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WHO EQUIPPED MERCENARY TROOPS IN CLASSICAL GREECE?

In his recent monograph *Outsiders in the Greek Cities in the fourth century B.C.*<sup>1</sup> Paul McKechnie has offered students of the period numerous stimuli to thought and investigation, on issues both familiar and novel. In the latter category he asks, for instance, who it was who provided mercenary soldiers with their armour and weapons; and after five pages devoted to the question he writes as follows:

The conclusion overall must be that there is enough evidence to suggest that persons and states wanting to raise an army would often start by collecting arms and armour, and that when they raised mercenaries they would often – perhaps even usually – equip them.<sup>2</sup>

The need to put this (if correct) important finding to the test is of some urgency, given the propensity of scholars' ideas to become schematized and exaggerated in the course of their dissemination. Here indeed one reviewer of *Outsiders* has already set the process in motion: '[McKechnie] asks who footed the considerable bill for the mercenary's armour. The answer is that persons and states wanting to raise an army of mercenaries had to buy the armour first, and the mercenaries themselves only after that'.<sup>3</sup> Dr. McKechnie's own 'answer', as indicated, is a good deal less categorical. Nonetheless the thesis has been proffered and invites a response. Mine is to endeavour to show, in what follows, that his case is (A) intrinsically weak and (B) neglectful of evidence and general considerations which tell, explicitly or implicitly, a different story. I shall argue, in other words, that the body of evidence which he has collected illustrates a rare phenomenon rather than a common or routine one – not least because the basic question which he poses is, from several standpoints, too broad. My focus, like his, will be the fourth century, but I shall also follow his lead in appealing to testimony from outside that era when it seems relevant.

(A) McKechnie's evidence

We have already noted the moderate way ('often – perhaps even usually') in which McKechnie frames his overall thesis of a distinction, both temporal and operational, between the acquisition of arms and of the troops who would wear and use them. This is in fact a reflection of his discussion as a whole, which, when presenting items of evidence and indicating how he himself would wish us to interpret them, is almost excessively sensitive to the realization that contrary interpretations would be equally possible. Witness for instance his comments<sup>4</sup> on two passages in Polyaeus:

(i) 4.3.13 ('Ἀλέξανδρος ἡμιθωράκια τοῖς [φεύγουσι] στρατιώταις ἀντι θωράκων ἔδωκεν).

<sup>1</sup> (London 1989) – hereinafter McKechnie. I refer also to the following by author's name only:

J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1970)

J. G. P. Best, *Thracian Peltasts and their Influence on Greek Warfare* (Groningen 1969)

G. T. Griffith, *The Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge 1935)

H. W. Parke, *Greek Mercenary Soldiers from the Earliest Times to the Battle of Ipsus* (Oxford 1933)

W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War III* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1979)

<sup>2</sup> McKechnie 80–85, at 85.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Hornblower, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 15 September 1989 (no. 880), 21.

<sup>4</sup> McKechnie 84.

'This may (or may not) suggest that he had given them the thoraxes in the first place. 'Soldiers' could be either Macedonians or mercenaries'.

(ii) 3.9.56 ('Ιφικράτης ἐν Ἄκῃ πυθόμενος δύο τῶν ἡγεμόνων προδιδόναι καλέσας τοὺς ἀρίστους τῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ στρατοπέδου προσέταξεν, ὅπότεν τοὺς ἐναντίους τῆς προδοσίας μεταπεμψάμενος ἐξετάζη τὸ πρᾶγμα, προλαβεῖν αὐτοὺς τὰ τούτων ὄπλα καὶ τὰ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῖς τεταγμένων λόχων. οἱ μὲν προλαβόντες κατέσχον τὰς πανοπλίας. Ἰφικράτης δὲ τὴν προδοσίαν ἐλέγξας τοὺς μὲν ἡγεμόνας ἐκόλασε θανάτῳ, τοὺς δὲ στρατιώτας γυμνοὺς ἐξήλασε τοῦ στρατοπέδου). 'The fact that Iphicrates seizes the men's armour before driving them out of the camp may (or, again, may not) suggest that it was not their own property . . . The least that can be said is that Iphicrates probably found the confiscated armour useful . . .

