travel

During time of peace there was relatively free intercourse between states. People traveled freely, even for extended periods of time.⁴⁰ The four great Hellenic festivals saw visitors from all over the Greek world. Although wars could and did upset their attendance and performance, the truces that attended them normally held good. Aeneas Tacticus wrote that citizens should not be allowed to leave without official permission (in the form of a token), but it is probable that such strictures were applied only during times of tension, if not open war—his work, after all, concerns a city under siege.⁴¹

The apparent exception, of course, was Sparta. In the truce between the Lacedaemonians and Athenians in 424, Athenian garrisons on the perimeter of Peloponnesian-controlled territory were expressly forbidden to mix with the population outside their walls.⁴² But the primary purpose of this provision was not to dam information flow but to confine Athenian actions and to prevent them from inciting helots to revolt. According to Plutarch, Lycurgus did not allow Spartans themselves to travel lest they be corrupted and destabilize their state.⁴³ It cannot be said with certainty that travel was altogether forbidden but it is entirely possible that it was regulated.⁴⁴ There is a note in Isocrates that Lacedaemonian citizens fit for military service could not leave the country without the consent of those in office.⁴⁵ The motive is not entirely clear in the last case but may be associated with the Lacedaemonian practice of sending its men abroad as mercenaries in the fourth century.⁴⁶ In any event,

40. Apparently unrestricted policies: Hdt. 1.68, 7.214. The stories of sages such as Solon and Lycurgus are predicated on the assumption that possibilities for unhindered travel existed; the careers of Herodotus and Xenophon imply similar opportunities. Cf. Xen. *Symp.* 4.31.

41. Aen. Tact. 10.8. For *sumbola*, see chap. 4.

42. Thuc. 4.118.4.

43. Plut. *Lyc.* 27.3.

44. There is evidence for a law prohibiting Heraclids from settling in a foreign country, attested in Plut. *Agis and Cleomenes* 11, and possibly implicit in Hdt. 6.70. There is no indication, however, that the Spartans forbade travel lest their citizens reveal information best kept secret; rather, they did so to prevent their citizens from being corrupted. See Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 14.4; Plut. *Mor.* 238e; Plut. *Lyc.* 27. Cf. Aristoph. *Birds* 1012.

45. Isoc. XI (*Busiris*) 18.

46. Cf. Pritchett 2:97.

Lacedaemonians were present at the Olympic Games as spectators as well as competitors, and a variety of remarks in Plutarch mention Spartans abroad.⁴⁷

All Hellenic states restricted travel at the outbreak of war.⁴⁸ Hyperides recalled a law against metics leaving Athens in wartime; similar controls would have been placed on citizens.⁴⁹ Some states, such as Cius and Erythrae, granted freedom of movement to honored foreigners in both peace and war. It is not clear whether they were being accorded the rights of citizens or given privileges beyond that status. Since one of the honorees, Athenodorus, was also granted exemption from taxation, and since another, Mausolus of Mylasa, satrap of Caria, was a man of considerable note, the latter alternative is preferable.⁵⁰ In time of war, even movement within a state could be restricted by the enactment of curfewlike measures. According to the *Suda*, the seer Diopithes introduced a law forbidding anyone from the city to remain in the Piraeus beyond a certain time of night, under penalty of death.⁵¹

Restrictions on Foreigners

In the small poleis so characteristic of Hellenic life, the presence of strangers would be readily noted. Even large cities, such as Athens, were a conglomerate of smaller subcommunities, whose members could identify those who did not belong.⁵² In military units, commanders could catch spies by calling a drill and arresting anyone who lacked an assigned place in the ranks.⁵³ Covert intelligence operations were correspondingly

47. Anecdotes place Spartan spectators at the Olympic and even the Panathenaic festivals. See, e.g., Plut. *Mor.* 235cd; cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 16.3, 24.3. Herodotus (5.63) mentioned Spartans coming to Delphi both on public and private journeys.

48. Cf. Hdt. 1.67.

49. Hyperides *Against Athenogenes* 29; cf. 33. Athenogenes left Athens during the war with Philip, just before Chaeroneia, and moved to Troezen, and therefore was tried under a law that stated that a man who moved in wartime should be indicted and summarily arrested if he returned.

50. Tod no. 149 (post-360): Athenodorus, an Athenian mercenary, and his descendants were honored by Cius with *atelia* (as opposed to *isotelia*) and the right of "sailing in and out [without harm and] without treaty, both in peace and in war" (lines 7–8). Mausolus and his descendants were awarded *proxenia* in addition by Erythrae (Tod no. 155, ca. 357–355). Cf. Tod no. 186 (Antigonos by Priene); Harding no. 28B (Idrieus by Erythrae); more generally Harding no. 117 (=SIG 273, between the peoples of Miletus and Sardis).

51. Connor 116–17, citing *Suda* s.v. Διοπίθης, ἐπιτήδευμα. Diopithes was himself caught doing so unintentionally and dragged off to court.

52. Aristoph. *Thesm.* 596ff.

53. Polyaeus 3.13.1 (of Chares), 5.28.2 (of Theognis).

difficult, and some types of counterintelligence were relatively simple. Strangers passing themselves off as citizens or members of a military force could be detected simply by not being known. They might more easily assume the role of newly established metics, but this population was often regulated.⁵⁴ Foreigners often faced some degree of limitation on their freedom, the extent of the limits naturally varying according to the internal and international atmospheres. Athens, for example, has been characterized as rather open to visitors in times of peace, at least according to Thucydides' Pericles and the evidence implicit in such examples as the presence of a Syracusan troop-master in the city in 421.⁵⁵ But as tension increased, the city's policy grew more strict: for instance, when suspicious of Potidaean fidelity, the Athenians forbade their Potidaean "allies" to admit Corinthian magistrates.⁵⁶ In time of war, extreme measures were taken: at the opening of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians arrested all Boeotians in Attica, and they later cast the Aeginetans from their island.⁵⁷ An inscription from the Attic town of Eleusis, dated to the opening of the Peloponnesian War, mandates that no foreigners—not even deserters—could be received.⁵⁸

The last mentioned incidents give rise to the question of expulsions of foreigners (*xenelasiai*) and their application to counterintelligence. The Lacedaemonians have often been charged with recourse to such practices, but the extent and purpose of their use of expulsion acts was respectively exaggerated and misrepresented by Athenian propaganda. *Xenelasia* was directed against corruption rather than intelligence, although it could have had a collateral effect in disrupting information flow.⁵⁹ It could also have made the relationship between a domestic fifth column and a sympathetic foreign power more difficult, and hence it could have reduced the efficacy of traitors as informants. Failing this, it would have forced traitors to use covert means of communication. Expulsion acts could be instituted to preserve physical as well as moral

54. Tod p. 119.

55. Thuc. 2.39.1; Xen. *Symp.* 2.1. Some religious secrets were vigorously kept, and foreigners were excluded from some rites (see, e.g., [Demosth.] LIX [*Against Neaera*] 79–83; Wallace 108–9 ad loc.).

56. Thuc. 1.56.2.

57. Thuc. 2.6.2, 2.27.1.

58. *IG* I³ 58.

59. Cf. Allmand (in Neilson and McKercher, 40 and n. 35): during the Hundred Years' War, the English parliament on more than one occasion demanded that Bretons be expelled to preserve secrecy.

security and can be associated with fear of sabotage: in the case of the Boeotians just mentioned, there are allusions in Aristophanes to apprehensions lest they burn the facilities in the Piraeus.⁶⁰ Expulsions of foreigners, by individual or type, were not unknown in other states. Aristotle's flights from Athens in 348 and 323 no doubt owe something to his Macedonian background.⁶¹ Further, there is a general feeling in the comments of Aeneas Tacticus that periodic expulsions of foreigners are a hygienic practice, undertaken out of prudence, to enhance security.⁶²

Other measures could be instituted by a state to control the admittance of foreigners and to monitor them during their stay. Aristophanes spoke of a token (alternately called a *sphagis* and a *sumbolon*) that was obtained at the gates to the city from the commander of the guard. This could be demanded of foreigners to verify their right to be present.⁶³ Aeneas Tacticus accorded public officials the duty of registering the names and lodgings of visitors. Mention of the use of tokens in his preceding sentence may apply here also.⁶⁴ Envoys of hostile or potentially hostile states, although admitted for the sake of maintaining diplomatic channels, might be kept apart from the general populace during their stay, to prevent communication.⁶⁵ Aeneas further advocated a general policy whereby trusted citizens were assigned to ambassadors and whereby ambassadors would be limited to discourse with these alone.⁶⁶ His advice might be limited in application to his context (a city under siege), but it seems to rest on the more sociable practice of envoys and notable visitors being entertained by prominent members of a community.⁶⁷ Even when formal controls were not in place, there

60. Connor 117, citing Aristoph. *Knights* 475ff. and adding: "The same fear is mentioned in *Frogs* 359ff. In *Acharnians* 715ff. Aristophanes jokes about Boeotian plots to set the naval yard afire. All these passages are jesting treatments of a very real anxiety." See also Dinarchus *Against Philocles* 1–2; Hyperides *For Lyc.* frag. IIIa (IV).

61. Cf. McKechnie 152, with nn. 124 and 125. See also Demosth. XIX (*On the False Embassy*) 331.

62. Aen. Tact. 10.10.

63. Aristoph. *Birds* 1213 (*sphagis*), 1214 (*sumbolon*).

64. Aen. Tact. 10.9. On the basis of this passage, Whitehead ("Lakonian Key," 268) suggested that the "Laconian key" (mentioned in Aristoph. *Thesm.* 423 and schol. ad loc.), which locked a door from without, rendering it impossible to open from within, alluded to a form of house arrest of foreigners practiced in Sparta.

65. Aen. Tact. 10.11; cf. Thuc. 2.12.1–2. Cf. Thuc. 5.84.3 and, for late antique examples, Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, 167–68.

66. Aen. Tact. 10.11.

67. See, e.g., Xen. *Oecon.* 2.5; Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.61.

seemed to be a general interest in keeping tabs on anyone socializing with foreigners.⁶⁸

Provision was apparently made for attendance of religious festivals and access to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi even in time of war. Aristophanes mentioned that Athenians wishing to go to Delphi during the Peloponnesian War had to ask for passage from the Boeotians, through whose territory their route lay.⁶⁹ The mechanics of this application could be a problem: how would an Athenian obtain permission from the Boeotians without being admitted into Boeotia, yet how could he be admitted into Boeotia without first gaining permission? Some arrangement with a third party might have solved this dilemma, or perhaps application was made via a herald, who possessed immunity.

The religious festivals, which provided an excellent opportunity for information gathering, must have made counterintelligence correspondingly difficult, and there is no evidence for monitoring of contact between individuals of mutually hostile states. Even regional festivals allowed admittance to a state during a war (without provisions for a truce). There is mention of visitors to the Gymnopaedia while most of the Spartan men were abroad at Leuctra, although it is hardly likely that Theban tourists were admitted into the city at that time.⁷⁰

Attempts to control the contact between citizens and foreigners could impede the mobility of agents and reduce the availability of sources in time of war. Consequently, states would be relatively ignorant of their opponents' affairs or would be compelled to compensate by using available means more extensively (e.g., heralds), by using different types of informants (e.g., captives), or by relying on covert collection (e.g., spies).

