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ATHENIAN NAVAL POWER IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

The reader of Demosthenes can hardly avoid the impression that there was something sadly awry with the Athenian naval system in the two decades prior to Chaeronea. The war in the north Aegean was essentially a naval war, and Demosthenes frequently enough blamed Athens' failure on her lack of preparation. 'Why do you think, Athenians, ... that all our expeditionary forces are too late for the critical moments? ... In the business of the war and the preparation for it everything is in disorder, unreformed, undefined. So it is that some news arrives, we appoint trierarchs, we give them the opportunity legally to get others to act in their stead, we consider provision of money, then it is decided that the metics and those "living out" should go on the ships, then again you yourselves, then to allow substitutes, and during these delays the cause for which we would have been sailing is lost before we have sailed. For we spend the time for action on preparations, but the critical moments for action do not last as long as our dilatoriness and cautious procedures' (4. 35 ff.). This was spoken in 351 and it is much the same a decade later (8. 10 f.).

This impression is strongly reinforced by a first reading of Apollodorus' speech *Against Polycles* ([Dem.] 50), which is our principal evidence for the state of the navy in the fourth century. There we are presented with a picture of a trierarch shirking his duty with the connivance of a general, a seemingly deplorable state of affairs.¹

All this is illusory. Within the unavoidable limits of the Athenian city-state, the navy was as good as it could be and the charge that it was the naval system that in large measure led to Athens' ruin is false. Such is the thesis of this article.

I. THE CONDITION OF THE NAVY IN THE LATE 360s

The speech *Against Polycles*, delivered in the early 350s,² concerns the seventeen-month trierarchy of Apollodorus which began in August 362, and it is necessary first to make clear that this was a period when Athens' naval and military resources were exceptionally and unpredictably under stress. It was no part of Apollodorus' concern to explain the general context of his trierarchy, and we must piece it together for ourselves.

Athens' war in the north Aegean began in 368 when Iphicrates commenced his campaign for the recovery of Amphipolis and was extended in 365 when Timotheus proceeded from the capture of Samos to the attempt to recover the Chersonese.³ How many ships were involved in these operations we can only guess. Timotheus had a fleet of thirty at Samos and appears to have used them for his operations round the Chersonese (Isoc. 15. 111 f.). Presumably Iphicrates had a similar force operating at the other end of Thrace. However, since Iphicrates was recalled in 365 and Timotheus put in command of all the operations in the north (Dem. 23. 149), the naval force may not have remained as high as fifty or sixty ships. In the later 350s and early 340s a force of thirty ships seems to have been normal. In 349 Chares had thirty ships (Philoch. F 49). In 353 he waited at Neapolis with twenty ships to ambush the

¹ Cf. Blass, *Att. Bered.* iii. 1, p. 527 ('Der Mangel an Ordnung und Zucht im athenischen Seewesen wird uns jedenfalls durch diese Rede sehr grell gezeigt').

² Cf. Blass, *ibid.*

³ For the chronology cf. Beloch, *Gr. Ges.* iii. 2, pp. 245–7.

Macedonian naval force that had escorted Philip on his campaign against Abdera and Maronea (Polyaenus 4. 2. 22); Chares' full force may have been larger.⁴ This was at a time when Athens was most hard pressed financially, and in the previous decade a larger number of ships may have been put at the commander's disposal, but if we postulate a regular number of thirty we are not likely to be badly wrong. This was not however the full extent of Athens' naval commitment, to judge by the evidence of the Navy list for 370/369 (*I.G.* II² 1609).⁵ That inscription gives details of 25 or more triremes of which certainly eleven had been despatched to a cleruchy (lines 88 ff.) and two others had sailed out on unspecified business (lines 116 ff.); the cleruchies concerned are probably those on Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros to which Athens annually sent magistrates (*Ath. Pol.* 62. 2), and the ships were perhaps regular contingents stationed there. In any case some ships must have been engaged in protecting shipping, piracy being a constant menace, and so placed at strategic points. After the capture of Samos, the island was used as a naval base (cf. Polyaenus 6. 2. 1), and by 362/1 Tenedos was already perhaps similarly used (cf. [Dem.] 50. 53 and [Dem.] 17. 20). The ships guarding the Hellespont (cf. Polyaenus loc. cit.) may have been different from those in the force controlled by 'the general for Amphipolis and the Chersonese' (Dem. 23. 149), who needed to keep his ships together. All in all, it would not be surprising if the Athenians had 40 or 50 ships a year out on active service in the 360s. (Nor should one forget the occasional minor crises, of which the Iulis inscription – Tod *G.H.I.* 142 – provides a sample: it would appear that in the first half of 362 Athenian generals – cf. line 57 – were engaged in settling troubles on the island of Keos.)