When a scholar insists upon providing, himself, so much ammunition for shooting down his own hypotheses, one feels a brute to pull the trigger; but in truth the caveats expressed here are only right and proper. 4.3.13, in particular, is virtually useless: undatable; unlocatable, accordingly, within what is known of the nature and development of Alexander's army;<sup>5</sup> and in any case, as McKechnie himself disarmingly admits, to be related to Macedonian quite as readily as to mercenary troops. As for 3.9.56, it boasts a date (374) as well as more incidental detail, but even so the appropriate inference to be drawn from the confiscation is not at all clearcut. McKechnie writes: "It would not be quite adequate to say that they were disarmed in order to prevent them turning traitors as their captains had: to make them harmless to his army, Iphicrates need only have taken their offensive weapons, but in fact they left the camp 'stripped'. Parke assumes that the armour was their own and that the point of the punishment was (a) to prevent desertion to the enemy, (b) to prevent mercenaries from soldiering until they could buy new ones. This too is unsatisfactory: they would have had to travel several hundred miles to find an enemy to desert to." In point of fact what Parke *overtly* assumes<sup>6</sup> is that the soldiers concerned could not have sought *alternative* employment until re-armed. Where he and McKechnie actually differ is over whether this second set of equipment, not the first, would have been purchased by rather than provided for the individuals in question. Still, that is to split hairs. The real issue is, does *any part* of this passage indicate that Iphicrates' action was one of repossession as opposed to confiscation? Again I can only agree with McKechnie himself that his case is not proven. It is certainly true to say that if the troops concerned had wished to transfer their allegiance to the particular enemy they had been recruited to fight, the Egyptians (see generally Diod. 15.41–43), that prospect posed no immediate threat to Iphicrates' forces; but it still made sense to prevent (or delay) their becoming an eventual one. In any case, parting these men from their equipment – defensive as well as offensive – was prudent on every count: keeping the army up to strength (McKechnie's notion about the *subsequent* utilization of the arms being perfectly plausible) at the same time as usefully confirming Iphicrates' reputation as an iron disciplinarian.<sup>7</sup>

A third passage from Polyaeus is also, in my opinion, misconstrued by McKechnie but in a different way. It is 3.8<sup>8</sup>: Ἀρχίνος Ἀργείων ὄπλα ποιουμένων δημοσίᾳ πᾶσι τοῖς πολίταις

<sup>5</sup> On which see most recently A. B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: the reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1988) 259–277. For the *hemithorakion*, half-corslet, cf. merely Plut. *Moralia* 596 D (Thebes, 379) and *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 421.39–40 (Aitolia, c. 270) – neither of them helpful in dating or interpreting Polyaeus 4.3.13.

<sup>6</sup> Parke 105–106.

<sup>7</sup> See generally Parke 77–78; W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War II* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1974) 237.

<sup>8</sup> Not 4.8, as McKechnie 96 n. 41. Less venially, he is also oblivious (McKechnie 84), it would seem, to the debate over the date of Archinos' tyranny, third-century (as he believes) or *sixth-century*: see on this H. Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen* (Munich 1967) 35–36 (cf. 389) with 537.

ἐπιμελητῆς τῶν ἐργαζομένων ἀποδειχθεῖς, καινὸν ὄπλον ἐκάστω τῶν πολιτῶν διδοὺς τὸ παλαιὸν ἐλάμβανεν ὡς ἀναθήσων τοῖς θεοῖς· καὶ γὰρ οὕτως ἦν τοῖς Ἀργείοις δεδογμένον. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὰ παλαιὰ πάντων ὄπλα μόνος ἤθροισεν, ὀπίστας ξένους καὶ μετοίκους καὶ ἀτίμους καὶ πένητας τὴν Ἀργείων τυραννίδα κατέσχευεν. Here McKechnie writes: “*Xenoi* is a standard word for ‘mercenaries’, and given the context it does not seem likely here to mean simply ‘aliens’ without suggesting that they were professional soldiers . . . The picture is of Archinus being able to recruit mercenaries (and discontented people from Argos) once he had armour to supply them with.”<sup>9</sup> This is too cavalier. *Xenos* is indeed a standard word – albeit not before the fourth century<sup>10</sup> – for a mercenary, but it also displays a variety of other, equally common, meanings,<sup>11</sup> and I am far from convinced that McKechnie is advocating the correct one here. With no assistance forthcoming from the only other extant source on Archinos, schol. Pindar *Olympian* 7.152, the context (both verbal and substantive) of Polyaeus’ reference to his arming ξένοι is, without question, crucial, and I can only say that on two counts I myself assess it differently. (a) Three of the four groups mentioned are seen from the perspective of the city of Argos; this might naturally suggest that all four are. (b) If the distinction between μέτοικοι and ξένοι is indeed the distinction between aliens regarded by Argos as, respectively, resident and not (yet) resident, that is a familiar enough distinction.<sup>12</sup>

At this juncture it is only fair to admit that the three Polyaeus passages reviewed here so far are proffered by McKechnie after, and (implicitly) as subsidiary back-up to, other instances which are less easy to argue away: (1) Kyros, (2) Dionysios I, and (3) Evagoras.