Counterintelligence Agents

The term *counterintelligence agent* is here used to denote those who disrupted the activity of intelligence agents or sources. In a few cases individuals were assigned the task of capturing or killing enemy intelligence agents. Patrols were sent to capture enemy scouts, and guards were posted to prevent deserters. Pompiscus, an Arcadian, was said to have made access to his camp difficult for enemy *kataskopoi* by fortifying the main roads and denuding them of cover, while patrolling the byways to

68. Hyperides *For Euxenippus* 22.

69. Aristoph. *Birds* 188–89.

70. Plut. *Ages.* 29.2.

capture those avoiding the roads.⁷¹ When important decisions were being made, Alexander posted mounted guards at the entrance to the camp and had nearby roads patrolled by cavalry to prevent messages being sent.⁷² Practical precautions were also suggested by Aeneas Tacticus. These included posting dogs outside the city walls and controlling passage out of the gates.⁷³ Sentries may have acted as an obstacle to desertion or betrayal, although Xenophon's description of small groups of men scattered through the dark to ambush would-be deserters probably reflects theory more than practice.⁷⁴ Men or ships posted as watchers were vulnerable in turn, and Xenophon advocated setting ambushes for these as well.⁷⁵

The bulk of counterintelligence activity, however, was a by-product of a need for security against treachery. To this end informers were encouraged in many states. The employment of these individuals is relevant to the conduct of both intelligence and counterintelligence, insofar as they provided information to the government by revealing traitors and, in doing so, put an end to the activity of those who often provided information to hostile foreign powers.

Losada has commented on the success of security measures against fifth columns in the Peloponnesian War but has also noted that of five plots discovered by their prospective victims, four were revealed by individuals who were party to the plot, rather than by people outside the plot discovering it through vigilance or accident.⁷⁶ As I mentioned earlier, it was (and remains) very difficult to keep secrets when the number of individuals privy to the secret exceeded three or four. Hence it is no surprise that conspirators were the most common informers. These were further able to provide a degree of detail unavailable from other sources.⁷⁷

Losada's small sample is indicative of the larger context, and it is fair to say that democracies and oligarchies relied most heavily on volunteered information rather than on agents commissioned to monitor the

71. Polyaeus 5.33.1, 33.5. Cf. [Nicephorus] *Campaign Org.* 12.

72. Q. Curtius 6.8.18. Cf. Aen. Tact. 22, 24; Onas. 26.1–2; Q. Curtius 7.2.28.

73. Aen. Tact. 22.7, 22.14, 22.20, 28.2; see also 23.1–3, 23.5, 29, 31.35, 40.5, and Polyaeus 3.9.51.

74. Xen. Cyr. 4.5.5. Cf. Polyaeus 2.22.4; Anon. Byz. *Peri Strat.* 7.

75. Xen. Cav. Com. 4.10.

76. Losada 116; cf. 113. Five of ten plots mentioned by Thucydides were uncovered; the source of information about the fifth plot is not recorded.

77. See, e.g., Hdt. 8.132; Thuc. 4.68.6, 6.74.1; Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.4. Cf. Hdt. 3.71; Thuc. 1.20.2, 6.57.2. Charon, e.g., realized that Archias' information did not come from a fellow conspirator, because of its vague nature (Plut. *Pelop.* 10.1).

populace.⁷⁸ Provocateurs were not altogether absent but were more characteristic of tyrannies. All polities encouraged contributions from informers. Encouragement took the forms of promises of rewards, on the one hand, and the exacting of oaths and inculcation of the concept of duty, on the other. It might have also manifested itself in penalties for not informing, should people fail to report their knowledge of a plot.⁷⁹

At least some of the peoples subject to Athens in the fifth century were bound by oath to denounce any revolutionary activity.⁸⁰ Their adherence to these oaths was reinforced by the more tangible presence of *episkopoi*, *proxenoi*, *phrouarkhoi*, and the like. There may have been a similar arrangement during the Lacedaemonian hegemony, since the Athenians were quick to inform the Spartan harmost on Aegina of Demaenetus' machinations lest they be considered implicated by their silence. Other authorities sometimes sought to instill a similar sense of obligation; hence sycophants often tried to give to their prosecutions the aura of public duty.⁸¹

Rewards included money for free people, freedom, and sometimes money for slaves. The amount of the reward could be fixed (and published), or it might be a percentage of the property of the accused.⁸² In either case, the rewards could amount to substantial sums of money. It was not uncommon for immunity (*adeia*) to be accorded to an informant who was himself involved in a conspiracy, in return for comprehensive information about a plot's purpose and membership. Immunity could be extended to a participant in a plot but not to the instigator, and was provisional based on the veracity of the information. Those who provided information judged to be false, whether on the basis of other evidence or political expediency, did not meet happy ends.⁸³

Informers were common in the fifth and fourth centuries and probably earlier as well, since informers and sycophants are mentioned (at least in

78. However, there were institutions that investigated treachery: e.g., the Areopagus at Athens had the right of *zetesis* in cases of *prodosia* (Wallace 113).

79. Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 222a.

80. Tod no. 42; cf. the Thasian decree (Meiggs and Lewis no. 18). In the Mytilene Debate (Thuc. 3.46.6), Diodotus advocated a careful watch on the allies to forestall revolts rather than chastising the rebellious population after the event.

81. Isoc. III (*Nicocles*) 53; Demosth. XVII (*On the crown*) 22–23.

82. Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 2.2.20 (a talent of silver); Aen. *Tact.* 10.3, 10.15 (which includes a provision for the physical display of the money on an altar or temple in the agora).

83. See, e.g., Xen. *Anab.* 2.5.24–26, when Clearchus and Tissaphernes agreed to turn over informants telling—quite truthfully—of bad faith; cf. Q. Curtius 10.9.9.

Athens) from the time of Solon.⁸⁴ They laid charges before magistrates (kings, tyrants, and fairly high-level officials, like *stratego*i and archons) or engaged in prosecution themselves. Intermediaries appear in the sources only when their behavior affected the information flow, although in less open societies their presence can be taken for granted. It is improbable that a cobbler, for instance, would be able to get an immediate interview with a tyrant without some sort of screening process. The channels through which an informant's report flowed could be rather circuitous: the plot to deliver Boeotian cities into the hands of the Athenian generals Hippocrates and Demosthenes was reported by Nicomachus, a Phocian from Phanotis, to the Lacedaemonians, who in turn communicated the information to the Boeotians in time for the latter to intervene and prevent the uprising.⁸⁵

In addition to informers, tyrants recruited and maintained provocateurs, such as those working for Hieron and the Dionysii in Syracuse. Ad hoc measures to test erstwhile friends on their fidelity were undertaken by people under other constitutions as well: Iphicrates, for instance, was said to have sent men disguised as Lacedaemonians into Chios to discover those who welcomed them. He arrested and sent to Athens those who received the imposters.⁸⁶ Agents could be recruited for specific tasks involving clandestine investigation of suspect elements. The leader of the popular party in Argos, learning from an unspecified source of an imminent oligarchic coup, won over two men of the opposite party to work for him covertly while he openly treated them as enemies. In secret he learned the oligarchs' plans from them and, on the night of the attempt, he called the *ekklesia* to stand in arms by tribe and so prevented the oligarchs from carrying out their coup.⁸⁷ I have given other examples of such agents in chapter 3.

Finally, there were men like Demosthenes—there is no fitting category for their role, save perhaps the notions associated with the term *loose cannon*—who fostered a certain paranoia over the presence of foreign spies and domestic traitors. Their efforts were not a function of the offices they held but were guided by private concerns and ambitions.

84. Losada 113 and n. 349.

85. Thuc. 4.89.1–2. Cf. Thuc. 8.73.4; Plut. *Pelopidas* 9.3, 10.3–4.

86. Polyaeus 3.9.58; Front. *Strat.* 4.7.23. On the private level, but perhaps of equal pertinence to counterintelligence in its specific sense, is the advice of Isocrates (I [*to Demon-icus*] 24–25), who advocated testing friends by confiding harmless information as if it were secret.

87. Aen. Tact. 11.7.

Demosthenes in particular was a self-appointed spy catcher and was censured, even mocked, by his political opponents for what they characterized as frenzied witch-hunts. Aeschines, his bitter enemy, declaimed, "I say nothing of his deceitful [perhaps "forged"] letters and arrests of spies and torture sessions on fictitious charges—as if I, and some others wanted to bring about revolution in the city."⁸⁸ Aeschines' mockery does not lack backing in the speeches of other orators and in the words of Demosthenes himself.⁸⁹ Dinarchus attacked Demosthenes on the grounds that he "brought into the assembly held just the other day an informer whom he had prepared with false statements to say that people were plotting to damage the docks."⁹⁰ The incident, if indeed it is the same one, appeared to Demosthenes in a different light.

You all remember Antiphon, the man who was struck from the register, and came back to Athens after promising Philip that he would set fire to the dockyard. When I had caught him hiding at Piraeus, and brought him before the assembly, this malignant fellow [Aeschines] raised a huge outcry about my scandalous and undemocratic conduct in distress and breaking into houses without a warrant and so procured his acquittal. Had not the Council of the Areopagus learned of the matter, and seeing that you had made an inopportune blunder, conducted an investigation of the man, arrested him and brought him to court a second time, the vile traitor would have slipped out of your hands and eluded justice, being smuggled out of the city by our bombastic phrase-monger. As it was, you put him on the rack and then executed him.⁹¹

In the life of Demosthenes, once ascribed to Plutarch, there is further mention that he arrested Anaxilas of Oreus, who had been his guest-friend, and had him tortured as spy. Although Anaxilas, under torture, did not admit to espionage, Demosthenes proposed a decree that he be handed over to the Eleven for execution.⁹² Interpretation of Demosthenes' action is rather difficult—he may have been attempting political

88. Aeschines III (*Against Ctesiphon*) 225; cf. 82.

89. Indeed Demosthenes (XVIII [*On the crown*] 21) called Aeschines and Philocrates Philip's spies, possibly because he characterized his political opposition as traitors and hence spies.

90. Dinarchus *Against Demosthenes* 94–95.

91. Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 132, Loeb translation. Cf. Wallace 113–15 ad loc.

92. [Plut.] *Mor.* 848a ("arresting him, he tortured him as a spy").

housecleaning under the guise of his concern for the security of the state, yet Aeschines (and later Dinarchus) had every motive for wishing Demosthenes' actions to appear in the worst light possible. In any event, these fourth-century free-for-alls show that counterespionage was a lively issue.