The supply of rowing labour will have matched demand. Those who came in to the Peiraeus to seek employment in the Athenian navy would not wait around for an unforeseen crisis to occur. In 373 Timotheus had not been able fully to man in the Peiraeus the sixty ships assigned to him (*Xen. Hell.* 6. 2. 11) and had had to fill up by sailing round the islands; presumably after the Peace of 375 the pool of skilled labour had flowed home. When a crisis occurred, the Athenians had to take the exceptional measure of drafting citizens.⁶

In August 362 there was indeed a crisis, a four-fold crisis, described by Apollodorus in §§4–6 of the speech *Against Polyclus*. First, Alexander of Pherae had seized Tenos, the start of a campaign of piratical raids that culminated in the sea battle of 361 in which the Athenian general Leosthenes was defeated (Diod. 15. 95, Dem. 51. 8, Polyaenus 6. 2. 1). Secondly, an embassy arrived from Miltocythes in revolt from Cotys, the Thracian king, with whom Athens was at war for the control of the Chersonese; he was appealing for help and offering to give back the Chersonese, a chance too good to be missed. Thirdly, the Proconnesians who were allies, presumably members of the Second Athenian Confederacy,⁷ were appealing for help against Cyzicus; the alliance required Athens to take action. Finally, there was the news that the Byzantines, Chalcedonians and Cyzicenes being short of corn were forcing

⁴ Diod. 16. 35. 5 speaks of Chares being offshore at the Battle of the Crocus Field (352 B.C.) with 'many triremes'.

⁵ For the dating cf. *Historia* 22 (1973), 759–61.

⁶ For the meaning of the phrase *καταλόγους ποιείσθαι τῶν δημοτῶν*, cf. Dover *ad* Thuc. 6. 26. 2. It does not imply the registration for service of those previously unregistered, but means simply 'to draft'. Cf. Lysias 9. 4, the case of a citizen, not long back from a campaign, conscripted again (*κατελέγην στρατιώτης*), and Lysias 14. 6. For drafting in an emergency cf. B. Jordan, *The Athenian Navy in the Classical Period* (Vol. 13, University of California Publications: Classical Studies, 1975), p. 226.

⁷ [Dem.] 50. 4 is our only evidence.

merchant ships to put in and sell their cargo;⁸ to protect the supply to the Peiraeus Athens had to act.

This fourth element requires to be elucidated. It might be thought that Athens had been neglectful in not providing protection for the corn-fleet to make sure that the ships were not so molested. This would be gravely to misunderstand. If there was one matter the Athenians did not neglect, it was the corn supply, which was on the agenda of the main assembly every prytany (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 43. 4).⁹ What happened in 362 is more likely to have been that when the news came that corn-ships bound for Athens were being forced by the Byzantines, the Cyzicenes, and the Chalcedonians to land and sell their cargoes, the Athenians received the first news of one of the periodic crises of general shortage of corn and reacted promptly, by providing for naval convoy of the corn-fleet.¹⁰ It was an important element in the unusual pressure on the city's naval resources in that year.

362 was not a typical year, and our principal evidence, the speech *Against Polycles*, in which this fact is taken for granted but obscured from us, must be approached with caution.

Nor was Apollodorus a typical trierarch. He certainly was a very rich man, even if his enemies as wildly exaggerated the extent of his fortune as he himself belittled it (cf. Dem. 36. 36 ff. and [Dem.] 59. 7), and as certainly a very extravagant one (cf. Dem. 36. 8, 42, 44 f. and 45. 76). Not only did he provide his own equipment for the ship, a common enough practice (cf. [Dem.] 47. 23, Dem. 51. 5), but he did so, on his own profession, most expensively ([Dem.] 50. 7); he reports a conversation in which Polycles jeered at 'gold-plated fittings' (*κόσμος χρυσόπαστος* §34), and since it was hardly to Apollodorus' advantage to dwell on the extravagance of his arrangements and so arouse sympathy for his opponent, we may accept that the ship was indeed extravagantly fitted out. Similarly with the crew. Apollodorus chose not to accept the citizens who had been drafted (§§6, 7) but to hire for himself the best rowers he could.

⁸ References to forcing ships to put in (*κατάγειν*) are frequent. This was not necessarily a sign of hostility (cf. *I.G.* II² 360. 35 ff., [Arist.] *Oec.* 1346b30). Cf. de Ste Croix, *Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, pp. 47 and 314.

⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1359b21–23.

¹⁰ Periods of widespread corn shortage were common. The best attested was that of 330–326, so profitably exploited by Cleomenes (cf. Dem. 56. 7, 34, 38 f., 42, 20, 31, *I.G.* II² 360, Plut. *Mor.* 851 b); its effects were felt through the whole of the Greek world, as Tod, *G.H.I.* 196 shows, and it prompted Athens to seek its own secure supply from the Adriatic (*G.H.I.* 200. 217 ff.). The most famous was that in which Joseph exploited the seven lean years (*Genesis* 41. 53–7). Another (*Acts* 11. 28) probably produced the bread riots under Claudius (Tac. *Ann.* 12. 43). In 357/6 there was 'a corn shortage throughout the human race' (Dem. 20. 33). When did it begin? The probable explanation of these periods of corn shortage is drought (cf. *Genesis* 45. 6, 'with neither ploughing nor harvest', which I take to refer to Israel, not Egypt, where agriculture depended on inundation which could be 'low' but never fail totally), and in 361 there was severe enough drought in Attica for the wells to dry up and crops to fail ([Dem.] 50. 61). Corn-ships were being 'beached' in 362 and needing convoy in 361. Perhaps this was one of those periods, and lasted until 357/6. But whether this is true or not, the important point is that the news that ships were being 'beached' which reached Athens in later summer 362 was the first sign of general corn shortage. The grain-harvest in the Crimea falls now in early July and in South Russia generally in the first half of that month (cf. M. Y. Nuttinson, *Wheat-Climate Relationships* etc., American Institute of Crop Ecology 1955 Figures 64 and 106 ff., Tables 53 and 96 ff.). One must allow time for threshing and transport (perhaps a fortnight) and the harvest date may not have been the same two and a quarter millennia ago, but all in all it seems likely that it would have been the first of the new season's wheat in 362 which would have been liable for compulsory purchase in Byzantium in late Hecatombaion and early Metageitnion 362/1. There is at any rate no reason to think that Athens had been neglecting to safeguard its corn-supply. In normal circumstances convoy was not necessary and at the first news of crisis the city acted.