(1) *Kyros*. A probability that the sheer size of Kyros’ (mainly hoplite) mercenary army necessitated the provision of their equipment was adumbrated some years ago, in James Roy’s authoritative study of the personnel involved.<sup>13</sup> Paul McKechnie now draws attention to *Anabasis* 2.5.38, which appears to confirm this. When, after Kounaxa, Kyros’ former friend Ariaaios attempts to persuade the Greeks to surrender their arms, his argument is that they now belong to the Great King *as they had belonged to his ‘slave’ Kyros* (αὐτοῦ γὰρ εἶναι φησιν, ἐπέειπερ Κύρου ἦσαν τοῦ ἐκείνου δούλου). McKechnie discusses the passage and its implications at some length,<sup>14</sup> and is once again candid about the problems it raises – not so much (in his eyes) its relationship with 2.1.8, where an earlier demand for the surrender of the arms had made no reference to their ownership, as the more nebulous matter of the interaction, in 2.5.38 itself, between Greek terminology (and assumptions) and Persian. On this, as he notes, the experts disagree,<sup>15</sup> and I feel no better qualified than he did to adjudicate. Nevertheless, his statement that ‘if taken at face value, [2.5.38] implies that Cyrus provided armour for all his Greek mercenaries’ cannot be gainsaid, and I am unable to demonstrate that it should not be so taken. In any case, even if McKechnie’s lesser argument fell, Roy’s greater one would still stand.

<sup>9</sup> McKechnie 84.

<sup>10</sup> Thus P. Gauthier, “Les xenoï dans les textes athéniens de la seconde moitié du V<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C.”, *REG* 84 (1971) 44–79, esp. 56–64.

<sup>11</sup> See in brief D. Whitehead, *The Ideology of the Athenian Metic*, *PCPhS* suppl. vol. 4 (1977) 10–11.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance Isoc. 8.21, Aeschin. 1.195, Aristot. *Pol.* 1326 a 18 and 21; less clearly so, Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.12.

<sup>13</sup> J. Roy, ‘The Mercenaries of Cyrus’, *Historia* 16 (1967) 287–323, at 310 – noting two minor and explicit exceptions, the Milesian exiles of 1.2.2 and the (mainly) Rhodian slingers of 3.3.16–20. For uniformity of armour, if not necessarily of weaponry, see 1.2.16.

<sup>14</sup> McKechnie 81–82.

<sup>15</sup> See McKechnie 81–82 with (esp.) n. 16, citing, on the one hand, J. M. Cook, *The Persian Empire* (London 1983) 132 (“All men under the King’s rule were his slaves . . . All property was at his disposal”) and, on the other, letters from and conversations with D. M. Lewis who emphasizes the lack of evidence for at least the second of these assertions.

(2) *Dionysios I*. Here too McKechnie's exposition<sup>16</sup> is beyond serious cavil. Already before the tyranny of Dionysios the provision of arms for *Syracusan* troops seems to have been a practical possibility (Thuc. 6.72.4; Diod. 13.96.1); and the stockpile of equipment which any such step presupposes cannot but have been augmented – if only temporarily – when, in 404, their new master craftily disarmed his fellow-citizens.<sup>17</sup> McKechnie reckons it “perverse to doubt” that these arms were promptly redistributed to the *μισθοφόρων πλῆθος* which Dionysios then proceeded to recruit. Perhaps so. But in any event, five years later came the preparations for war against Carthage, entailing munitions manufacture for a theoretical total of 154 000 men,<sup>18</sup> and here for once mercenaries do find explicit mention amongst the intended recipients: witness Diod. 14.41.4–5, 14.43.3, and above all 14.43.4, which unequivocally puts the *ὀπλοποιία* first and (for reasons of economy) the hiring second. The point of this has not been lost on earlier scholars,<sup>19</sup> and in itself the episode is one that we can clearly visualize. But is it (*ceteris paribus*) typical or exceptional? That remains to be seen.