Finally, it is curious to note that the appearance of an ability to detect traitors could itself be a deterrent to treachery, as evidenced by a story in Polyaeus, in which a man announced publicly that he knew an infallible way to discover plots. He was summoned by Dionysius, who bade him reveal his method. The man insisted on telling him in private. Upon the dismissal of all others, he advised Dionysius to pretend that he indeed had a sure way of apprehending traitors, so that all would shrink from treachery out of fear.⁹³ Nicocles appears to have aimed at provoking a similar response in his subjects when warning them, "Let none of you imagine that even what he secretly thinks in his own heart will be hidden from me."⁹⁴ But, more practically, Thucydides cynically observed that while much credit was given to those who had the intellectual prowess and, presumably, the sources that enabled them to detect plots, when the intelligent passively relied on their ability to anticipate unrest, they were destroyed by those of meaner wit but greater activity.⁹⁵

Disruption or Interception of Communication

While Plutarch wanted to believe that the Athenians would not open Philip II's private correspondence to his wife, he had to admit that such restraint could not be expected of all.⁹⁶ If, indeed, the Athenians refrained from breaking open that letter, they had no compunctions about reading others. Even Philip had cause to complain that they waylaid his herald and read out the captured letters in the *ekklesia*.⁹⁷ In fact, such evidence as exists implies that the Athenians were fairly adept at get-

93. Polyaeus 5.2.3; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 175f (*Sayings of kings, Dionys.* 8); Stob. 3.42.

94. Isoc. III (*To Nicocles*) 51, Loeb translation.

95. Thuc. 3.82.5, 83.2, 83.4, 87.3; cf. 6.38.2.

96. Plut. *Mor.* 799e, Loeb translation: "And I do not believe that the Thebans either, if they had obtained control of their enemies' letters, would have refrained from reading them, as the Athenians, when they captured Philip's mail-carriers with a letter addressed to Olympias, refrained from breaking the seal and making known an affectionate private message of an absent husband to his wife."

97. Philip *Epist.* 2 (in Demosthenes' corpus).

ting their hands on other people's messages and messengers, perhaps because of their control of the sea for much of the fifth and fourth centuries.⁹⁸

These incidents are by no means isolated, nor can all be attributed solely to the chances of war. Reconnaissance forces are sometimes mentioned as responsible for the capture of documents, which is probably due to their role in seeking captives for interrogation.⁹⁹ A number of messages fell into unintended hands because their bearers held allegiance to a third party above loyalty to the correspondents, sought personal gain by turning over the documents, or both. Such was the case with the courier of the treacherous regent Pausanias.¹⁰⁰ Third parties, perhaps having learned how easy it would be to frame somebody by simulated correspondence, seem to have been cautious in receiving defecting couriers and sought independent confirmation. A return to the story of Pausanias illustrates this: the ephors arranged to overhear Pausanias acknowledge his guilt in a conversation contrived by the courier. In other circumstances, couriers were ordered to deliver the message as directed by its sender and then return with a reply that would confirm the correspondent's complicity.¹⁰¹

Many citations are vague on details of the capture. Xenophon recorded the celebrated letter of Hippocratus, that was sent to inform his Lacedaemonian compatriots, "Our ships are lost. Mindarus is dead. Our men starve. We don't know what to do," but was intercepted by the Athenians. However, Xenophon left us to speculate exactly how and

98. Some examples: Thuc. 2.67ff., 3.35.1, 4.50.1–3. Besides these, there is indirect testimony to the existence of measures taken to intercept messages in countermeasures used, by inference, to circumvent them—that is, devices invented to convey information without detection.

99. Some examples: (1) Plut. *Lys.* 28.2; (2) the capture of tablets bearing the Syracusan catalogue by Athenian triremes sent ahead to scout Syracuse's harbor (Plut. *Nicias* 14.5); and (3) the capture of a Mardian messenger sent by the satrap of Damascus to Alexander (with secret overtures) by Parmenio's scouts (Q. Curtius 3.13.2). In some cases, the attribution to scouts is implicit: it is entirely possible that the cavalry who captured a courier conveying an appeal from Selinus to Hamilcar and brought him to Gelon were scouts, since cavalry often fulfilled this role (Diod. Sic. 11.21.4–5).

100. Thuc. 1.132.5; Diod. Sic. 11.45.2ff. (cf. Hdt. 5.32). Cf. Hdt. 6.4; Xen. *Anab.* 1.6.3.

101. Aen. Tact. 31.9: During a siege a man was sent into the city with a message for a traitor, but instead he went to the archon of the city, to whom he gave the letters; the archon told him to deliver the letters and bring back a reply. Upon receiving the reply, the archon summoned the traitor and convicted him with his own seal.

where the Athenians got their hands on it.¹⁰² One must also rely on conjecture with regard to Parmenio's letter to his sons, the letters of Darius intended for distribution among Alexander's troops, and those of Demades urging action against Antipater.¹⁰³

Private correspondence could also be subjected to interception and scrutiny. Aeneas Tacticus called for an *episkopesis* (perhaps best translated "censorship" here) of outgoing and incoming letters.¹⁰⁴ The context suggests that this practice would be continuous in peace and war; hence the creation of a new office or an alteration of an existing one might be desirable. There is no other evidence for such an office, and it may be that his theory did not become practice, but it is possible that a state would not wish to advertise its use of censorship on inscriptions for reasons of image or efficacy or both. Ad hoc measures to monitor communication were instituted by Alexander, who arranged for letters written by his troops to be opened and read to discern their sentiments. The Sicilian and Cypriot tyrants surely did likewise.¹⁰⁵ The sources are silent concerning regulation of private correspondence of soldiers, but some effort may have been taken to oversee this channel of communication, which could compromise security.

The interception of messages represented not only a facet of counterintelligence (in that intelligence flow was subject to interruption) but also one of intelligence, since the information contained in dispatches could prove of great value to their captors. In the case of Theban scouts who intercepted a dispatch from Lysander to King Pausanias, the Boeotians were able to act quickly enough to prepare a strong force at Haliartus, where Lysander met his death fighting. Captured documents could be exploited in other ways to strengthen one's own position or damage another's. The letters of Darius and Parmenio mentioned earlier might be examples of such a practice. The framing of Dion with a letter allegedly sent to the Carthaginians, captured, and presented to Dionysius is prob-

102. Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.23. This was an official dispatch, presumably on a *skutale*.

103. Respectively, Q. Curtius 6.9.13, 4.10.16; Arrian *Anab.* 2.14.5–6; Plut. *Demosth.* 31.3–4 (a letter from Demades to Perdikkas); Plut. *Phocion* 30.5–6 (from Demades to Antigonos). Cf. Polybius 5.28.4.

104. Aen. Tact. 10.6. Aeneas intended thereby to prevent contact between citizens and exiles, but such controls would have also affected other channels of communication of information.

105. Q. Curtius 3.7.14–15, 7.2.36; Diod. Sic. 17.80; Polyaeus 4.3.19; Just. 12.5. Cf. Polyaeus 7.20.1.

ably an example as well.¹⁰⁶ Conversely, disinformation could be effected by arranging for specially contrived documents to fall into enemy hands.

Attempts were also made to disrupt other modes of communication, either by forestalling or by “jamming” their transmission. Interdiction seems to have been a matter of general policy (at least by the fourth century), at times carried out by night watchmen and enforced by stiff penalties.¹⁰⁷ A notable instance of “jamming” was the Plataean confutation of signal fires lit by their Peloponnesian besiegers. The Plataeans had planned an escape attempt but realized that should they break through their besiegers, they would still have to deal with enemy reinforcements sent for from Thebes. Therefore they prepared beacons in advance, so that when the Peloponnesians tried to signal for aid, the Plataeans were able to light the beacons and thus confuse transmission of any messages.¹⁰⁸

Other Devices and Legislation

Legislation

Most legislation pertinent to counterintelligence was enacted to thwart treachery (*prodosia*). *Prodosia* encompassed espionage along with other forms of treason and fifth-column activity. Those found guilty under these laws were executed; spies of foreign states were subject to the same penalty as domestic traitors. A clause prohibiting the reception of deserters was incorporated among the terms of the truce between the Lacedaemonians and Athenians in 423.¹⁰⁹ It would be interesting to know whether the two parties abided by their agreement. If nothing else, the treaty would make desertion a yet riskier undertaking in the mind of a soldier, since he could not have confidence that he would not be returned by his new patrons, particularly if his presence brought them no particular advantage. There are no indications, however, that deserters who claimed to have information were ever turned away unheeded by the

106. Plut. *Dion* 14.4–7.

107. Aen. *Tact.* 10.26; Lysias *Against Agoratos*. 65/67.

108. Thuc. 3.22.7 (ὅπως ἀσαφὴ τὰ σημεῖα τῆς φρουκτωρίας τοῖς πολέμοις ἦ καὶ μὴ βοηθοῖεν). Cf. Polyaeus 6.19.2. Naturally, the troops in Thebes were aware that something was up, but their response was less well directed than it might otherwise have been. Cf. Riepl 73 for an analysis of how this might have worked.

109. As recorded in Thuc. 4.118.7 (“neither you nor we are to receive deserters during this time, neither free nor slave”). Cf. *IG*³ 58 (Attic, ca. 430): “it is forbidden [to receive any] *xenos* [into one’s house, not even a suppliant or an *auto*] *molos*.”

people whom they approached. Those who suffered their desertion established severe punishments. An Athenian decree concerning those who fled to Deceleia mandates that should they be caught returning, they could be taken by any Athenian to the Thesmothetae, who would in turn hand them over to be executed.¹¹⁰

In an exceptional case, the communication of a specific item of intelligence was prohibited by law. A decree passed by the Thebans, often lauded by Athenian orators of the fourth century, mandated that the Thebans were to ignore anyone (i.e., any Athenian rebel) passing through their country under arms. This decree was enacted to prevent information concerning the muster in Boeotia (of the Athenians opposed to the Thirty) from reaching the Thirty or the Lacedaemonians.¹¹¹ One wonders how effective such a decree could be, since the mere fact that it was enacted would be an indication that some game was afoot and would hardly prevent a Laconophile from tipping off the Spartans. It must be noted, however, that the Thirty did not lead out their troops until too late, after Phyle was seized—perhaps they had not taken the threat seriously.

Internment

During time of war, a commander had license to arrest and detain anyone who might conceivably be able to pass on information of his movements or plans. Such was the intent of the Athenians when they interned the crews of the ships of their Lesbian allies while preparing a surprise attack on Mytilene.¹¹² Alexander proved more successful when he sent troops against a Mallian town with orders not to engage but to prevent anyone from escaping lest they tell their compatriots that the Macedonians were at hand.¹¹³ Armies on the march made no effort to distinguish between likely and unlikely security risks—instead, those who fell in with them were seized indiscriminately, as when Alcibiades and Chalcideus sailed to Chios.¹¹⁴ Likewise Seuthes led his force with cavalry that

110. Lysurgus *Against Leocrates* 120–21. Cf. [Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 3.5; Front. *Strat.* 4.1.17.

111. See, e.g., Dinarchus *Against Demosthenes* 25; Plut. *Pelopidas* 6.4. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.2.