In consequence he was especially affected by desertions (§§14–16, 23, 65) to more steadily paid employment abroad (§14) or simply to their families in the Peiraeus (§11). So the successor to Apollodorus would have been taking on an exceptionally costly trierarchy. One can sympathise with Polyycles in his insistence on his rights.

Indeed it is in considering what Polyycles claimed as his rights that one can see that the succession to Apollodorus was in another sense quite untypical. It is to be noted that the speech was delivered in a legal action aimed at the recovery of the expenses incurred by Apollodorus after his twelve-month trierarchy had concluded (§67) – a matter of money and nothing more. Polyycles was emphatic that he would not take over the trireme in the absence of his fellow syntrierarch (§37). The general Timomachus approved of Polyycles' conduct, for he would not even urge Polyycles to take over the ship (§§38 ff.); Apollodorus would have it believed partly that it suited Timomachus to keep in his fleet a trierarch who maintained his ship so well (§43 ff.), partly that he had a grudge against Apollodorus for refusing to carry the exiled Callistratus on his ship (§§46–52); but there is no hint either that Timomachus had broken the law or that he had been prosecuted for such a breach. Indeed, despite vague allusion to the severity of the law governing succession of trierarchs (§43) and even the wish expressed for the law to be read out to the court (§57),¹¹ Apollodorus refrained from close argument on the basis of the text of the law. Instead he cited another case, where a man who arrived to succeed was content to take over in the absence of his syntrierarch (§§41 f.); which in no way disproved Polyycles' contention that he was not obliged to take over on his own. The truth must be that Polyycles did not break the law. That is why the case was concerned solely with the recovery of expenses.

Such a law can have been maintained only if trierarchies normally began in the Peiraeus. Evidently the syntrierarch was obliged to serve for only six months (§§39, 68). If it had been at all common for boats to be taken over in mid-Aegean or at the Hellespont, there would have been constant confusion. Either syntrierarchs would have gone out in pairs and one of them would have made his way back to Athens to await his due six months or there would have been interminable wrangling and law-suits over equipment as well as over petty periods of 'extra trierarchy' (*ἐπιτρηρχήματα*), for succession on the exact day would often have been impossible. Under such stress the law would have cracked and needed amendment. It is only intelligible if in the vast majority of cases ships were taken over in the Peiraeus, where the requirement that both syntrierarchs had to be present could be easily satisfied; where trierarchs were abroad at the time when they were due to be relieved, the normal method was presumably to send out relieving ships (*τρήρεις διάδοχοι* Thuc. 1. 110. 4).¹² After all, getting successors to their own ships would often have turned into a frustrating and comic chase after ships dispersed on various duties.

But 362 and 361 were different. The fleet was under stress. There was a shortage of rowing labour in the Peiraeus. The successors had to be specially sent out to take over in mid-Aegean. It was all extraordinary, quite untypical. Our main evidence, the speech *Against Polyycles*, requires careful handling.

What, then, are we to judge of the condition of the Athenian navy in the late 360s? Are we to think that the typical trierarch was a shirker like Polyycles? Was the navy's effectiveness much reduced from what it had been in the great days of the fifth

¹¹ Perhaps the law was part of the evidence read out after the speech (§68).

¹² It is to be noted that the phrase does not occur in Xenophon or the orators, nor does it occur elsewhere in Thucydides. But such reliefs must have been commonplace. In the navy lists the only discernible instances of trierarch succeeding trierarch at sea are *I.G.* II² 1629. 776 and 941 (which repeats 1628. 421).

century, so dramatically portrayed by Thucydides at the moment of the departure for Sicily (6. 30 ff.)?

