The independent Greek city-states of the classical period, 500-338 BC, fought many wars against each other individually or in various combinations. Many of the most important city-states were also slave societies: their numerous slaves were crucial both to their agriculture and to their urban economies. In response to this pair of circumstances, cities sometimes encouraged their opponent’s slaves to desert. They also mobilized their own slaves in a variety of ways ranging from emergency infantry service with the promise of freedom to regular mobilization with pay in the navy.

Warfare between the independent city-states of Greece in the archaic period, 750-500 BC, was limited and convention-bound.¹ This type of warfare is

sometimes called agonal because it resembled a contest with set rules, an agon: a single battle resulted in a clear winner and decided the war. The heavy infantry, the hoplites, who determined the battle's outcome, provided their own metal armor and thus came from the richer part of the population. This warfare regime left little scope for arming slaves, because only a fraction of even the free population was armed and inviting the desertion of an enemy's slaves would result only in retribution and contribute little to the single battle that counted.

In the classical period, some wars became more intense and lasted longer. They were no longer routinely decided by single battles but sometimes by lengthy campaigns. Wars were no longer fought over disputed borderlands, but more often a state's independence and even its system of government were at stake. On occasion, a city's very existence could be at risk: defeated cities could have their adult men killed and their women and children sold into slavery. Athens, the most populous city in the Greek world, came close to such a fate at the end of the Peloponnesian War, a particularly bitter conflict. Naval warfare, whose importance grew with the increasing importance of trade, demanded material and financial resources, centralized planning, and manpower well

beyond those required by hoplite warfare. In the context of more intense wars, often involving large navies, states used every available source of manpower including their slaves. As attacks on an enemy’s economy became more common, states were often tempted to try to get the slaves of their opponents to rebel or, more often, just to desert.

Ancient Greek city-states typically possessed significant populations of chattel slaves. The commercial and prosperous islands of Chios and Corcyra seem to have had particularly numerous slaves, but even agrarian Elis and Thebes had many also. Plausible estimates for the number of slaves in classical Athens range from forty thousand to over one hundred thousand at the time of the Peloponnesian War. Since the population of Athenian adult male citizens was

between thirty and sixty thousand at this time, the military potential of slave manpower was obvious.

Greek agriculture was mixed, intensive, and dominated by mid-sized farms with a few slaves on each. Slaves were even more prominent in urban crafts, commerce, and mining. The greatest concentrations of slaves were employed in these sectors: one hundred slaves working in a shield workshop or a thousand owned by a single man and rented out to work in the silver mines of southern Attica, which may have employed more than twenty thousand slaves at their height.\(^3\) But, perhaps more typically, craftsmen worked together with a single or a handful of slaves. Overall, slave ownership was more widely distributed among the free than in New World slavery: at the height of Athenian wealth, fully a third of the citizen males probably owned at least one slave; very few owned large numbers of slaves, i.e. over thirty. The politics of arming slaves was influenced by this pattern of ownership within different classes. Although the common people held sway in Athens’ direct democracy, widespread slaveholding meant that only in extreme emergencies would the emancipation of slaves for military service be contemplated—and even then it was controversial.\(^4\) As we shall see below, the regular use of slaves in the navy did not usually infringe on the interests of slave owners.

**The Evidence and Its Difficulties**


Our sources of information about the role of slaves in ancient Greek warfare are pitiful.\(^5\) Two examples will show the grand scale of Greek slave recruitment and our paltry evidence for the practice. Aegospotami, the last and decisive battle of the Peloponnesian War, 431-404 BC, was fought between the navies of the Spartan-led Peloponnesian league and of the Athenian empire. These navies together were manned by over sixty thousand men including slave rowers. We have to guess, however, at the proportion of slaves in their crews and with little firm ground on which to base our speculation: at most we possess six scraps of evidence relevant to the proportion of slave rowers.\(^6\) Each must be