112. Thuc. 3.3.4.

113. Arrian *Anab.* 6.6.4.

114. Thuc. 8.14.1. At a later date Alcibiades, upon arrival at Proconnesus, took into custody all the vessels in the harbor, even small ones, so that nobody could reveal the size of his own force to the enemy; he had a proclamation made to the effect that anyone caught sailing across the strait would be killed (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.15). Cf. Amm. Marc. 29.4.4.

detained everyone it met lest someone escape to warn his foes.¹¹⁵ Xenophon was particularly impressed with this precaution and improved on it in his *Education of Cyrus*, in which Cyrus, attempting to surprise the Armenians, sent men ahead in the guise of brigands to capture any Armenians on the army's route, to prevent them from spreading news of his advent.¹¹⁶

Concealment and Distraction

Concealment is attested most often in the military sphere, especially on tactical levels. It frequently manifested itself in ambushes over the entire range of the period under discussion, but it was also useful in achieving tactical advantage through unexpected movement. Agesilaus was praised by Xenophon for habitually concealing his army's movements, so that his enemy often did not know where he was or whither he went.¹¹⁷ Movements by night or behind a screening body of troops or terrain and even smoke screens were used by Greek commanders and their opposite numbers among the Carthaginians.¹¹⁸ Troop numbers were also concealed or misrepresented.¹¹⁹ By the fourth century, all such measures were advocated as basic security and affected campaigning. Xenophon commended Epaminondas, for instance, for pitching camp within the walls of Tegea, since his actions would be less visible to his enemies, while it was possible for Epaminondas to observe them, since they were camped in the open.¹²⁰

While concealment of information is an impediment to an opponent's ability to make intelligent decisions, its employment is liable to arouse suspicions. Although it is not always easy to detect a lack of information and understand its significance, it is certainly possible for an astute observer to be prompted to ask questions such as "Why am I not able to learn the whereabouts of the Athenian fleet?" and "Where did his light-armed troops go to?" or even "Why do the Spartans wish to conceal this?" Such thoughts lead naturally to further inquiry and speculation, which might compromise the counterintelligence effort. Indeed, Timoc-

115. Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.36. Onasander (39.4) suggested this as standard operating procedure.

116. Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.15–23.

117. Xen. *Ages.* 6.6.

118. Xen. *Ages.* 6.6; Arrian *Anab.* 2.9.1, 2.9.3; Polyaeus 2.3.13, 3.3.13, 3.3.14, 3.9.8, 5.10.5. Cf. Thuc. 5.8; Q. Curtius 4.9.15. Cf. also Anderson 217–18 and n. 84.

119. Polyaeus 1.47.1, 3.9.19.

120. Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.8.

rates aroused suspicions of treachery because he would not share common quarters with his compatriots when participating in an embassy to the Thebans, and he was executed on the belief that he did this to conceal secret negotiations and corruption.¹²¹ Thus although concealment in itself can be effective, its utility could be enhanced by complementary devices, such as misinformation and distraction. These devices, by concealing actual plans and actions beneath apparent explanations or demonstrations (particularly those appealing to an opponent's expectations and prejudices), could deter hostile parties from properly considering the implications of whatever preparations they might detect.

Distraction entails the provision of an opportunity for an opponent to divert his attention and resources to an activity other than the one concealed. The Corinthians, for example, demonstrated with warships stationed opposite the Athenian fleet at Naupactus, while secretly preparing to send troop carriers to Sicily.¹²² The Corinthians knew that Naupactus was of considerable importance to the Athenians, who used it as a base to observe and hinder Peloponnesian movements west through the gulf. The Corinthians reasoned, soundly as events proved, that the potential threat of their fleet would divert Athenian attention from their other preparations.

Other Comments on Methods

Information on an opponent's intelligence efforts facilitated a counterintelligence response, both in general strategy and in particulars. In the former case, it was essential to know what an enemy was actively seeking to learn and what types of agents he was employing, so that counterintelligence resources could be allocated where they were most needed, and so that measures taken to conceal, distract, or misinform the foe would be as effective as possible. A fitting example, if one of somewhat tenuous historicity, is the story of the Persians sent by Darius at the instigation of Democedes to reconnoiter the Greek coasts. Upon reaching Taras, Democedes jumped ship and persuaded Aristophilides, the Tarantine king, to arrest the Persians as *kataskopoi*. While the whole affair is described as a collusion between Democedes and Aristophilides to enable the former to escape back to his native Croton, nevertheless the Persians

121. Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.38.

122. Thuc. 7.19.5.

were in fact *kataskopoi*, and their reconnaissance was compromised and only partially successful.¹²³ Other measures included sealed orders and spot security checks on these.¹²⁴ There are also a fair number of examples of efforts to withhold information that lack clarification as to the method used. Xenophon mentioned, for instance, that Alcotas, a Lacedaemonian guarding Oreus, took care lest the Thebans learn that he had manned ships for an ambush. No indication was made of how Alcotas achieved this.¹²⁵

Disinformation

Disinformation complements concealment by providing one's opponent with a false perception of one's intentions. It further hinders the efforts of agents seeking reliable information, both by the immediate consequences of providing false information to decision makers and by the long-term demands it exacts due to the necessity to verify information.

Disinformation entails both outright falsehood and the presentation of the truth in a way that compels the listener to draw an erroneous conclusion or encourages an action beneficial to the deceiver.¹²⁶ It was employed against enemies to gain advantage, especially in military contexts to lull their awareness and so heighten surprise, to lower their morale, to detach their allies, and to prevent or provoke movements.¹²⁷

The deception of an enemy did not seem to pose ethical dilemmas for

123. Hdt. 3.136.

124. Polyaeus 5.2.12; Leo Byz. *Strat.* 7.1. Cf. Polyaeus 4.7.2.

125. Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.56.

126. To denizens of the twentieth century the distinction between these two forms of deceit is perhaps arbitrary. There is, however, an interest in Greek literature in how far one can bend the truth until it breaks, which reflects a distinction in their society. In the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* (274–77, 368–86), e.g., the god Hermes seems to swear an oath denying that he stole Apollo's cattle, but he is only describing an oath he might swear, and he presents his case to Zeus in words that are technically true but meant to mislead. His efforts, though detected, afford amusement and admiration rather than censure.

127. To heighten surprise: e.g., Aen. *Tact.* 23.3. To affect morale: e.g., Xen. *Cav. Com.* 5.8: "To instill fear in one's enemies, one does such things as fake ambushes, fake reinforcements, and false information. Enemies are especially confident when they learn of difficulties and bother among the other side." Cf. similar sentiments attributed to Iphicrates by Polyaeus (3.9.32). To detach allies: e.g., Plut. *Dion* 27.2. To affect movements: e.g., Aen. *Tact.* 23.7–11. Cf. also Dulles 145: "Its [deception's] best known use is in wartime or just prior to the outbreak of war, when its main purpose is to draw enemy defenses away from a planned attack, or to give the impression that there will be no attack at all, or simply to confuse the opponent about one's plans and purposes." Collateral effects on evaluation will be discussed shortly.

the Greeks, particularly in military operations.¹²⁸ They were hardly more hesitant to deceive their own soldiers than they were to mislead their enemies. Andocides accepted this practice as standard operating procedure, and even the moralizing Xenophon sanctioned its use when aimed at the general good.¹²⁹ It might be argued that concealment of danger was more common than outright fabrications, but the former does imply the latter.¹³⁰

Disinformation has some important implications for a study of intelligence. First, the instigator of a leak had to be able to count on his foe's willingness and ability to collect information, since for his plan to succeed, some effort on the enemy's part was necessary. It would be futile—and perhaps bad for morale—to circulate disinformation at home and abroad if it could not provoke a desired response in a victim who was unable to discover it. The instigator had to have some knowledge of which channels of information were flowing at a given time, so as to ensure that the disinformation effort was placed appropriately.¹³¹ Additionally, anyone conveying disinformation by leak or agent must have sufficient knowledge about his foes to anticipate their response to the news. An example from Polyaeus may illustrate this: Iphicrates, while still in Mytilene, was said to have circulated that his men were to collect shields to send to Chian slaves. This move was calculated to pressure the Chians into supporting him, and indeed it succeeded in doing so. Had Iphicrates not known that the Chians lived in constant dread of a slave revolt, it is hardly probable that this idea would have occurred to him.¹³² While such knowledge hardly required elaborate information gathering, his assessment also relied on information about relative strengths and capabilities (what if the Chians had been strong enough to exact retribution?) and on an awareness that Chian agents or sympathizers would be present on Lesbos to report his rumor. Alternatively, if the means for such an operation had not been obviously at his disposal, the disinformation would not have been credible. Therefore it can be expected that

128. Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.15, 16. Cf. Thuc. 4.86.6; Xen. *Ages.* 11.4. The Greeks were not the only ones to use misinformation: see, e.g., Hdt. 9.89; Xen. *Anab.* 2.4.14–25 (of Persians; cf. Polyaeus 2.2.4); Plut. *Timoleon* 19.4–6; Polyaeus 5.10.3 (of Carthaginians).

129. Andoc. *On the Peace* 33–34; Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.17. Cf. Onas. 23.1–2.

130. See Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.36 (Polyaeus 1.44.1), 4.3.14 (Plut. *Ages.* 17.2–3); Plut. *Pelop.* 10.2.

131. Cf. Isoc. I (*To Demonius*) 33.

132. Polyaeus 3.9.23 (ca. 391); cf. Athen. 265d–266e for corroboration of Chian fears of slave revolts.

commanders had need of good intelligence on their opponents, supplemented by adequate knowledge of their opponent's information-gathering practices.¹³³

Effective disinformation also demanded an ability to withhold true information that could expose the lie. There was a greater degree of confidentiality possible when information was communicated to a single person—had not Eteonicus been privately informed of the Lacedaemonian defeat at Arginusae, he would not have been able to suppress this report and bid the messengers to deliver false news of victory to his men.¹³⁴ Such confidentiality was much more difficult to maintain in collective bodies because of varied individual interest, carelessness, or faction on the part of their members (even smaller bodies, such as the five ephors at Sparta, were not always in agreement, and security was less than airtight).¹³⁵ There was correspondingly less ability to manipulate the populace by withholding or publishing news.¹³⁶

Having introduced the prerequisites of misinformation, it remains to turn to the subject itself. Disinformation took a variety of forms, but these can be generally placed into categories based on the manner of delivery: the leak and the agent.

Leaks

While the Greeks may not have known a word corresponding to our twentieth-century conception of a leak, they were familiar enough with the idea.¹³⁷ Most leaks seemed to have been arranged by the instigator discussing his (false) plans openly or perhaps employing men to spread the word throughout his camp, in the expectation that someone would

133. Cf. Dulles 145–46: “As a strategic maneuver, deception generally requires lengthy and careful preparation. Intelligence must first ascertain what the enemy thinks and what he expects, because the misleading information which is going to be put into his hands must be plausible and not outside the practical range of plans that the enemy knows are capable of being put into operation. Intelligence must then devise a way of getting the deception to the enemy.”

134. Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.36; for a similar story of Agesilaus, see 4.3.14.

135. See, e.g., Thuc. 1.134.2.

136. So Adcock and Mosley (181), whose reasoning is good as far as it goes (“News was not carried exclusively or most quickly along official channels. Therefore there was no opportunity for it to be digested by an official body which could prepare its release and manipulate public opinion”) but incomplete in that it does not consider security measures.