(3) *Evagoras*. “In 391 Evagoras of Cyprus sent envoys to Athens to ask the state for help and recruit some mercenaries; peltast equipment was provided for the (relatively few) men recruited.” Thus McKechnie's summary<sup>20</sup> of the background to Lysias 19.21 and 43. He might have made it clear that the Athenian state as such merely provided naval transport; it was Aristophanes and his friends who paid for the peltasts and their equipment. Still, that arms were only bought for the men once they had indeed been hired is plainly stated twice over. “As this expedition was on a small scale”, McKechnie adds, “it is probably unfair to assume that the provision of arms was typical of mercenary recruitment.” On the scale of the expedition he is probably right,<sup>21</sup> but is this relevant, as a point to be cited against the typicality of the episode? I would myself prefer to emphasize the particular nature of Evagoras' request, in combining an approach to Athens (rather than anywhere else) with a request (if such it was) for peltasts rather than hoplites. Although there were apparently troops, citizen as well as alien, in Athens as early as c. 430 who could operationally be designated *peltastai*,<sup>22</sup> what remains highly uncertain is how far in the early years – within which 391 must still be counted – such men provided their own equipment and how far, like Thrasyllus' ‘peltastes improvisés’ of 409, they were sailors and/or others kitted out *ad hoc*.<sup>23</sup> But the matter of peltasts vs. hoplites, and the different types of mercenary soldier generally, will be examined more directly in section B.

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To round off the dossier of particular cases already reviewed here,<sup>24</sup> McKechnie brings forward

<sup>16</sup> McKechnie 82–83.

<sup>17</sup> Diod. 14.10.4; cf., for Dionysios II, 16.9.2 (stockpile; cf. Plut. *Timoleon* 13.3) and 10.1 (disarmament).

<sup>18</sup> Diod. 14.41–43. The size of the eventual army fell c. 70 000 short of that (14.47.7).

<sup>19</sup> e. g. Parke 69: “. . . with typical prudence [Dionysios] provided the arms first and then raised the mercenaries, so that he might not be paying them wages before he was ready to use them in war.”

<sup>20</sup> McKechnie 84.

<sup>21</sup> Ten vessels were despatched (Lysias 19.43; Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.24), which would imply a force of some 2 000 peltasts if the peltasts doubled as rowers but only c. 200 if, as is more likely (McKechnie 96 n. 35), they were passengers.

<sup>22</sup> The crucial item of evidence (ignored by Best) is IG I<sup>3</sup> 60.17–18. See on this and in general D. W. Bradeen, “An Athenian peltast?”, in *Phoros: tribute to Benjamin Dean Meritt* (Locust Valley NY 1974) 29–35.

<sup>23</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.1. (The phrase ‘peltastes improvisés’ is from J. Hatzfeld, *Alcibiade* (edn. 2, Paris 1951) 278, cited by Best 41.) See in general Parke 48 with n. 2.

<sup>24</sup> One could add Diod. 17.111.3: Leosthenes at Tainaron in 324 is secretly promised Athenian money *and arms* for the assembling mercenaries demobilized from the satrapal armies. However, the phrases used both of this (*ὀπλων δὲ πλῆθος ἱκανὸν εἰς τὰς κατεπειγούσας χρείας*)

a final and more general argument in support of his thesis of routine separation between recruiting mercenaries and arming them. The notion of a standing stockpile of weaponry available for distribution, whether to citizens or mercenaries or both, is one that we have encountered in connection with Dionysios of Syracuse. McKechnie seeks to establish that classical Athens too maintained such a stockpile, and that “clearly the purpose of collecting it was to hand it out.”<sup>25</sup> Yet such a purpose is actually far from clear, as emerges both from his own brief (but characteristically even-handed) resumé of the evidence and, above all, from the detailed discussion, by Kendrick Pritchett, which he cites.<sup>26</sup> I cannot pretend to do justice to this topic here, but it must be stated that McKechnie’s ‘clearly’ does decidedly beg the question. Indeed, that adverb betrays a modern, secularized conception of the matter which may very well be quite anachronistic. *Was* (e.g.) the Chalkotheke an arsenal as well as a storehouse for votive dedications? “In a normal armory, one would expect that military gear was constantly being dispersed as it was needed in warfare. Yet, when a new ἐξετασμός of the Chalkotheke was made a little after 350/49 B. C. (IG II<sup>2</sup> 1440.46ff.), we have, so far as can be tested, exactly the same items, including the shields, as in IG II<sup>2</sup> 120 [33–34: 362/1].”<sup>27</sup> As Pritchett insists, “interpretation is complicated”,<sup>28</sup> and I would not wish to pretend otherwise. No doubt the complications would be lessened if we were in a position to differentiate more securely between arms which were *dedicated* (e.g. the 300 panoplies deposited ἐν τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς ἱεροῖς by Demosthenes in 425: Thuc. 3.114.1) and those which were merely *stored* (e.g. the 1 000 shields presented to the city, probably during the Corinthian War, by Pasion (Demosth. 45.85), 778 of which are listed as still in store on the akropolis more than twenty years later: IG II<sup>2</sup> 1424a. 128–9, 139–40). However, we are not – overall – in such a position. And as McKechnie himself concedes, where the intent (or at least the result) of stockpiling military equipment *was* to ‘hand it out’, the recipients will not necessarily have been mercenaries.<sup>29</sup> Nor, we might add, will the transaction necessarily have been temporary. The practice, for example, of presenting a panoply to the sons of war-dead is mentioned in the 380s;<sup>30</sup> and half a century later there was enough *matériel* laid by to permit both extraordinary donations such as the one to the Thebans in 335<sup>31</sup> and (e.g.) the routine annual presentation of shield and spear to second-year ephebes (?Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 42.4).