\(^6\) IG I\(^3\) 1032. Thucydides 1.55.1, 8.84.2, Herodotus 6.15, Diodorus 14.58.1. See also Michael Jameson, "The provisions for mobilization in the Decree of Themistocles," *Historia* 12 (1963):385-404. The proportions of slaves implied, more or less firmly, in these sources are as follows: more than 20%; about 80%, more than 50%, more than 80% (?), 50% (?) respectively—see below page XX for a
squeezed to produce a possible estimate for the proportion of slaves in a particular navy. And this information is for all of Greece during the entire classical period. None of this evidence pertains specifically to the battle of Aegospotami. So the number of slaves at this battle may have been anywhere from ten thousand to forty-five thousand. We know that slaves took part at this decisive battle on a large scale, but theories about their origins, means of recruitment, and fate depend on arguments from probability—and sometime tenuous ones—rather than on hard evidence.

A second example concerns slave desertion, again in the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides mentions briefly that over 20,000 slaves, most of them skilled workers, ran away from their Athenian masters and escaped to a fort established by the Spartans in Athenian territory at Decelea. Whether these slaves escaped to freedom, to re-enslavement under different masters, or ended up as rowers in the Peloponnesian Navy is unknown. Nor does Thucydides explicitly say that the Spartans promised freedom to the slaves, although this is most likely what motivated them to desert in such large numbers.

In part, the lack of detailed information is a problem common to all ancient history: our sources are scarce and difficult to interpret even compared to the high Middle Ages and are far inferior to the evidence for any modern period. Even crucial events, matters of common knowledge and great interest throughout Greece, are insecurely known. For example, the mid-fifth century discussion of some of these passages. My minimum of ten thousand out of sixty thousand, 17% of the total, is conservative.

7Thucydides 7.27.5.

treaty that formally ended the great Persian Wars, the Peace of Kallias, is so insecurely attested that many scholars doubt its very existence.\footnote{D. M. Lewis, "The thirty years' peace," in D. M. Lewis, J. Boardman, J. K. Davies and M. Ostwald, eds.\textit{The Cambridge Ancient History,}\textit{: The Fifth Century,} vol. V, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 121-127 surveys the controversy.}

When, however, we consider the Peloponnesian War, we might expect our information to be much better, since we possess the long and meticulous account of Thucydides and its admittedly less competent continuation by Xenophon. But a second difficulty now presents itself. Greek historians assumed informed Greek readers. They did not always detail standard practices that their readers understood already. Rather they focused on the course of events, its explanation, or on exceptional practices. Certain uses of slaves in war may have been taken for granted and therefore neglected.

This explanation for ancient reticence is still not quite sufficient: Thucydides would never have let the fate of twenty thousand Athenian citizens go unstated as he does the fates of the slaves who fled to Decelea. A systematic neglect of slaves mars our sources. To begin with, slaves were less important than citizens and thus less worthy of report. But, even this explanation is too neutral; slave soldiers were not just unimportant but a particularly awkward topic for two main reasons. First, classical Greece emphasized more than most other societies the importance of military service in judging a man and specifically his claims for political rights. Second, in common with a variety of slave societies, free Greeks affected to despise their slaves for a variety of faults, several of them incompatible with the virtues of a brave soldier.
From the time that the *Iliad* was written down, around 700 BC, a strong stream in Greek thinking put a high value on fighting for one's city and linked it with social status. The aristocrats of Homer encourage each other to fight as follows:

> Therefore it is our duty in the forefront of the Lykians to take our stand, and bear our part of the blazing battle, so that a man of the close-armoured Lykians may say of us: "Indeed, these are no ignoble men who are lords of Lykia, these kings of ours, who feed upon the fat sheep appointed and drink the exquisite sweet wine, since indeed there is strength of valour in them, since they fight in the forefront of the Lykians."10

When hoplites came to dominate warfare in the course of the seventh century BC, military service became associated with the citizenship of the independent farmers who made up the hoplites, rather than the aristocrats of Homer.11 Even in classical Athens, a man could lose his citizen rights for cowardice in battle.12 It was not only political rights, but basic worth that depended on one’s fighting ability and courage: Tyrtaeus' archaic paean to the absolute primacy of the virtues of a good hoplite was still well-known into the fourth century:

> I would not say anything for a man nor take account of him for any speed of his feet or wrestling skill he might have. . .