137. *ὑεδαγγελία*, in Xen. *Cav. Com.* 5.8, almost attains this meaning, but the word is elsewhere used in its literal sense.

desert to the enemy or that a spy would be present. Since deserters were endemic to Greek warfare, the expectation was a real one.¹³⁸ Such was probably the course of events when Alcibiades, Antalcidas, and Alexander deceived their respective foes.¹³⁹ Making an announcement to a popular assembly also worked well—which is, to be sure, a measure of the difficulty of keeping real information from the enemy in democratic forms of government. Aeneas Tacticus suggested using this method for leaking fabricated plans for night attacks to the enemy to divert them from their own intended actions. He might have been alluding to the example of Iphicrates, who used this tactic against the Thebans.¹⁴⁰ A rather crude alternative was to speak so loudly that a nearby enemy would overhear—such was the ploy ascribed to Pelopidas, who arranged for a horseman to ride up to him near the walls of a town, announcing loudly that the town's ally had fallen.¹⁴¹ Hardly more sophisticated were Alexander's measures to deceive Porus' watchers: he had a small contingent pretend to be his whole army by making a lot of noise and commotion, while he moved his main force to attack elsewhere, thereby gaining tactical surprise—herein the kinship between concealment and demonstration is quite close.¹⁴² Stock stratagems included such devices as lighting more or less fires to deceive the enemy as to one's numbers and making withdrawals while leaving fires lit behind. Signals observed by an enemy could also be used to denote the opposite of what the foe expected through prior experience, as in the cases of Cleomenes and Pompiscus.¹⁴³ Occasionally appearances were manipulated when contact with representatives of other states was expected, as when the Egestaeans gave visiting Athenian envoys an impression of great wealth by gathering all their tableware of precious metals together and transferring the lot to each house that hosted them as if it was the property of each rather than all.¹⁴⁴ Letters containing false information were allowed to fall into enemy hands on occasion.

138. Cf. Polyaeus 1.17, 1.42.1; see also Onas. 10.22–24, and chap. 1.

139. Alcibiades at Byzantium (Plut. *Alc.* 31.2–3), Antalcidas at Abydos (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.25ff.; Polyaeus 2.24.1), Alexander at the Hydaspes (Arrian *Anab.* 5.10.1; cf. Q. Curtius 6.8.15).

140. Aen. Tact. 9.1–3; Polyaeus 3.9.20. Cf. Paus. 9.12.

141. Polyaeus 2.4.1: Pelopidas also arranged for smoke to billow up in the direction of the allied town, as confirmation of the report; cf. Front. *Strat.* 3.8.2, in which the deception was further supported by prisoners dressed in the manner of the townspeople.

142. Q. Curtius 8.13.18ff.

143. Hdt. 6.78; Polyaeus 1.14.1, 5.33.2.

144. Thuc. 6.46; Polyaeus 6.21.1.

Agésilas was a master of subtle and elaborate deception. Not only did he employ the tried-and-true method of deliberately circulating false information within his camp, but he made preparations consistent with this, so that his opponents would receive varied and independent evidence all pointing to the same erroneous conclusion. When campaigning against Tissaphernes in Asia Minor, he mustered men and sent word to those cities en route to Caria to stock markets. In doing so, he manipulated the expected indications of an attack and its directions, which large armies must make due to logistic necessity, and relied on Tissaphernes' spies or on deserters and captives from his own army to convey information that would logically be sought by his foe. When Tissaphernes moved to defend Caria, Agésilas invaded Phrygia.¹⁴⁵ Agésilas used the same method against the Thebans, when he wished to lure them from their defense of the pass at Scolus. He again gave orders for markets to be prepared, this time in Thespieae, and further indicated that all embassies should await him there; the Thebans moved to guard the pass to Thespieae, while he marched unhindered through Scolus.¹⁴⁶

There are only two examples of this type of disinformation before the second half of the Peloponnesian War. This could indicate (1) that the Greeks were not so efficient at gathering information that an attempt to circulate false information in the hope of it being reported back to an opponent was feasible, and/or (2) that the possibility of such a subtle form of deception was not yet realized, or (3) that examples occurring before the birth of historical writing were lost due to secrecy or neglect. The second possibility seems to be the most likely, since the Greeks perceived an active effort, via an agent, as normal operating procedure; the story of besieged Miletus (if true) seems more of an ad hoc response to an unforeseen opportunity.¹⁴⁷

145. Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.11–12; Xen. *Ages.* 1.14–16; Plut. *Ages.* 9.2, 10.1; Polyaeus 2.1.9. For other examples of the collection of foodstuffs as an indication of an army's muster or route, see Hdt. 7.25; Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.11. Cf. Frederick the Great 126 ("look for the enemy's supply depots"), 347–48; Maurice de Saxe (291): "They [spies] should be placed everywhere, among the officers, the generals, the sutlers, and especially among purveyors of provisions, because their stores, magazines, and other preparations furnish the best intelligence concerning the real designs of the enemy."

146. Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.48; Polyaeus 2.1.11.

147. Hdt. 1.20, 23 (ca. 611): When the besieged Milesians learned from Periander of a future embassy from Alyattes, they arranged a show of conspicuous consumption for his herald to witness. On learning of the apparent prosperity of the Milesians, Alyattes despaired of his siege. Cf. Polyaeus 6.47.1; Front. *Strat.* 3.15.6.

Agents

If a leader could not count on an enemy intelligence agent being on hand to report disinformation back to his employer, he could send one of his own men to accomplish the task.¹⁴⁸ Particularly reliable men were sought for such a role, and one can imagine that the risks they faced were considerable should their reports be revealed as lies.¹⁴⁹ The agent's first problem was to get access to the foe, then win acceptance and trust. As Dulles put it, "He cannot simply turn up with dramatic military information and expect to be believed unless he can explain his motive and how he got his information."¹⁵⁰ The most common cover employed by such agents, as with spies, was that of a deserter: it provided a familiar context for gaining admittance, it eliminated the need to fabricate another identity, and it lent itself well to a cover story built around a motive.

The first (more or less) historical use of this manner of disinformation by a Greek is credited to Solon, who sent a fake deserter to Salamis with the story that the Athenian women were celebrating a festival on a given night apart from the city. He thus lured his foes into an ambush, when beardless youths disguised as women turned on their Megarian assailants.¹⁵¹ Numerous other examples occur in Polyaeus.¹⁵² One of

148. He could also undertake it himself, but this was not so common (delegation being the better part of valor, no doubt). Themistocles took the Spartans for a ride with his denials that the walls of Athens were being rebuilt, but he was practicing his deceptions amidst friends (if heavy-handed ones) rather than enemies (Thuc. 1.91.3–7; Diod. Sic. 11.39ff.; Plut. *Them.* 19.1–2). Cf. Alcibiades at Thuc. 8.81.3. Aristarchus apparently did not seek to delegate the task when he tricked the Athenian garrison at Oenae into relinquishing their camp (Thuc. 8.98.1); this is no doubt due to his reliance on his office of *strategos* to lend authority to his words.

149. Individuals so employed are called "trusted" (πιστός) at Thuc. 6.64.2 and Plut. *Solon* 8.4. They had better be, since they were quite likely to be caught. Sun Tzu classified such men as "death agents"—i.e., serving with the expectation of eventual execution by the enemy.

150. Dulles (146–48) described such agents, including, among more modern examples, the man from Catana sent by the Athenians to deceive the Syracusans (Thuc. 6.64).

151. Plut. *Solon* 8.4; cf. Polyaeus 1.20.2, 1.48.1, 2.12.1. Earlier examples (Polyaeus 1.9, 1.15) are mythical.

152. In our period: Polyaeus 4.2.21 (Philip II; cf. Front. *Strat.* 1.4.13), 5.33.4 (Pompilius), 5.44.2 (Memnon). Unfortunately these cannot be confirmed by other sources (except the story of the Persian Zopyrus [Polyaeus 7.13.1; cf. 7.12.1 of Sitalces], which is attested in Hdt. 3.153ff.; Diod. Sic. 10.19.2–4; Just. 1.10.15; Front. *Strat.* 3.34; Plut. *Sayings of Kings*, *Darius* 4; Leo Byz. 2.3), but they are worthy of mention on the grounds that they may be derived from sources lost to us. Cf. Vergil *Aeneid* 2.57–198.

these is of special interest in that there was an attempt to corroborate the report of the fake deserter: when the Lacedaemonians were short of provisions, Agis sent fake deserters to tell the (unspecified) enemy that a large army was on its way to reinforce his troops. Not only did Agis back up their story by having his men make noises consistent with the report, but he thought to have a number of (ostensibly) independent sources all bearing the same tidings.¹⁵³

The Athenians, while in Sicily, sent to Syracuse a Catanaean whom the Syracusans thought sympathetic to them. He told them that the Athenians spent the nights in the city away from their arms and that if the Syracusans came, there were many in Catana who would join them. The Syracusan generals were careless, failed to check into the man's story, and eagerly took the bait. While their forces were marching to Catana, the Athenians sailed by night, landed at the Olympeium near Syracuse, and consolidated their position as their foes began the weary trek back.¹⁵⁴ By the end of the struggle in Sicily, the Syracusans were able to even the score. After they had inflicted a crushing blow on the Athenians at sea, the Athenians prepared to move their land forces to safety. The Syracusans were not about to interrupt their victory celebrations to prevent them. But their general, Hermocrates, was aware that Nicias had agents in Syracuse, so he sent some of his companions to the Athenian camp. These men called out names of Athenian officers as if they had been sent from Nicias' agents, bidding them to tell their general that the roads were guarded. Nicias failed to verify the report, since he thought it came from a reliable source. The delay ended in disaster.¹⁵⁵

In addition to the use of fake deserters and impersonation, a commander might allow an enemy to capture some of his men who were primed with incorrect information. Xenophon portrayed Cyrus devising such a scheme in the theoretical context of the *Education of Cyrus*. The context was as follows: Cyrus had won the allegiance of Gadatas, an Assyrian officer still among his people. He planned to have Gadatas and his com-

153. Polyaeus 1.46.1.

154. Thuc. 6.64–66. Plutarch (*Nicias* 16.2) credited Nicias with the scheme, while Thucydides made a vague reference to the Athenian *strategoi*. One wonders whether Lamachus, who was characterized as brave but not overly imaginative, would have had the idea; Alcibiades had already fled (although Polyaeus 1.40.5 attributed the ruse to him). Cf. Diod. Sic. 13.6.2–3; Front. *Strat.* 3.6.6. Both Dulles (145) and Plutarch (loc. cit.) commended the maneuver.