It is worth noting at the outset that the trierarchic system seems to have remained virtually unchanged between 415 and 362. As remarked above, it was probably exceptional for the city to conscript rowers in 362. Apollodorus preferred to take out an 'empty' ship (i.e. one for which he found the crew himself) and that may have been normal enough. We continue to hear of 'empty' ships (Dem. 3. 5, 4. 43) and of ships for which the city provided only part of the rowers (Philoch. F 49). The Corinthians had been made by Thucydides to assert that Athenian naval strength was mercenary (*ὠνητή* 1. 121. 3), and Pericles to riposte that though this was true, the city did have the manpower to man the fleet in an emergency (1. 143. 1). That was probably the case as long as Athenian naval power endured. The 'empty' ships of 415 (Thuc. 6. 31. 3) were manned by the same method as the 'empty' ships of Charidemus in 351 or the fleet of Chares out on operations in 349, and as Apollodorus chose in 362. That part of the trierarch's duty remained constant. Likewise, perhaps, the hiring of the petty officers (*ὑπηρεσία*). Although in 415 the city 'provided the best *ὑπηρεσία* for the ships' (Thuc. *ibid.*), that does not mean that a trierarch could not or did not find his own. Pericles had remarked that Athenians' steersmen (*κυβερνήται*) and other petty officers were citizens (Thuc. 1. 143), and Thucydides' phrase about the city providing them in 415 may mean no more than that the best were drafted to the expedition, each of the trierarchs having still to find his own particular set. This may not be right. 415 may have been exceptional in this respect. But the speaker of Lysias 21 shows that in the Ionian War at any rate trierarchs found their own sets of petty officers (cf. § 10), and in this respect things had probably not changed. Indeed the whole of Thucydides' discussion of the preparation of the fleet in 415 is entirely intelligible in the light of Apollodorus' speech. The trierarchy was essentially what it had been. The only certain change is the institution of the syntrierarchy by the time of and presumably during the Ionian War (Lys. 32. 24),¹³ but this merely reflected the declining prosperity of Athenians after the Sicilian Expedition and made no serious change in the nature of the trierarchy. Another change that has been suggested involves the introduction of the lot for assigning ships to trierarchs.¹⁴ The evidence adduced is a passage of Aristophanes' *Knights* (912–18),¹⁵ hardly to be pressed as literal truth, and it seems unlikely that in a city where the use of the lot was long established to frustrate knavish tricks and ambitions, generals were still as late as 425 exercising such power over individuals' fortunes. This questionable reform apart, there is no reason to suppose that the naval system that flourished when the Empire flourished did not survive until the law of Periander. It seems to have satisfied the Athenians in the fifth century. Why should it be judged unsatisfactory in the fourth?

The obvious difference between the two centuries is, of course, in the wealth of the city. According to Apollodorus (§ 10), in the seventeen months he held command of the ship he received full pay for the crew for only two; for the other fifteen he got only enough to provide 'ration money' (*συντηρέσιον*). Demosthenes supposed that no more than 'ration money' could be provided by the city for the standing force of ten ships he advocated in the *First Philippic* (§§ 22 f., 28). So the state of affairs described by Apollodorus was probably typical enough for the period. The results were on the one

¹³ *I.G.* II² 1951 is (unnecessary) confirmation of a sort, for its date is very dubitable. Cf. Jordan, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 f.

¹⁴ Cf. Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 229 n. 63.

¹⁵ The Scholiast appears to have no independent knowledge. If the Themistocles Decree were genuine, it would tell against Jordan's view (cf. l. 26).

hand that hired rowers sought more satisfactory employers (v.s.), on the other that generals had to find other paymasters and neglect the city's interests.¹⁶ All this, however, was not a defect of the naval system, but the failure of policy. If states pursue policies beyond their means, failure is due to those who make the policy, not the armed forces who try to execute it.

The reluctance of Polyycles to take over the ship is understandable enough. A considerable sum of money was at issue and it is to be noted that Polyycles, by insisting on his legal rights, in no way hindered the effectiveness of the fleet; Apollodorus continued to serve, by his own account with distinction (§43 f.), and no harm resulted.¹⁷ But what of the other trierarchs? The speech gives the impression that Polyycles was 'compelled to go to the ship' by decree of the Athenian people (§29), but if indeed Polyycles had been the subject of a special decree, Apollodorus would have made a great deal more of it and of the circumstances in which it was passed. So it must have been a general instruction to the replacement trierarchs to go to their ships, and the reason can be readily guessed. In 361 the Aegean was far from safe.¹⁸ Both before and after the battle of Peparethos the danger presented by the ships of Alexander of Pherae must have made the Athenians very cautious about allowing out of the Peiraeus anything less than a considerable squadron.¹⁹ The trierarchs were not taken out to their ships until very late in the year, in December (§§29 and 23), by which time Alexander's ships had probably withdrawn for the winter. There is, therefore, no reason to think that there was a general shirking of duty by Polyycles' fellow replacements.

There is, however, one curious feature of the speech. Polyycles had declared that he would not take over the ship in the absence of his fellow syntrierarch (§37). Apollodorus countered by citing a case in which a successor had indeed taken over and settled with his syntrierarch later (§41 f.). Was this the only case Apollodorus could cite? He certainly speaks as if it was. Why could he not muster a number of examples to strengthen his attempt to show up Polyycles as a selfish shirker? It may have been that most of the replacements were full trierarchs. It is evident from the early navy-lists that the syntrierarchy was far from being universally the case;²⁰ Apollodorus himself was sole trierarch,²¹ and the syntrierarch to whose case Apollodorus appealed may have been the exception. But that is unlikely, as is also the possibility that in other cases where syntrierarchs were taking over, they brought their fellow syntrierarchs with them to approve the terms of the transfer; only one of a pair could actually command at any time and the superfluous member would have had to return to Athens to await his six months. So why did Apollodorus have only the

¹⁶ Cf. Dem. 2. 28, a general statement occasioned principally by the case of Chares in 356/5 (Diod. 16. 22. 1, Dem. 4. 24), as the mention of Sigeum and Lampsacus suggests (cf. Schol. Dem. 3. 31), and De Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, pp. 293 and 607 n. 37.

¹⁷ Polyycles may have been an exceptionally sticky customer. There is no knowing in what circumstances he had, at some earlier date, not taken over a ship at the end of a fellow syntrierarch's six months (§68).

¹⁸ Cf. §28, where Apollodorus' friends, confronting Polyycles, allude to danger in transporting money.

¹⁹ Diodorus (15. 95) provides a date for the battle, 361/0. Alexander's piracy had begun by September 362 ([Dem.] 50. 4).