and of the mercenaries’ activities before reaching Tainaron (17.111.1: see below, section B (3)) indicate that this was supplemental rather than total provision (cf. Griffith 35).

<sup>25</sup> McKechnie 85.

<sup>26</sup> Pritchett 240–295, esp. (on Athenian inventories) 255–263.

<sup>27</sup> Pritchett 257 n. 69; cf. 261 n. 89, “the fact that a large number of a particular article was inventoried together is no reason for assuming that the objects were not votive offerings.”

<sup>28</sup> Pritchett 256.

<sup>29</sup> For an era when all troops were paid, one’s definition of mercenaries must hinge on their not being members of the polis or other organization employing them (nor, of course, coming in force to its aid by dint of treaty obligations). I must therefore challenge Pritchett’s citation of the third-century Teos/Kyrbissos treaty of union (L. and J. Robert, *Journal des Savants* 1976, 153–235) as evidence “for equipment provided to the soldiers of a garrison of mercenaries” (Pritchett 259 n. 79): line 19 makes it clear that the 20 men who will each receive a shield, spear, sword and helmet (line 34) are Teian citizens.

<sup>30</sup> Plato *Menexenos* 249 A. Pritchett 259 n. 79 cites parallels from Thasos (Pouilloux, *Etudes thasiennes* 3 (Paris 1954) 371; cf. McKechnie 94 n. 12) and Rhodes (Diod. 20.84.3).

<sup>31</sup> Diod. 17.8.5; Plut. *Demosth.* 23.1. Both these sources employ phraseology too vague to exclude the possibility that the gift was Demosthenes’ own, and it is so regarded by (e.g.) G. L. Cawkwell, ‘The crowning of Demosthenes’, *CQ* 19 (1969) 163–180, at 174. However, decisions by the ekklesia were closely associated (Diod. 17.8.6), and I agree with Pritchett 259 n. 79 in regarding this as one of them.

## (B) A return to orthodoxy?

In seeking to show that mercenaries 'often – perhaps even usually' had to be separately armed by their employers, Paul McKechnie is questioning an orthodoxy which, as he points out,<sup>32</sup> is more implicit than explicit. I believe he is justified, nevertheless, in conveying the impression that there *is* an (unwritten) consensus – holding that mercenaries usually turned up with equipment of their own – on this point. I further believe that orthodoxy, now that we must recognize it as such and determine its validity, is correct. This is partly because the case for (so to speak) its prosecution fails to convince, especially for mainland Greece: no straightforward evidence that arms *for mercenaries* were routinely stockpiled, and no instance of their provision from which it looks safe to generalize.<sup>33</sup> But as we shall now see, orthodoxy can be defended on other grounds besides.

(1) *The argument from silence*

When ancient historians are confronted (as they so often are) with only scanty evidence for phenomenon *x* but wish nonetheless to claim that it was a widespread phenomenon, they regularly appeal to an argument from silence: that at the time *x* was taken for granted and so did not need to be constantly mentioned. Such an argument can often be perfectly legitimate. In this instance McKechnie does not expressly make it, but I imagine he would not deny that it implicitly underpins his case.

How can one counter such an argument? Not, I feel, by demanding to know why the separate provision of arms was *ever* mentioned. That (rhetorical) question would properly arise only if we were being invited to believe that the employers of mercenary troops *always* provided them with their equipment. A black-and-white scenario of that kind would impose the obligation, on its proponents, of explaining why from time to time phenomenon *x* did receive a mention. McKechnie, however, by not striving to show that mercenaries and their arms *never* came as a package deal, is under no such obligation; and if he were to maintain that in (e.g.) the Dionysios episode the separate provision of weaponry was a central rather than a merely incidental feature, I for one would not be disposed to protest.

Even so, arguments from silence cut both ways. And a particularly telling one can take the form of asking why *x* passes unmentioned – if so it does – in circumstances where its mention would have been appropriate and expected.