155. Thuc. 7.73; Plut. *Nicias* 26.1–2; Diod. Sic. 13.18.3–5; Front. *Strat.* 2.9.7; Polyaeus 1.43.2.

mand admitted into a stronghold that Cyrus wanted to possess, so that the traitor could overcome the garrison and deliver the stronghold to the Persians. Cyrus devised thus: he gave some of his men word that he planned to attack the stronghold, and he arranged for them to be captured by Gadatas. Gadatas then had the captives interrogated in front of witnesses, and on the basis of their information, he was sent to reinforce the stronghold; he thereafter betrayed it as planned.¹⁵⁶ There are mercifully few examples of such callousness toward one's own men, and one presumes that the practice was rare, although couriers were now and again deliberately allowed to fall into enemy hands: Philip II, when the Athenians and Thebans held a pass against him, sent a contrived letter to Macedon, as if he had learned of a Thracian revolt and intended to march on Thrace. He sent the courier through the narrows, where the *strategoí* Chares and Proxenus captured both man and letter; the *strategoí* thought the letter genuine and moved their force, thereby freeing the pass.¹⁵⁷ It is further conceivable that soldiers were told what they might tell the enemy if captured, yet this was probably avoided for the sake of morale and security.

Other Forms of Disinformation

To this point the focus has been on disinformation in military contexts, since it is easier to perceive its presence and study its effect. In the political realm things become nebulous, due in part to the clash of personalities and ideals rather than arms. Rhetoric pervades politics, and it manip-

156. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.1–2, 15. The verb βαρύνω is used for the interrogation, which implies the use of torture (but does not necessitate it, as the word comes to denote thoroughness of investigation rather than method); cf. LSJ s.v. II.1 and II.2.

157. Polyaeus 4.2.8 (cf. Front. *Strat.* 1.4.13). Cf. Polyaeus 3.9.57: When two thousand mercenaries deserted to the Lacedaemonians, Iphicrates was said to have contrived fake secret orders to their leaders, bidding them to seize opportunities to betray the Spartans. Iphicrates then sent them, knowing that the letters would fall into the hands of the Lacedaemonian road guards (Parke 52–53 proposed that this event might have taken place while Iphicrates was stationed near Corinth, during the years 393–389). Forged letters (and other documents) were of course used for a variety of purposes, among them fraud, slander, and manipulation (see, e.g., Demosth. XXV [*Against Aristogeiton* 1] 50; Diod. Sic. 17.39.1–3. Cf. Polyaeus 4.8.3; Polyb. 5.38.2ff.). There is one example I cannot refrain from mentioning: Anaximenes, taken no doubt with *odium philologicum*, devised a method to blacken the name of his enemy Theopompus. He wrote a scathing history of Athens, Thebes, and Laconia imitating Theopompus' manner and style. He then signed it in Theopompus' name and distributed it around the cities. The story is found in Pausanias (6.18.5) and is, perhaps, too good to be true.

ulates information by its very nature. Are those who employ it engaged in disinformation? Did Pericles (or Thucydides) intend to deceive his listeners when he distorted truth in the funeral oration, or did Isocrates in his *Panathenaicus*? Were the Athenians who spoke against aggressive action against the Macedonians really Philip's agents or victims of mud slung all too vigorously by Demosthenes? It is difficult to distinguish sincerity of belief from fabrication, and in any case this is not a treatise on psychology or rhetoric. Suffice it to say that disinformation was and is subtle and pervasive, in the sense that information is manipulated or suppressed according to the goals of the individuals who present it.

Besides deliberate disinformation, there are many examples of reports or rumors that proved to be unfounded. These might be due to wishful thinking, fear, partisanship, prejudice, misunderstanding, or any combination of the many factors that influence people to accept information that is not true.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the dictates of chance could be such that even the data before one's eyes cannot always be trusted: at one point in the Corinthian War a group of Lacedaemonian cavalry dismounted and took up shields left by routed Sicyonians. They fell on the Argives, who saw the sigmas on the shields and did not realize their danger until it was too late.¹⁵⁹

The Greeks manipulated their opponents (and allies also, for that matter) by means of true information as well as false. A case in point is the scheme of Themistocles to force the Greeks to fight at Salamis.¹⁶⁰ Themistocles felt it was in the Athenians' best interest, and incidentally that of the other Greeks as well, to fight the Persians in the narrows, while the other Greeks preferred not to risk a battle from which there could be no viable retreat should they be defeated. Unable to win over his compatriots with arguments, Themistocles sent an agent (various accounts give various details) to Xerxes with the (quite true) news that the Greeks were divided among themselves and planned to slip away. This information, as Themistocles had anticipated, encouraged Xerxes to surround the Greeks and plan an attack for the following morning to put an end to their naval strength once and for all. Thus the Greeks soon discovered that they were unable to flee and were faced with no alternative

158. See, e.g., Thuc. 6.52.1–2, 6.104, 8.66.3.

159. Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.10.

160. Aeschylus *Persians* 355; Hdt. 8.75, 87; Diod. Sic. 11.17.1; Plut. *Them.* 12.3; Plut. *Arist.* 9.4; Plut. *Mor.* 185bc; Polyaeus 1.30.3; Front. *Strat.* 2.2.14; etc. Cf. Hdt. 8.110; Plut. *Them.* 16.4.

but to fight. Had Salamis ended with a Persian victory, Themistocles' name would have been a byword for treachery among the Greek peoples. As it was, he emerged covered with glory.¹⁶¹

The effect of disinformation extends beyond the immediate success or failure of a particular application. Its memory endures in its victims' (and, to some extent, the perpetrators') minds, so that when they later receive other items of information, their ability to judge and evaluate data will be at once enhanced and hindered by their experience.¹⁶² It will be enhanced in that they will be more likely to question appearances and less prone to fall for subsequent misinformation. It will be hindered in that they will hesitate to act on real and valuable information and so lose opportunities or even—as in the case of Tissaphernes mentioned earlier—be so suspicious of information that they will err by acting on the assumption that it was intended to deceive.

Broadly speaking, the Greeks' characterization of the prevalence and efficacy of counterintelligence was influenced by their perception of power structure. In military contexts, it was assumed that secrecy was a necessary ingredient for surprise and that counterintelligence measures were a prerequisite for secrecy. In a democracy, counterintelligence was seen as antithetical to individual freedom. Governments in which power was held by few or one were thought to rely for stability on an ability to detect secrets and conspiracies among the populace while withholding their own secrets from foreigners.

161. Cf. the manner in which the Athenian Phrynichus handled a tricky situation resulting from his correspondence with Astyochus, the Spartan navarch, during the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 8.50–51).

162. Cf. Dulles 151–52; Handel, *Intelligence and Military Operations*, 41 (giving as an example Wavell's hesitation in crediting the fact that Crete was in fact the target of imminent German airborne attack, rather than a diversion or ruse).

Conclusion

The manner in which the Greek states obtained and processed information was subject to a number of variables, of which the most important were era, perception of security, and political structure. Assessing information-gathering efforts before the fifth century (and indeed before the Peloponnesian War) is quite difficult, due to a scarcity of relevant contemporary material. Later periods may not be well documented but they are better documented. Therefore, the relative paucity of examples of information gathering in earlier periods may be caused by the distribution of source material.¹ Nevertheless, many of the examples attributed to the earlier period are derived from late authors, such as Plutarch and Pausanias, and hence may be anachronistic. There are indications that between the eighth century and the middle of the fourth, an awareness of the importance of information gathering increased, along with an interest in its application, which reached its height at the hands of such men as Xenophon, Aeneas Tacticus, and Alexander. There was a corresponding tendency for information-gathering processes to become more systematic over time, but this was a function of political development rather than chronological evolution.

Patterns of Information Flow and Processing

Perception of security had considerable influence on the vigor with which the Greeks pursued their information-gathering needs, and it had some impact on the relative importance of various channels. In general, the more secure a state felt, the less attention it paid to information gathering; hence the flow structure (such as it was) became dominated by rela-

1. Fewer *types* of agents and sources are attested in Homer than, e.g., in Thucydides, but this may reflect difference in genre as much as difference in practice, except for the absence of mercenaries and *proxenoi* (who are first attested in the sixth and late seventh centuries, respectively).

tively passive collection (e.g., listening to tales of news from abroad told by merchants), while active efforts (e.g., spies) were neglected. This could be true even in time of war, when one would expect the belligerents to have every interest in being alert—a case in point is the Athenian failure to anticipate, or even guard against, Spartan naval threats to the Piraeus in the Peloponnesian and Corinthian Wars. The contexts of war and peace were, however, marked by somewhat different characteristics. Some channels and sources (especially military ones—e.g., reconnaissance agents and captives) might be inactive in times of peace, while others (e.g., envoys, merchants) would be more important. In wartime, these roles would shift (e.g., envoys would be less common and no longer able to operate without heralds, while reconnaissance agents would come into play). Exceptions naturally occurred, especially in that uncomfortable gray area where war was not yet violent but peace was hardly tranquil.

With regard to foreign affairs, there was no real conceptual distinction between military and political intelligence—indeed, the latter seems to have been encompassed by the former. It is certainly true that there were mechanical differences involved in gathering and processing types of information that we might today distinguish as political or military. These were reflected in the different types of agents and sources employed and to some extent, in military contexts, in a tendency toward centralized command and delegation of the supervision of agents. In states in which there existed a division of political and military authority—fourth-century Athens, for instance—mechanical differences could combine with different fields of expertise and different ambitions to create some sort of practical disjunction. But again there is little evidence for a contemporary conceptual distinction between the political and military spheres.² Further, when political and military power were in the hands of a single individual, any distinction between the two types of intelligence was not terribly meaningful. There was a fair bit of overlap, even when the combination of powers was far from complete or not formally recognized, as in the cases of Pericles in the mid-fifth century and Agesilaus in the early fourth.

Perceptions of domestic insecurity stemmed principally from fear of potential fifth columns within a state's populace or of revolts of a subject population. As the numbers of exiles increased in the late fifth and fourth centuries, these fears were expanded to encompass plots originating out-

2. Cf. Plut. *Phocion* 7.3.2.

side the walls as well as those within. The *types* of mechanisms employed to deal with such threats were dictated more by constitutional structure than by circumstance. In brief, democracies relied on legislation backed by private activity on the part of informers and sycophants, together with some oversight bodies. These existed as early as the prototypical democracy of Solon in the sixth century. An ad hoc arrangement for fielding covert agents in democratic Argos may have other unrecorded parallels. Measures taken by oligarchies are less well attested but seem to be similar to those of democracies. However one might classify the government of Sparta, it is fairly certain that it featured a force dedicated to internal security, augmented by informers and ad hoc engagements of covert agents. Some monarchies and many tyrannies also boasted organized networks operating covertly among the populace. No such organizations are attested before Hiero's in the early fifth century, but it is possible that the sixth-century tyrants had similar arrangements.³

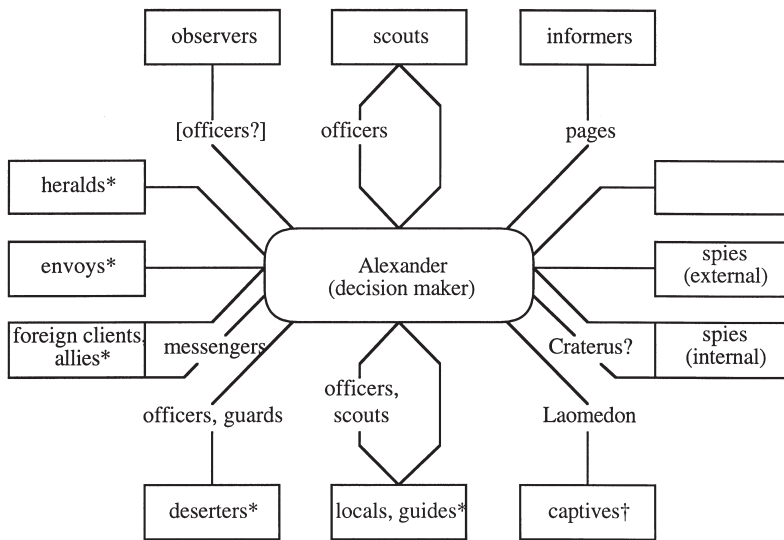
More generally, there was a clear difference in the way different forms of government handled and evaluated information. The distinction between oligarchy and democracy here (as elsewhere) was somewhat blurred—the principal factor was whether authority rested in the hands of one man (herein called a “centralized command”; see fig. 1), or in those of more than one (herein called a “diffused command”; see fig. 2).