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12Lysias 10.1.
not if he were more handsome and gracefully formed than Tithónos, or had more riches than Midas had, or Kýnyras too, not if he were more of a king than Tantalid Pelops, or had the power of speech and persuasion Adrastos had, not if he had all splendors except for a fighting spirit. . .

Here is courage, mankind’s finest possession, here is the noblest prize that a young man can endeavor to win. . .\textsuperscript{13}

Tyrtaeus specifies that it is fighting at close quarter in the infantry that reveals the worthy man. Classical Athens, however, depended more on its navy than its hoplites. But, despite some aristocratic contempt for the naval mob, the connection between military service and rights remained strong.\textsuperscript{14} A fifth-century critic of Athenian democracy had to admit that the common people deserve their power since "it is the ordinary people who man the fleet and bring the city her power."\textsuperscript{15} Although Tyrtaeus’ poem manifestly oversimplifies the actual complexity of social status in Greece, the military virtues played an

\textsuperscript{13} Tyrtaeus 1 in Richmond Lattimore, trans. \textit{Greek Lyrics} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) 14.


\textsuperscript{15} Xenophon [pseud.], \textit{The Constitution of the Athenians} 1.2.
unusually large role in the Greek spectrum of values. Accordingly, the question of arming slaves was always a political and ideological as well as a practical one.

So all sorts of military service, even navy rowing, were associated with rights that slaves manifestly did not have and, to Greek thinking, should not have. Slaves were sometimes Greek prisoners of war, but more often came to Greece via trade from areas in the northern Aegean, around the Black Sea and the coasts of Asia Minor and Syria. The circumstances of their original enslavement are largely unknown. So slaves were seen as inferior, having been defeated in war or coming from "barbarian" peoples. They were seen as childish and cowardly, and as the polar opposites of the citizens. None of these ways of viewing slaves could easily be reconciled with their playing an important role in warfare, an activity so central to the self-definition of the male citizen.

The juxtaposition of this seemingly overwhelming ideology and the barely mentioned participation of slaves in warfare have resulted in two very different historical approaches. Some scholars have played down our evidence for slave participation, since such a practice was incompatible with Greek thinking. They tend to argue that a handful of exceptional cases comprise the whole of slave use in classical Greek warfare. I have recently argued for the opposite approach. Rival cities at war often had no choice but to press every advantage including the recruitment of slaves—and inciting desertion among their enemies. Contemporary Greek historians were not similarly constrained in what they chose to report or focus on. They could neglect slave participation or

16 The scholarship on Greek attitudes towards slaves is huge. My views with bibliography can be found in Hunt, Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology, 126-138 (polar opposites to citizens), 146-160 (defeated in war), 160-164 (childish and cowardly), 48-50 and 158-159 (inferior foreigners).
focus on other issues. So, far from looking askance at brief references to arming slaves, on the grounds that such a practice was incompatible with Greek thinking about slaves and military service, we should take full account of this evidence. Indeed, other cases have very probably been completely lost from our records.

**Types of Slave Use**

Rather than go through the scattered individual cases of arming slaves among the many wars of classical Greece, perhaps more useful is first to sketch out typical practices in broad strokes. It is readily admitted that such a general picture, *faute de mieux*, is not as solid as one built up by the consideration of many detailed narratives. We have a few pieces of a jig-saw puzzle and are trying to put them together, knowing full well that they may belong to different puzzles and simply hoping that the puzzles resemble each other, e.g. that a Peloponnesian navy in 405 will resemble one of 411. This general overview will focus on three cases: slaves from Scythia, archers, performed police functions within Athens; slaves accompanied hoplites on campaign but were not armed; slaves were occasionally armed as infantry soldiers. Then we shall consider in greater detail two cases of great military importance and about which our evidence allows more insight into the practical problems, politics, and effects of arming slaves: the military roles of Sparta's serf-like Helot population and the use of slaves in Athenian navy during the Peloponnesian War.