²⁰ Cf. e.g. *I.G.* II² 1605 (a trierarch in line 30, a pair of syntrierarchs in line 36). In *I.G.* II² 1609, of 19 clear cases, 4 are single trierarchs, the rest syntrierarchs. (However, in *I.G.* II² 1604, where only single trierarchs are named, it would be wrong to assume that none of them were syntrierarchs.)

²¹ Cf. Dem. 47. 22, 29; the plaintiff appears to have been a sole trierarch in 357/6.

one case to cite? It is to be remarked that in this one case the absent syntrierarch, by name Phrasierides, never appeared and the take-over was effected by 'those from Phrasierides' (§42). The suspicion therefore arises that we have here an instance of a syntrierarch hiring out his duty and that the shortage of parallel cases for Apollodorus to cite is due to the prevalence of this custom. Apollodorus in his summary (§§ 57 ff.) boasted that he made himself and his ship fully available to the general, 'not only spending my property, but even risking my life by joining in the naval expedition' (*συνεπιπέλων*) (§59), as if there was something peculiarly virtuous in his doing so. That hiring out trierarchies was becoming common is in any case suggested by a passage in Demosthenes' speech *On the Crown of the Trierarchy* where it is said that the Athenians held those who had hired out their trierarchies especially responsible for the loss of the battle of Peparethos in 361 (§8); there must have been a substantial enough number of such cases in that battle to make such an accusation credible. So we may take it that by the late 360s the hiring out of trierarchic duties had become common. Is it to be taken as a sign of corruption and neglect?

The senior professional of the Athenian naval system was the steersman, the *κυβερνήτης*. Trierarchs served their turn but being of the richest class of Athenians they did not necessarily have much knowledge or even experience of the sea. Trierarchs might be held to be particularly responsible, especially if they had commanded as generals (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 1. 7. 5), and so were competent to act in lieu of the generals, but it was the steersmen who had the real knowledge of the sea and whose advice was sought. At Syracuse it was a Corinthian steersman whose opinion was regarded, just as it was with the Athenian steersmen that Nicias concerted measures for frustrating Syracusan tactics (Thuc. 7. 39. 2, 62. 1). A steersman could have the reputation of being 'the best in Greece' (Lys. 21. 10), and the steersman of Lysander, Hermon, was honoured with a statue at Delphi as well as with the citizenship of Megara (Paus. 10. 9. 8 f.). Nor is this surprising. The steersman had worked his way up from the rowing benches and acquired his seamanship by long experience (Ar. *Knights* 541-4). The title literally translated is 'steersman', but it is clear that others worked the steering paddles, and that the *kybernetes* was the commander, as Plato (*Rep.* 341 c. d) declared him to be. It should cause no surprise therefore that when Alcibiades temporarily left the Athenian fleet, he left in command not the most senior or the most experienced of the trierarchs but his own steersman, Antiochus (Xen. *Hell.* 1. 5. 11). Indeed the true state of affairs is well illustrated by what happened in Apollodorus' own ship. The Athenian general, Timomachus, sent orders to Apollodorus to assemble his crew; Callippus then came aboard and told the steersman to sail to Macedonia (Dem. 50. 46 f.). The trierarch in short did not really matter, and it was only when word got about that Callippus was to transport the exile Callistratus to Thasos, an illegal act, that the steersman firmly declared that Apollodorus was the trierarch and provided his pay and that he would sail whither Apollodorus ordered (§48 ff.); until the legal question was raised, the trierarch was of little importance in the running of the ship. The trierarch paid and anxiously regarded, the steersman had the knowledge and the experience.

None the less it was not an entirely satisfactory situation. The Fourth Century is the age of the professional in all spheres of Athenian life and it is not surprising that a tribe of professional 'trierarchs' came into existence ready to be captains in the real sense. They are a shadowy lot, for the names recorded on the navy lists are the names of the citizens appointed by the generals, not necessarily of those who sailed on the ships. The only name we have is that of a metic of Egyptian origin (Dem. 21. 163). He may not have been typical. One would not be surprised to discover that the hired

'trierarchs' were Athenian citizens who had done their time as steersmen. If that was the case, the practice of hiring out trierarchies may have been no bad thing. Typically, the Athenians rounded on those who had hired out their duty in 361 (Dem. 51. 8), but the practice made sense and continued unstopped (*ibid.* 11), surviving the law of Periander (Dem. 21. 80, 163), even receiving the seal of approval thereby. It would be wrong therefore to see the practice as a degeneration of Athenian patriotic spirit rather than as a sensible development in tune with the general tendency of the age to prefer professionalism.²²