A centralized command was typified by a spiderlike array of information channels, all leading, sometimes through various intermediaries, to a central authority.⁴ This arrangement held a number of advantages over diffused commands, since the same individual possessed both a complete intelligence picture and an ability to act unilaterally on it.⁵ Thus those

3. I am not arguing that these organizations were characteristic of *all* tyrannies. Pisistratus, e.g., seems to have survived without one (although he might not have been thrown out of Athens twice if he had possessed adequate information-gathering resources).

4. Intermediaries were more common between the decision maker and those agents that gathered tactical information. In general these intermediaries (other than messengers) were found more often in later periods than earlier. Specialized subordinate officers with intelligence duties, such as Democrates son of Temnus (in effect, a reconnaissance *skoparkhos* of the Ten Thousand) and Laomedon (Alexander's officer in charge of captives), appeared occasionally from the late fifth century onward. Delegation of authority to leaders of surveillance detachments seems to have been more or less constant over time. If anything, Greeks of later periods seem to have been more haphazard in this respect than the Mycenaean.

5. With incidental variations, charts similar to that in fig. 1 might be constructed depicting the information flow to Dionysius the Elder (derived principally from Diodorus Siculus, supplemented by Aristotle and Plutarch), the Lacedaemonian “general staff” centered on a king on campaign (Hdt. 6.57; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 13.1, 3, 7; cf. Thuc. 5.66.3–4; Pritchett



* In some circumstances interpreters acted as mediums between the imparter and recipient of information.

† Laomedon spoke Persian as well as Greek (Macedonian); captives unable to speak these languages would have to be questioned through interpreters.

Fig. 1. Information flow to a centralized command: Alexander the Great (in the context of a campaign—i.e., normally, 336–323). (Derived principally from Arrian and Quintus Curtius, with additions from Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch.)

authorities possessing centralized information flows enjoyed the ability to respond to intelligence quickly (in a few cases, perhaps, too quickly).⁶ In general, centralized commands tended to be constant over relatively long periods, which enabled individuals to acquire and improve arrangements for information flow. Their efficacy was, naturally enough, determined by the abilities and capabilities of the commander.

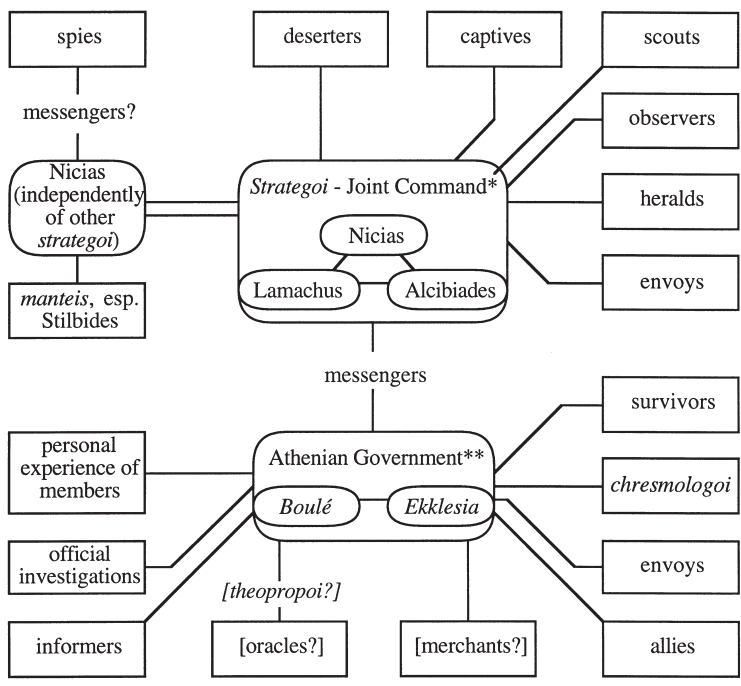
2.36–38), Xenophon's network centered on a *hipparchos* (Xen. *Cav. Com.* passim), his program for Cyrus' model command (Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1–4), and Aeneas Tacticus' system centered about the commander of besieged forces (Aen. *Tact.* 22.2–3). Earlier tyrants and monarchs, for whom evidence is scant, seem likely to fit the same pattern.

6. Isoc. III (*Nicocles*) 22: monarchies have every advantage in war, including the ability to forestall and mislead their enemies. Cf. Demosth. XVIII (*On the crown*) 235.5 (of Philip II); Plut. *Mor.* 782c (of Dionysius I).

In diffused commands, there existed a separation between spheres or levels of authority, with lines of communication between them.⁷ One might be tempted to draw a distinction between political and military authorities, but again the differentiation between strategic and tactical intelligence (with operational intelligence lying in a hazy middle ground) more accurately reflects ancient practice. “Political” authorities, such as the Athenian *ekklesia*, made decisions on the conduct of war at the strategic and operational levels (deciding, for example, the size of the expeditionary force sent by the Athenians to Sicily in 415). They did not normally, however, directly interfere with tactical decisions in the military sphere. “Military” leaders might make political decisions at tactical levels (e.g., Agesilaus declined to grant an audience to Theban envoys before he received news of the disaster that befell the Spartans at Lechaëum). Few military leaders, however, were authorized to make strategic commitments on behalf of their states. Not unnaturally, authority in the operational and tactical realms tended to be subordinated to their strategic counterpart, and thus military commanders were obliged to keep their states informed through dispatches or other arrangements. In many cases, more than one commander led forces at any one time, either on separate or on joint enterprises—such as the command of the Athenian expedition to Sicily, which was (initially) split between Nicias, Alcibiades, and Lamachus. Hence there was a need for information flow along levels as well as across them.

An all-too-common problem with diffused commands was a lack of two essential ingredients: clear delineation of authority and excellent communication between decision makers. Imperfect arrangements varied in their impact on the ability of decision makers to act effectively on intelligence. In some cases, the same quantity or quality of intelligence was not available to each party—in the aforementioned example of the Athenian expedition sent to Sicily in 415, the Athenian *strategoï* in Sicily possessed tactical and operational intelligence to a far greater degree than did the Athenians at home, while the latter might have been in better touch with the overall strategic situation. The time lag for communication between Athens and Sicily could only have hampered effective

7. Structures similar to that in fig. 2 can be found particularly (but not only) in other democracies, which range from the chaotic “allied” command during the Persian Wars (480/79) to more hierarchical and ordered examples, such as Astyochus’ command in the Aegean early in the late fifth century.



* The *strategoi* were involved as advisors and officials in the decisions of the *ekklesia* before departure; henceforth they contributed information and advice through dispatches but were separated by distance from the decision-making arena.

**The *ekklesia* and *boulé* in turn represented a diffusion of authority and intelligence (not only in relation to each other, but also regarding their own compositions), which I have not attempted to depict or describe here. As noted in the text, the relationship between political structure and information flow awaits extensive study.

Fig. 2. Information flow into a diffused comand: the Athenians and the Sicilian Expedition (415–413). (Based principally on Thucydides and Plutarch.)

action, since the decision makers on either side of the Ionian Sea would be reacting to messages whose relevance was likely to have been overtaken by subsequent events. Even without time lag, communication could be a problem. Returning again to the example of Nicias in Sicily, one can see that both the disaster at Epipolae and the failure to order a timely evacuation were caused by Nicias' failure to share with his fellow

commanders the extent and nature of the intelligence he had acquired from his personal network.⁸ This communication failure was caused by personal interest that, combined with other forms of partisanship, hindered, far more often than aided, effective application of intelligence.⁹ Differences in perspectives might have been supposed to enhance evaluation and decision making, but in practice they commonly resulted in conflict or unhappy compromises.

A Question of Application

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate channels through which information could and did flow to decision makers, but they describe flows that were aggregates over extended periods. At specific points in time, relatively fewer channels would be flowing simultaneously. Frequently, circumstance dictated which agents and sources would be available, and hence scholars have been led to believe that the Greeks applied themselves to information gathering and intelligence in an ad hoc manner.¹⁰ While applicable in some instances, the picture this model presents does not do justice to actual practice.

The problem might be best explained in terms of an analogy to methods of irrigation. A farmer might, with much labor and expense, contrive a permanent irrigation system from a water source to all his fields. Although requiring maintenance, the system would serve continuously. Alternatively, he might rig a pipeline from the water source to a point in his fields that he sees needs water, irrigate it, then dismantle or move the pipes when the job is done. He might merely divert natural channels here and there and so achieve a degree of success dependent on terrain. Or he might devote his efforts to other problems and hope that water will somehow wend its way to where it is needed.

8. Nicias spoke against the night attack on Epipolae, since his agents led him to believe that the best policy for the Athenians was to wait, because the Syracusans were exhausted by the war and disgruntled with Gylippus. Due to his concern for the security of his sources, he was vague in communicating this intelligence to his colleagues, who attributed his statements to cowardice. They went ahead with the attack against his will and met with disaster (Plut. *Nicias* 21). Thucydides (7.43.1) passed over this dispute, simply noting that Demosthenes persuaded Nicias.

9. An exception might be the contrivances of Themistocles at Salamis.

10. Cf. Adcock and Mosley 174; Gerolymatos, *Espionage*, 4, 15; Starr 28. There are only two notable exceptions: (1) the *proxenos-episkopos* relationship of the Athenian Empire, discussed by Meiggs (*Athenian Empire*), Gerolymatos (*Espionage*), and Balcer ("Athenian Episkopos"); and (2) Alexander's intelligence system, discussed by Engels.

Similarly, an authority might establish permanent and coherent arrangements to ensure that information flow was reliable and timely. Such a practice was found most often among tyrants and fairly frequently among monarchs and military commanders on campaign. In such cases, the demand for information was constant, so that real threats might be countered. Thus the requisite expenditure could be justified. In some tactical applications, such as coherent and elaborate networks of watchers, democracies and oligarchies had recourse to such measures as often as did other more centralized forms of government. With the possible exception of watchers, the incidence of such arrangements increased over time.

The second method, that of employing agents and sources as need arose, was fairly common, particularly with “political” agents, such as envoys and heralds, and in most cases with spies recruited from one’s own populace for specific missions in foreign territory. It required some sense of direction and effort and sometimes featured a degree of specialization on the part of the agents involved. It remained in practice throughout the period in question.