Athens did not have a police force; its legal system depended a great deal on self-help and social pressure.17 To maintain order in the courts and

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assemblies, and to assist certain magistrates, Athens, in the fifth century, bought a force of three hundred Scythian slaves, armed with the traditional Scythian bow. These slaves carried these lethal weapons among an unarmed populace, but they seemed to have performed their jobs smoothly and did not evoke fears of a slave revolt. Despite being the butt of various xenophobic jokes in comedy, the Scythian archers were a favored group of slaves. Due to their homogeneity and weapons, the lives of the Scythian archers were perhaps more like those of mercenaries—or of Muslim slave soldiers—rather than of individual chattel slaves. These archers may have provided a bulwark for the democracy against the possibility of oligarchic coups, which often depended on a surprise attack in concert with mercenaries. The Scythian archers also strengthened the state's power while maintaining equal rights among the citizens: such equality was felt to be offended if a citizen, even in the role of policeman, laid hands upon another. The Scythian archers were armed slaves, but armed for internal rather than external purposes.

Each hoplite, often an independent farmer, typically brought one of his slaves with him on campaign. Such hoplite attendants played a key support role in warfare. In particular, they helped carry the hoplite’s armor, which was heavy, up to fifty or sixty pounds, uncomfortable in the summer heat, and thus

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19Paradoxically, this sensitivity probably derived from the Athenian practice of slavery: to be answerable with one's body was the mark of a slave (Demosthenes 22.55, 24.166-167). I owe this interpretation of the Scythian slaves to Margaret Imber, "Cops and Robbers and Democratic Ideology," (paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association, San Diego, December, 1995).
not put on until the last possible moment. The hoplite attendants might also help to plunder or ravage the enemy’s countryside, throw stones at the enemy, and carry and care for the wounded. They seem not to have played a large role in battle itself and did not present the threats, both practical and ideological, that slaves in a combatant role did. Although such slaves might take an opportunity to desert, they might also render their masters exceptional service and receive commensurate rewards, such as their freedom, or at least public commemoration if they died. More commonly they did hard but inglorious work on campaign and returned to their previous duties afterwards.

On occasion, slaves were armed as infantry soldiers. A variety of factors limited the usefulness of this policy. Although chattel slave revolts were almost unheard of the classical Greek world, the Greeks often viewed their slaves as intrinsically hostile to the free: Xenophon argues that the free citizens provide a bodyguard for each other so that they are not murdered by their slaves. So, slaves who fought in the infantry were typically either promised or given their freedom to assure their loyalty. Rarely were they made citizens, a closely


22Xenophon, Hiero 4.3; see also Hiero 10.4, Plato, Republic 578d-579b, and Keneth J. Dover, Greek Popular Morality (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974) 114 on this attitude.
guarded prerogative; rather, they became *metricals*, resident aliens, liable for military service and subject to a special tax, but also free to leave the city. Thus, the policy of freeing slaves to fight was expensive, unrepeatable, and usually reserved for emergencies. For example, after Philip of Macedon defeated the Athenians and their allies at the battle of Chaeronea, 338 BC, the Athenians voted, among other emergency measures, to free and arm their slaves, presumably to man the extensive walls of Athens and its port, the Piraeus.23 When they discovered that Philip was willing to offer them peace terms instead of attempting to storm the city, they rescinded their offers and decided to make peace instead. Hyperides, who proposed the motion to arm the slaves, was put on trial. He defended himself on grounds of necessity alone: "it was not I who wrote the decree; the battle of Chaeronea did."24 Earlier, during the Peloponnesian War, an Athenian general armed the crews of his navy as javelin throwers, a type of light-armed infantry.25 These crews included slave rowers, but, as we shall see, such slaves probably enjoyed an above-average status and incentives for good behavior, including the hope of eventual manumission. So they could be used as infantry almost as easily as they could serve as rowers.