The one area where confusion seems to have reigned was in the provision and maintenance of equipment (*σκεύη*). There was an abundance of hulls but the amount of equipment held by the Naval Commissioners (*ἐπιμεληταὶ τῶν νεωρίων*) fell far short of the number of hulls. For instance, at the end of the navy list for 353/2 (*I.G.* II² 1613. 284–310) the total number of triremes is given as 349, for which there are full sets of oars for 291, and steering oars for 280-odd, and this sort of deficiency can be instanced many times over. Furthermore, Naval Commissioners got away with owing money for over thirty years (cf. *I.G.* II² 1622. 405 ff. for a debt deriving from 378/7, not paid until the late 340s, and *passim* for many other similar cases), and likewise trierarchs were recorded year by year as holding equipment they had not returned at the end of their trierarchy,²³ at the least a very inefficient system. But things were not quite what they seemed. Many trierarchs had the prudence to do very much what Apollodorus did, *viz.* provide their own equipment (cf. Dem. 51. 5, 47. 23); if a rope snapped or a spar broke, not only might the trierarch's own life be endangered but also he might be involved in a great deal of expense or a great deal of wrangling over how far he was responsible for the ensuing damage. Presumably the reason why the items of equipment owed to the dockyards were so various is that trierarchs varied greatly in the equipment they bought for themselves. For instance, in *I.G.* 1611. 286 ff. there is the start of a list of triremes from the harbour of Munichia that were at sea when the list was drawn up; one ship is not recorded as having any public equipment, the next is recorded as having a great deal, the next only a pair of poles, and so on. All these ships would have had their full equipment, but a very great deal of it was held and cared for by individuals. So the Naval Commissioners probably held ample equipment for their normal needs. Only when there was a call for an unusually large number of ships would their holdings prove insufficient, a situation which could be dealt with, as it was dealt with in 357/6, by a decree requiring all equipment, public and private, to be handed in (Dem. 47. 20, 44). The only real difficulty in such a situation was the provision of the more perishable items, sails and ropes. For these, supply no doubt matched demand, and a sudden heavy demand might create temporary shortages – but only temporary, for the Peiraeus catered for a huge number of merchant ships and a naval force of, say, another sixty ships could quickly enough have been supplied. For there was never any question of manning and despatching at any one time more than a quite small proportion of the hulls the city possessed. The largest naval force ever sent out by Athens after 480 was the force of 170 ships that fought and lost the battle of Amorgos in 322 (Diod. 18. 15. 8); the city then possessed over 400 ships. Similarly in the Social War 120 ships, a union of two squadrons of 60, fought at Embata (Diod. 16. 21) at a time when the city possessed 283 ships (*I.G.* II² 1611. 9). So the slackness and inefficiency that seem to rule the

²² The same view should perhaps be taken of the practice of commuting service for pay in the Peloponnesian League (Xen. *Hell.* 5. 2. 21–23).

²³ Cf. J. K. Davies, 'The Date of *I.G.* II² 1609', *Historia* 18 (1969), 311–18. A good instance of an outstanding debt is provided by *I.G.* II² 1611. 400 ff. and 1622. 249 ff., a gap of 14 years.

administration of the city's dockyards must be seen in proportion. Despite what seems like muddle, Athenian fleets were not under-equipped or, for all we know, ill equipped.

All in all, the appearances of Apollodorus' speech are deceptive. Wages were indeed ill provided, but, as has been noticed, this was a defect of policy rather than of the naval system. For the rest the system was perfectly adequate for the calls made on it. The city's corn was convoyed, and the various political opportunities not neglected. The battle of Peparethos was indeed lost (Dem. 51.8), but it was a very minor affair. Alexander saw his chance to attack when Leosthenes sent off a mere three ships (Polyaenus 6. 2. 1), and a mere five ships were captured (Diod. 15. 95). After 361, no more is heard of Alexander's privateers. The battle was a very minor and a very temporary reverse. In the late 360s Athens still ruled the waves.

II. THE NAVY IN THE AGE OF PHILIP OF MACEDON

If the naval system was gravely in need of reform, it is remarkable how limited in scope were the two reforms of which we are informed, viz. the law of Periander of 357/6 and the law of Demosthenes of 339.²⁴ Both were concerned, either first and foremost or solely, with establishing a more equitable sharing of the costs of running a trireme. By 357 Athens was approaching the nadir of her economic fortunes and the number of those rich enough to be able to pay for even a syntrierarchy was presumably greatly diminished. In such circumstances the law of Periander, which established a system of symmories to share in the costs previously borne entirely by the trierarchs, was a sensible solution. By 340/39 the prosperity of Athens was greatly restored and individuals were rich enough to bear the costs of more than a single trireme. Demosthenes' law simply adjusted the system to this new state of affairs, his virtuous trumpeting being hardly justified. Thus both reforms were of the same inspiration as the introduction of the syntrierarchy in the late fifth century.

Demosthenes' reform was a straightforward variation of the system established by Periander, and made no change other than in the way the financial responsibility was shared. In Periander's law, however, one might wonder whether changes of wider import were made. Certainly, in setting up symmoriai, Periander made formal the breach between paying and serving. Some members of the 1200 symmoritae were still liable for military service and, when they were appointed trierarchs, they had to serve although the funding of the triremes was no longer theirs alone; other members, who were too old or unfit and were exempt from military service, merely had to pay. (Isocrates is a notable instance of the second kind.²⁵) In this way the practice of hiring out trierarchies, common enough in the late 360s (v.s.), was given legal recognition (Dem. 21. 155). So much is sure enough. But were there other changes? Demosthenes, contrasting the period of his own first trierarchy with that following the law of Periander, indicates that there were changes both in the manning of ships and in the provision of equipment (21. 154 f.); whereas he and his fellow trierarch had 'paid all the expenses out of their own pockets and themselves got the ships manned', Midias

²⁴ For the evidence see M. Brillant in Daremberg-Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités* s.v. 'trierarchia' pp. 445-9, and H. Strasburger, *R.E.* VII A 1 Cols. 108-12.