The third and fourth methods were forms of adaptation to opportunity commonly practiced in all eras. Their difference was more one of aspect than one of essence, since informers, deserters, and to some extent captives naturally fell into both categories. However, those individuals and states who saw fit to encourage informers and deserters, and to make efforts to procure captives for questioning, can be differentiated from those who did not. The former would belong to the third category; the latter would belong to the fourth, since little effort was required on the part of the recipient of the news, aside from making oneself available and spending the time necessary to listen to a report.

These four methods were naturally used in conjunction with each other. And one would expect a decision maker who made extensive arrangements for receiving information not to overlook that which presented itself as a gift on his doorstep (although this could happen).

Efficacy

It is time to face the fundamental question—how well did all this work? Generally speaking, the more energy an individual or state put into obtaining, communicating, and evaluating information, the better the result was. Good intelligence, handled skillfully, enabled people and

states to maximize military and political efforts, on all levels. In some instances good intelligence prevented action that would probably have led to failure. In some cases it provided opportunity for effective action. It by no means guaranteed success in any endeavor, even as it does not today. In some situations excellent intelligence was of no use, since its possessor lacked the means to act on an opportunity or to prevent a disaster. Indecision or undue expenditure of time on evaluation also wasted opportunities.

Conversely, neglect of information gathering or intelligence did not necessitate disaster, but it courted it. Given a strong enough position, the Greeks could and did succeed with very poor intelligence. Poor evaluation of reports might merely result in wasted effort, but it could also mean defeat and death. One scorned the use of information-gathering agents at one's own peril, and one neglected their reports at great risk.

For the most part, the Greeks heeded the need for information and intelligence on basic levels throughout the classical period. Although there are a number of harebrained schemes recorded in our sources, one rarely finds instances when hares initiated aggression against lions. No consistently successful military commander failed to heed the importance of intelligence, and while some great statesmen, like Pericles, put their bets on the wrong horse, their policies were effective insofar as they were based not only on imagination but on a practical awareness and evaluation of reality.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Objects of Verbs of Learning (distribution by percentage in selected authors)

Objects	Verbs			Total
	-αἰσθάνομαι	-μανθάνω	-πυνθάνομαι	
Opponent's military move ^a	27.7	10.3	14.9	16.7
Opponent's military prep./intent ^b	7.8	3.6	8.5	7.0
Opponent's military circumstance ^c	5.1	9.0	7.1	7.1
Opponent's diplomatic activity, policy	2.7	2.0	2.9	2.6
Other information re opponent ^d	1.6	3.3	7.7	<u>5.0</u>
Total				38.4
Another's military move ^a	3.9	1.7	1.2	2.0
Another's military prep./intent ^b	0.8	3.0	1.6	1.8
Another's military circumstance ^c	2.7	6.3	5.3	5.0
Another's diplomatic activity, policy	10.6	8.0	5.9	7.6
Other information re another ^d	10.9	22.6	22.6	<u>19.8</u>
Total				36.2
Own military circumstance ^c	15.2	13.6	8.1	11.3
Other information re self ^d	5.5	10.9	4.1	<u>6.4</u>
Total				17.7
Plot	4.7	1.7	2.4	2.7
Geography	0.8	4.0	7.7	<u>5.0</u>
Total				7.7

^a Includes location, attack, revolt.

^b Includes technological innovations (takes priority over military move when both applicable).

^c Includes numbers, tactics, outcomes of battles (battle outcomes are entered in "own military circumstance" when the focus of the import of the information is domestic and in "opponent's" or "another's" when foreign), and general activity.

^d Includes identity, internal situation, activity, and information unspecified elsewhere.

This survey does not purport to be a complete list of every occurrence of all verbs. Instead, it catalogues their use with respect to matters of public, as opposed to private or academic, concern. Thus historians and orators were selected over philosophers, and inscriptions were generally preferred to poets. The authors chosen were Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon (all works save the *Memorabilia*, *Symposium*, and *Apology*), Andocides, Lysias, Demosthenes (orations I–XIX), Aeschines, Aristotle (the *Politics* only), and Arrian (the *Anabasis* and the *Indica* only); inscriptions on the Packard Humanities Institute disk (to the end of the fourth century) were also included. Arrian was admitted despite his late date, because of the necessity of covering the era of Alexander.

The verbs chosen were αἰσθάνομαι, μανθάνω, and πυνθάνομαι (and their compounds). Other verbs also can denote learning (e.g., ἀκούω, εὕρισκω, ὁράω, τηρέω), but the first mentioned were preferred because they are more often used in the context of public inquiry and reception of information. Ἀγγέλλω and similar verbs denoting communication (often of information concerning public affairs) are also pertinent but are left to another study. Citations without application to the focus of this study are not included in the chart; of these, many examples of πυνθάνομαι concern interpretation of myth and ritual, while many of μανθάνω concern skills and knowledge of the dead (the latter in epitaphs on inscriptions). The totals are -αἰσθάνομαι, 16 (of 272; the remaining 256 are included in the table in this appendix); -μανθάνω, 137 (of 438; 301 are included in the table); -πυνθάνομαι, 94 (of 602; 508 are included in the table). The total number of examples in the survey was 1,312, of which 1,065 are recorded in the table.

The objects of verbs of learning are fairly consistent over time.¹ The variation in emphasis seems to arise principally from the focus of individual writers. In the *Odyssey*, for instance, there are many inquiries categorized as “other information about another” because of such themes as Telemachus’ quest to learn of his father, while in the *Iliad* military matters are dominant. As one would expect, diplomatic concerns are treated more by Demosthenes and Aeschines. Examples found in Arrian’s narrative are heavily influenced by the context of Alexander’s expedition—hence military and geographic concerns are relatively heavily represented; the same can be said of books 7 through 9 of Herodotus.

1. The frequency of particular verbs does, however, vary over time: αἰσθάνομαι, for instance, is quite rare before the late fifth century.

Types of Kataskopoi

(according to archaic and classical terminology)

Also Called	Role	Primary Sphere of Operation
“Eyes”		
1. <i>episkopoi</i> , <i>ophthalmoi</i>	official or semiofficial investigators	external or within empire (strategic)
2. <i>skopoi</i> , <i>prodromoi</i>	vanguards (groups up to ca. 1,000)	external (tactical, operational)
3. <i>skopoi</i>	reconnaissance (teams ca. 10–30)	external (tactical, operational)
All those below subjected to torture if caught		
4. <i>episkopoi</i> (Homer only)	espionage/covert reconnaissance (2–3)	external (tactical, operational)
5. <i>pseudautomoloi</i> , etc.	disguised/dissimulating spies	external (any)
All those below could be recruited from women as well as men		
“Ears”		
6. <i>ota</i> , <i>otakoustai</i>	provocateurs, professional informants	internal, rarely external
Others		
7. <i>prodotai</i> , etc.	traitors (modern “agents in place”)	internal, for a foreign power

Glossary

Adeia: immunity from harm, a privilege accorded to heralds

Angelos, angeloi: messenger

Automolos, automoloi: deserter

Boulé: a council. In some oligarchies, it consisted of the ruling elements and exerted considerable authority. In democracies, it was elected by vote or lot to take care of daily business and to prepare an agenda for the ekklesia. In Athens, it was responsible for admitting foreign envoys, screening proposals, and running background checks on candidates for office.

Chresmologos, chresmologoi: collector and distributor of oracles

Ekklesia: the meeting of citizens of a polis as a political entity. In democratic states, it was the ultimate sovereign body, made up of all citizens, deciding on all matters of policy and administration, and electing magistrates. Its political clout in other forms of government varied. In Sparta, it was called the Apella and could not deliberate issues but voted yes or no on matters put before it by the council (Gerousia).

Ephebos, epheboi: a youth who has come of age and is fulfilling his military duty, typically on the frontier

Ephoros, ephoroi: “overseer;” a magistrate in Dorian states. In Sparta there were five, elected annually, who exercised executive powers.

Episkopos, episkopoi: In Homeric times: a scout, overseer, or spy. In the Athenian Empire: a roving official appointed by the boulé to check on the administration of the subject “allies.”

Epistoleus, epistoleis: letter writer, secretary; sometimes a particular office attached to a general or magistrate

Grammateus, grammateis: secretary; often elected and attached to a governmental body or a general

Harmost: Spartan official sent to states within Sparta’s sphere of influence during her hegemony (404–371), sometimes commanding a garrison.

Helot: state-owned slave or serf in Laconia and Messenia

Hemeroskopos, hemeroskopoi: “day-observer,” typically stationed in an observation post to keep an area under surveillance

Hermeneus, hermeneis: translator

Hippeus, hippeis: literally, a horse-man. It can be used either of cavalry, or of a social class having little to do with horses. In Sparta, three hundred men who comprised an elite fighting force. Cf. the English “knight.”

Kataskopos, kataskopoi: scout or spy

Kerux, kerukes: herald. Some had purely ceremonial functions; from the fifth century they were used by military forces for official communications with enemies

Mantis, manteis: a diviner, who interprets signs to predict the future

Ota (normally in the plural): “ears,” usually those engaged in domestic espionage

Otakoustes, otakoustai: “eavesdropper,” again, usually somebody engaged in domestic espionage

Peltast: light infantry, typically armed with javelins and unarmored except for a small shield, often used for skirmishing, protecting flanks, fighting on rough terrain, and scouting

Perioikos, perioikoi: literally, “dweller-about;” often in reference to those in Laconia who were neither citizens nor slaves but engaged in commercial activities forbidden to citizens

Peripolarkhos, peripolarkhoi: commander of the peripoloi (below)

Peripolos, peripoloi: patrol; in Athens, the ephebes served as peripoloi on the frontiers

Philia: tie of personal friendship

Phrouarkhos, phrouarkhoi: garrison commander

Phulax, phulakes: guard; often a night watchman

Potagogeus, potagogides (prosagogeus in the Attic dialect): domestic spies and provocateurs in Syracuse

Presbus, presbeis: literally: old man; envoy

Presbeutes, presbeutai: envoy

Prodromos, prodromoi: advanced guard, vanguard

Proxenos, proxenoi: consul; a citizen of one state appointed by another as its official friend and agent on its behalf

Prutanis, prutaneis: in Athens, a section of the Boulé, comprising fifty men who acted as a committee to prepare business and receive envoys

Pseudautomolos, pseudautomoloi: fake-deserter, either acting as a spy or a disinformation agent

Psilos, psiloi: unarmored or light-armored troops, often archers or slingers

Skiritai (normally in plural): a unit of the Lacedaemonian army, of about six hundred men, from the Arcadian district of Skiritis; they were often used as nightwatchmen

Skoparkhos (or skoparkhes): commander of skopoi

Skopos, skopoi: generic term for observer or scout

Skutale: wooden rod around which a strip of leather was wrapped; lengthwise on the strip was written a message that, when unwound, became illegible until wrapped around the recipient's rod

Strategos, strategoi: an elected magistrate whose duties included command of military forces or, simply, a commander of army or fleet

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