Such an expectation must surely be created by, in this instance, Aineias the Tactician's *How to Survive under Siege*. Aineias offers unique insights into a typical, small Greek city-state of his period, the mid-fourth century. McKechnie knows this,<sup>34</sup> and duly invokes Aineias' evidence where he can, including in his chapter on mercenaries.<sup>35</sup> Now Aineias takes it utterly for granted that ordinary cities of the type he is catering for will employ mercenary troops, for internal security if not necessarily for external campaigning (see esp. 10.7, 10.18–19, 12.2–13.4, 22.29), and he offers ideas on how to fund this (ch. 13). Yet nothing whatsoever is said of providing them with their equipment; and – more significantly still – his constant concern with arms procurement and control (see esp. 10.7, 10.9, and chs. 29–30) conspicuously fails to state or even hint that the city itself, as opposed to its individual inhabitants, is presiding over stocks of arms and armour.

It is of course the universality of Aineias' (negative) testimony in this regard which gives it its

<sup>32</sup> McKechnie 80 with n. 11.

<sup>33</sup> It would not even be safe to say that (e.g.) Dionysios *always* hired men first and then equipped them: witness the Messenians from Naupaktos who join him – and others – after leaving Greece μετὰ τῶν ὀπλῶν (Diod. 14.34.3).

<sup>34</sup> McKechnie 27.

<sup>35</sup> McKechnie 84, 86 (at n. 58), 88 (at n. 77), 92.

special importance. Elsewhere, the silence of an ancient writer about the arms-and-armour aspect of any particular episode of mercenary recruitment may seem less eloquent. So here I would only say that, if a formulation such as *μισθοφόρων πλῆθος ἤθροϊζε* (Diod. 16.28.1, of Philomelos) proves nothing in any individual case, the same can less confidently be affirmed of its repetition, with no word of separate arms provision, time and time again.

(2) *Variety of troops*

"Of material improvements", wrote H. W. Parke, "the rise of the mercenary chiefly contributed to the diversity of armament."<sup>36</sup> This fact, and its implications for his thesis, is largely glossed over by McKechnie, concerned as he is to stress (correctly) that the socioeconomic spectrum of society from which mercenaries came was a broad one, embracing "the homeless and destitute"<sup>37</sup> as well as "citydwelling and not unrespectable Greeks" like the Kyreians.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly he concentrates on hoplites. "Hoplites in city armies owned their own armour: if such was also the case in mercenary armies, then the poorest or most destitute outsiders cannot have qualified."<sup>39</sup> This argument subsequently acquires a crucial proviso, however: "if mercenaries usually provided their own armour, then outsiders who did not have capital assets to the value of at least 100 drachmas could only exceptionally turn to mercenary soldiering, *at least in the hoplite role*."<sup>40</sup>

Whatever one's views about the overall protasis of this argument, the blanket term 'mercenary' does seem to call for some refinement. And, as regards the kit of troops other than hoplites, we may surely envisage it as being not only cheaper, by and large, than the hoplite's panoply<sup>41</sup> but also *so* diverse and specialized as to make it almost axiomatic that the fighters and their equipment were commissioned as a totality. Is it really conceivable, for instance, that in 428 the Lesbians, awaiting the archers whom they had sent for from the Black Sea, spent that time in manufacturing or purchasing bows and arrows for them?<sup>42</sup> And can it really have been the Athenians themselves who kitted out the 480 Cretan and other archers and the (?) 700 Rhodian slingers who sailed to Sicily in 415?<sup>43</sup>

Archers and slingers, it may be held, were merely peripheral. Yet the same view must be taken of front-line troops too. Here are two illustrative passages:

(i) Thuc. 7.27.1: the arrival in Athens, in 413, of the 1 300 Dioi from Thrace. Thucydides has

<sup>36</sup> Parke 236.

<sup>37</sup> McKechnie 79.

<sup>38</sup> McKechnie 80; cf. Parke 29.

<sup>39</sup> McKechnie 79.

<sup>40</sup> McKechnie 80–81 (with my emphasis), providing documentation for the figure at 94 n. 12.

<sup>41</sup> This must be true of (defensive) armour if not always of (offensive) arms. Cavalrymen present a particular problem, not so much in their personal accoutrements (on which see J. K. Anderson, *Ancient Greek Horsemanship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1961) 140ff.) as in their horses (for some prices of which see McKechnie 94 n. 12). One answer would be to say, of mercenaries no less than of citizens, that "cavalrymen had to be quite a bit richer than hoplites" (McKechnie *loc. cit.*); note, however, that Xenophon's scheme for adding 200 ἵππεῖς ξένοι to the Athenian cavalry corps included ideas for defraying the cost of their horses (*Hipparchikos* 9.3–5).