²⁵ A. H. M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy*, p. 57 speaks of 'the parsimonious orator' being able at the age of 80 to boast of only three trierarchs, a marvellous instance of lack of public spirit. The remarks are inept. Isocrates, born in 436, may not have been rich enough to qualify for trierarchic service in the Corinthian War, and beyond military age soon after the start of war in 378. So he may never have been called on before the law of Periander and his boast (15. 145) may have been justified. Further, some scepticism about his wealth would not be out of place; cf. G. L. Cawkwell in *Ancient Writers*, 1 (Scribner/New York, 1982), p. 315.

has exacted a talent from the syntely and hired out the trierarchy for the same amount, and 'the city provides crews and gives equipment' (*σκεύη δίδωσιν*). Since before the law of Periander the city is found on occasion providing crews (Dem. 50. 6) and after the law on occasion providing unmanned ships (Dem. 3. 5, 4. 43)²⁶ and since it is clear that before the law the city did provide equipment for those who chose to use it and after the law the amount of public equipment used varied greatly from trireme to trireme, Demosthenes' words are somewhat puzzling. Some indication of the scope of Periander's law may be found, however, in Demosthenes' proposals for reform in his speech *On the Symmories* (Or. 14). There in addition to a new system of symmories (§§ 16–20), he makes a proposal (§21 f.) for the recovery of equipment from debtors, which calls to mind the statement in Speech 47 that the law of Periander obliged certain officials 'to take over those owing equipment' (§21). It is not clear in that passage which of the officials mentioned, viz. the Naval Commissioners, the trierarchs on the point of sailing out, and the Superintendents of the Symmories (*ἐπιμεληταὶ τῶν συμμορίων*), were 'obliged' by the law. Perhaps all three were. But it looks as if Demosthenes in 354/3 was proposing some minor variation of the law of Periander with regard to the collection of overdue equipment, not a great change in the system. The navy lists make clear that individuals continued to draw and to owe equipment belonging to the state. (It is true that from 357/6 a different method of accounting seems to be in force. In the lists of the 370s, each trireme seems to have its own set of equipment, albeit frequently incomplete; in the lists of the 350s the equipment is pooled. But this change hardly betokens much. The early system must have produced chaos, and the system of the 350s was plain good sense. Nor did it necessarily have anything to do with the law of Periander. The lists of the late 360s are missing, and the change of accounting may have been made well before 357/6.) Whatever Demosthenes meant by his remark that 'the city gives equipment', it cannot have been a major change in the system.

Likewise with the provision of crews (Dem. 21. 155). The speech *On the Symmories* made proposals concerning the manning of ships (§§ 22–23). Whereas in 362 citizens were drafted for service in the navy by the Council and the Demarchs (Dem. 50. 6), in 354/3 Demosthenes proposed a system involving the taxiarchs,²⁷ and again it seems likely that this is a variation on some change instituted by Periander. When the city had to conscript citizens as rowers, how was it to be done? Periander made one change. Demosthenes proposed another. Probably neither and certainly not Periander envisaged that the city would always provide crews. After Periander's law, as already remarked, there could be 'empty ships' voted. There was no great change of principle.²⁸

Thus apart from the question of who paid, the law of Periander was a limp affair, which left the naval system essentially what it had been since the fifth century. Similarly, the proposals of the speech *On the Symmories* would have made remarkably

²⁶ Philochorus F 49 states that in 349/8 the Athenians 'completed the manning of eight ships' (*συνεπλήρωσαν*); for which word cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6. 2. 12).

²⁷ For the evidence about taxiarchs cf. P. J. Rhodes *ad Ath. Pol.* 61. 3 and Busolt-Swoboda, *G.S.* 1128, 1185 f., 1193. Their role in the fleet is mysterious (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 1. 6. 29, 35), but there is no reason to suppose that they had any part in the manning of ships.

²⁸ Isaeus 7. 38 might suggest that trierarchs were guaranteed by the law of Periander a two-year interval before being again conscripted, but the orator may mean no more than that whereas in the late Fifth Century service there were large fleets out almost continuously, by the middle of the Fourth Century there was comparatively a great deal less naval activity and so trierarchic service was required on average only every third year. However it is to be noted that a law prescribed a year's interval between liturgies (Dem. 20. 8).

little real difference. Demosthenes' purpose was to secure that a naval force should be got together 'in the best and quickest way possible' (§ 14), to face a Persian invasion if it came (§§ 3–13). So for ordinary naval activity in the mid 350s he seems to have considered that there was no need of radical reform.

Once Demosthenes had recognised the danger of Philip, as he did in 352/1, his criticism of Athens' performance is sharply directed to her forces always being too late to save the day. His proposals concern the conduct of policy and not the reform of the naval system. In the *First Philippic* he demands both the preparation of a task force of fifty ships with horse transports and supply ships, which can be sent wherever trouble threatens, and the establishment of a small force of ten ships regularly engaged in operations against Philip (§§ 16–22). In the *First Olynthiac* (§ 17) the notion of a dual force is again raised. The Athenians chose not to follow his policy, to my mind wisely, but it is worth considering whether a radical reform of the navy could have improved Athens' performance against Philip.

If a force of fifty ships manned by citizens were to be constantly ready, 8,500 citizens²⁹ would have had to be constantly on call to row the ships and a further 500 as marines, as well as the citizens in the hyperesia. If they were to be paid, even at the rate of half a drachma a day, and for only eight months of the year,³⁰ the city would have taken on a large item of expenditure it was in no position to afford. If they were not to be paid, they would at any rate have had to be kept trained, and it would hardly have been practicable for such a large proportion of the citizen body to be constantly engaged in rowing practice. Athens would have had to become a sort of naval Sparta. In any case, fifty ships in the Peiraeus would have been of no great use. Demosthenes supposed that his naval preparations would rob Philip of the geographical advantage he derived from timing his attacks to coincide with the Etesian Winds (4. 31 f.). But his ten raiding triremes would have been too small to prevent anything and so his fifty ships would have had to be at the ready in the north Aegean, at impossible cost and beyond the reach of the Demos' decisions. The whole idea of a standing navy was absurd.

Minor improvements could indeed have been made. The control of state equipment should have been more efficient, though it is far from clear that the navy would have been any the better for it. If trierarchies were to run for twelve months from the moment that the actual need for them arose, some system of forewarning would have been useful, as would earlier opportunity for the legal process of exchange (*ἀντίδοσις*). To what extent such matters delayed the despatch of fleets is quite uncertain. According to Aeschines (3. 85), the expedition to save Euboea in 357 got there within 5 days. The expedition which occupied Thermopylae in 352³¹ must have got there in very quick time. Those whom Demosthenes pictured in the *First Philippic* as demanding action 'quickly' and 'today' (§ 14) seem not to have envisaged great delay. Indeed one suspects that the indecision he describes at 4. 36 f. as if it were regular derived from a single occasion, perhaps in connection with the despatch of Charidemus (Dem. 3. 4); such changes of mind about who would serve are not likely to have occurred very often. In any case such delays would be the fault of policy, not of the naval system. On the whole there was little need for reform.³²

²⁹ For the number of rowers in a ship cf. J. S. Morrison and R. T. Williams, *Greek Oared Ships*, p. 256.

³⁰ Cf. Plut. *Per.* 11. 4.

³¹ Diod. 16. 37. 3 and 38. 2, Justin 8. 2. 8, Dem. 4. 17 and 19. 319.

³² According to Demosthenes (18. 107), his law of 340 (limited in scope though it was) secured the perfect functioning of the fleet.

From the restoration of the Athenian navy in 378 down to the disaster of the battle of Amorgos in 322, the Athenians kept control of the sea.³³ The system was adequate to the demands made of it, though it must be admitted that the challenges were very minor. The Persians, the rumour of whose preparations had excited the speech *On the Symmories*, were not really a naval power. Apart from the fleet of Conon and Pharnabazus in the 390s and the fleet of Memnon in 334 and 333, the Persians did not operate independently of a land army; their ships were only the mobile wing of their armies. Likewise Philip declined to become involved with the sea. We hear of privateers and petty raids.³⁴ On one occasion, it is alleged by Polyaeus (4. 2. 21), an expedition into Thrace was accompanied by 'many ships', but if there is any truth in the story, that is the only occasion. Until he crossed to Asia, the Athenian navy was neither of use nor a menace. Once the Macedonians got control of the Phoenician naval bases in the Levant and could exploit Phoenician skill, the end for Athenian sea-power was in sight.

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³³ The period of the Social War might seem to be an exception. In the later stages of the war the allies assembled a fleet of 100 ships with which they ravaged Lemnos, Imbros, and 'many other of the islands subject to the Athenians', and began an assault by land and sea on Samos (Diod. 16. 21); the inscription of the ninth prytany of 357/6 providing for a garrison on Andros (Tod, *G.H.I.* 156) is a reflection of this period. Clearly the fleet of 60 ships under Chares originally assigned to deal with the revolt (Diod. 16. 22. 1) had proved inadequate and a further fleet of 60 ships had to be sent out (*ibid.*). The two sea-battles of the war were minor affairs. The battle of Embata was abortive, being called off due to bad weather (Diod. 16. 21. 4, Polyaeus 3. 9. 29, Nepos *Tim.* 3. 3 f.). The battle of Chios was hardly a major engagement. Chares launched a combined assault on Chios by land and sea. The naval operations in which Chabrias died occurred when the Athenians tried to force their way into the harbour of Chios; Chabrias' ship alone succeeded in entering the harbour and was rammed; the crew swam to the other ships and were saved; he stayed on the sinking ship and was killed (Diod. 16. 7. 3 f.; Nepos *Chab.* 4 – Plut. *Phoc.* 6 gives a slightly different account). None of this suggests a major battle. If the Chians had had a fleet equal to defeating the Athenians in a full engagement, events would have been different and indeed Chares would have adopted a different strategy.

According to N. S. R. Hornblower, *Mausolus* pp. 211–14, Mausolus, who was alleged by Xenophon, speaking of the late 360s, to have had a fleet of 100 ships (*Ages.* 2. 26), played an active part in these naval operations. Diodorus (16. 7. 3) says that the allied forces at Chios at the start of the war came in part from Mausolus, but if his contribution was naval, it is unlikely, in view of the nature of the battle, to have been large; but perhaps all he did was to send some mercenaries to help in the defence of the city. It must be remembered that the war ended when a rumour reached Greece that the Great King was preparing to intervene with 300 ships (Diod. 16. 22. 2), which hardly suggests that Persian forces were already playing a major role. It would seem that Athens feared she might lose control of the sea rather than that she had.

³⁴ Dem. 4. 34 and 22; Aesch. 2. 72; Androtion F 24; Justin 8. 3. 13.