<sup>42</sup> Thuc. 3.2.2. (They may or may not be the ἐπικούροι mentioned in 3.18.1 and/or 2.) I take both the τοξόται and the σῆτος to have been *bought* rather than requisitioned under treaty obligations.

<sup>43</sup> Thuc. 6.43 (cf. Nikias in 6.22), with Dover's note on the number 700. For *citizen* archers (who surely provided their own gear) in Athens since at least c. 460 see Thuc. 2.13.8 with Gomme's note; for τοξόται βάρβαροι in casualty lists, D. W. Bradeen, "The Athenian casualty lists", *CQ* 19 (1969) 145–159, at 149 with n. 9. On archers and slingers generally see Griffith 138–139.



already (2.96.2) applied to them the term *μαχαροφόροι*, and the adjective is repeated here. To suppose that they had to turn up in Athens before being issued their μάχαιραι, or for that matter the rest of the equipment which merited Thucydides' description of them as peltasts<sup>44</sup> strains credulity; and their bloodthirsty progress *after* leaving Athens (see below, subsection 3) is further corroboration that no such strain is called for.

(ii) Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.5: Agesilaos' preparations, in 394, to return from Asia Minor to the Corinthian War. He offers prizes to whichever *lochagos* of mercenaries joins the expedition (συστρατεύοιτο) with the best-armed (εὐοπλότατος) *lochos* 'of hoplites and archers and peltasts'; also for the best-mounted and best-armed (εὐπιποτάτη καὶ εὐοπλοτάτη) cavalry squadron. Somewhat paradoxically, the ἄθλα for hoplites and cavalry turn out to be ὄπλα (4.2.7); but overall the picture is one of mercenary *lochoi* coming forward ready-equipped.<sup>45</sup> And this of course leads us directly on to the question of:

### (3) "Unemployed" mercenaries

If we were to accept the idea that it was common or even customary for the employers of mercenaries to arm their men before using them and retrieve such equipment afterwards,<sup>46</sup> it would follow that mercenaries could only operate effectively during their periods of employment. But this is not the picture the sources paint.

Take (once again) the Dioi in 413. We have already seen that the specialized nature of their weaponry makes it highly unlikely that they were not issued with it until they reached Athens. Probability becomes proof, however, when we read Thucydides' graphic and, by his austere standards, emotional description of the atrocities which they committed in Boiotia on their way home (Thucydides 7.29–30, cf. Pausanias 1.23.3–4).

Other instances are less clearcut. I confine myself to two, both of them from the second half of the fourth century:

(i) Diod. 16.62.2. Sailing to Magna Graecia in summer 345 (or spring 344),<sup>47</sup> Phalaikos' mercenaries suspect that no definite employment is awaiting them there, draw their swords on Phalaikos and the helmsman, and force them to change course (for Malea and, ultimately, Crete). These men had been ceremonially disarmed in the summer of 346 (Diod. 16.60.3); so we see here that at least some of them – Diod. 16.62.2 writes of the mutineers as μάλισθ' οἱ τὰς ἡγεμονίας ἔχοντες – had subsequently re-armed themselves.

(ii) Diod. 17.111.1. Before assembling at Tainaron, the demobilized mercenary armies of the satraps support themselves by καθ' ὅλην τὴν Ἀσίαν πλανώμενοι καὶ τὰς ἀναγκαίας τροφὰς ἐκ τῶν προνομῶν πορίζόμενοι. This implies their retention and/or subsequent acquisition of at least some arms and armour, however much it needed to be supplemented by Leosthenes.<sup>48</sup>

More significant, though, than individual illustrative passages like these is the general backdrop of prevailing fourth-century (and later) assumptions about mercenaries and the chronic dangers they pose. The key witness here is Isocrates. With Parke's opinion that 'Isocrates'

<sup>44</sup> On the peltast's equipment see generally Best 3–16; Anderson 37–38 (*machairai*) and 112–113.

<sup>45</sup> The episode is regarded by Anderson 59 as 'implying that [the *lochagoi*] were responsible for the state of the men's equipment'. This is fair comment, but would not of itself presuppose (as Anderson appears to do) centralized issuing of that equipment.

<sup>46</sup> Provided of course they were in a position to do so. The Kyreians are the obvious example of men whose initial employer, if he had ever armed them, lost (along with his life) his ability to repossess those arms; note Xen. *Anab.* 7.2.3. For instances of arms initially provided (on the McKechnie hypothesis) by one employer being used in the service of another see (e.g.) Diod. 19.87.1ff. (Telesphoros) and 20.19.2 (Polemios).

<sup>47</sup> For the chronology see H. D. Westlake, 'Phalaecus and Timoleon', *CQ* 34 (1940) 44–46.

<sup>48</sup> See above, n. 24.

testimony on *strategic* matters is not necessarily to be taken as accurate' one can have no quarrel,<sup>49</sup> but in other, broader respects what Isocrates has to say must be taken seriously. The relevant passages are well-known (chiefly, in chronological order: 4.168; Ep. 9.8–9; 8.24; 15.115; 5.96 and 120–123; Ep. 2.19), and the image they conjure up is one of itinerant forces of mercenaries on the loose, especially in Asia Minor, and 'committing outrages upon whomsoever they encounter' (5.120). The essential truth of this is accepted both by Parke<sup>50</sup> and indeed by McKechnie, who while suggesting that the units of real durability were less often mercenary armies, as such, than their constituent *lochoi*,<sup>51</sup> writes nonetheless of 'quasi-independent forces'<sup>52</sup> and offers a lengthy and convincing demonstration of the high degree of overlap between mercenaries and pirates.<sup>53</sup>

Unless these indications that the aggressive activities of mercenary fighters were by no means confined to their periods in *bona fide* employment are somehow illusory, they seem to me to deal a final and fatal blow to any notion that, as a rule, only during such periods would mercenaries have been armed. Accordingly, on the basis of both this and the other evidence and arguments here presented, I would urge instead the opposite (and traditional) view: that to hire a mercenary in classical Greece was, under normal circumstances, to hire a man who brought with him the tools of his trade.

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#### PHILOLOGIE, PROSOPOGRAPHIE ET HISTOIRE À PROPOS DE LUCIUS FABIUS HISPANIENSIS

Voilà maintenant bien longtemps que deux des sénateurs de l'entourage des Sertorius qui participèrent au complot contre lui excitent la curiosité des historiens. Salluste nous apprend, en effet, qu'au repas où devait être assassiné ce chef charismatique participait, entre autres, un certain L. Fabius Hispaniensis *senator ex proscriptis*, qui se trouvait juste au-dessus de Sertorius (occupant lui-même le *locus consularis* sur le *medius*<sup>1</sup>) et qui, donc, a dû prendre une part importante dans cet assassinat. Or on connaît, sous ce nom, pour la même époque, un questeur du proconsul des deux Espagnes, C. Annius, qui avait réussi à contraindre Sertorius à quitter le sol espagnol et à s'embarquer pour la Maurétanie.<sup>2</sup> Comme ce sont pratiquement les deux seules

<sup>49</sup> Parke 44 n. 6 (with my emphasis). A good example of the difficulty of using Isocrates' version of any given instance of mercenary recruitment is 4.144: in 397 Drakon of Pellene 'collects three thousand peltasts (τρισχιλίους πελταστάς συλλέξας)' to campaign in Mysia. In a more militarily-precise writer this might warrant the assumption that peltasts were collected ready-armed, but not necessarily in Isocrates; note also that πάντα τὰ ἐπιτήδεια with which Derkyllidas had stocked Drakon's base, Atarneus (Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.11), possibly included arms.

<sup>50</sup> Parke 228–229.

<sup>51</sup> McKechnie 88, cf. 91.

<sup>52</sup> McKechnie 87, cf. 115.

<sup>53</sup> McKechnie 101ff. See also H. A. Ormerod, *Piracy in the Ancient World* (Liverpool 1924) 119–150.

<sup>1</sup> *Igitur discubere: Sertorius inferior in medio, super eum L. Fabius Hispaniensis...* (Sall., *Hist.* III, 83 M). Mais Plutarque (*Sert.* 26) et Diodore de Sicile (37, 22a) décrivent la disposition de façon différente et, en fait, aberrante. Sur cette question du placement au banquet, uid. J. Marquardt, *La Vie privée des Romains*, trad. française, Paris, 1892–1893, 356–359; A. Schulten, *Sertorius*, 2ème éd. Leipzig, 1926, 134–135.

<sup>2</sup> Plut. *Sert.* 7, 4. Cette questure est attestée par une émission monétaire du procos. sur un denier de laquelle on lit, en effet, L. FABI.L.F.HISP.Q. (Crawford, *RRC* 336). Sur le fait que C. Annius Luscus, avait bien en charge l'ensemble de la péninsule, uid. E. Badian, *Studies in Greek and Roman History*, Oxford, 1964, 96 & n. 165.