23 A Hellenistic writer, Philon of Byzantium (5.4.14-15), advises that it's a good idea for besieging armies publicly to promise freedom for deserting slaves. Then the defenders will not be able to arm their slaves for fear of desertion or rebellions. They will also have to feed their slaves better and will run out of food sooner.


25Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.2.1.
In neither of these cases did slaves serve as hoplites, the heavy-armored infantry who dominated Greek battles. An ideological factor made the arming of slaves as hoplites particularly unpalatable: all military service gave some claims to those who performed it, but the hoplite was the soldier most closely associated with citizenship. Thus, the hoplites remained primarily citizen amateurs in the fourth century when the use of mercenaries had become common for other types of soldiers.\textsuperscript{26} The hoplites were the branch of the armed forces from which slaves ought especially to have been excluded.

In addition, the hoplites only came from the richer half or third of the male citizen population, and class imperatives often influenced the decision who to arm. If a city had extra hoplite weapons and armor on hand, it could, if it wished, arm its poorer citizens. In some cases, class tension among the citizens made this option unappealing—on one occasion the poor overruled an oligarchic government as soon as they were given hoplite weapons.\textsuperscript{27} The Athenians reportedly armed three hundred slaves, probably as hoplites, to fight at the battle of Marathon against the Persians, 490 BC.\textsuperscript{28} They did so, although they had thousands of poorer citizens, the \textit{thetes}, available. Presumably, the rich and middling farmers, the hoplites, wanted to maintain their monopoly of the prestige of defending the city. They were willing not only to risk their lives to


\textsuperscript{27}Thucydides 3.27.

\textsuperscript{28}Hunt, \textit{Slaves Warfare, and Ideology}, 26-28 includes bibliography. Almost all scholars accept the story of armed slaves at Marathon, since it is hard to imagine a reason for the story to be invented.
justify their prerogatives—as they had for centuries—but also gave whatever extra armor was available to their slaves rather than to the thetes, who were perhaps considered more of a threat to their dominance. The promise of freedom for the slaves could be considered another act of laudable public spirit on the part of the slave-owners, since they were making a financial sacrifice for the community’s benefit.

**Sparta's Rebellious Helots**

For deeper insight into the practical problems, politics, and effects of arming slaves, the military roles of Sparta’s serf-like Helot population deserve special mention. Spartans maintained their status as leisured, professional soldiers through their exploitation of a large population of unfree peasants called Helots. The origins of Helotry in the Spartan homeland, Laconia, is obscure, but many of the Helots were the population of the territory of Messenia, conquered by Sparta in the early archaic period. These owed to the Spartans a proportion, probably half, of their produce. They might be required to perform personal service as well, for example, as hoplite attendants. The Spartans called them their "slaves" and they are so described even in treaties. This designation was an attempt to assimilate Sparta’s controversial subjection of a whole Greek

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30Thucydides 4.118.7, 5.23.3.
people to the accepted system of slavery, usually of non-Greek individuals. The Helots were not, however, chattel slaves. They could not be bought or sold individually. Many lived within their own villages and with their own families.

The Helots, especially those of Messenia, were notorious for their rebelliousness. Messenia had attempted and failed to free itself in a bitter war of the seventh century. Messenian exiles, attested in the mid-sixth century, suggest further disturbances. Another revolt in 490 is likely to have occurred. Sparta required the aid of allies throughout Greece—and may have taken years—to put down a large Helot insurrection in the mid-fifth century. Indeed, Spartan treaties sometimes specified that Sparta's allies must come to its aid in case the "slaves rose in rebellion." In addition to these particular incidents, an atmosphere of suspicion and brutality between Spartans and Helots is well attested. The constant military training and totalitarianism of the Spartans were aimed at much at the danger within as at any external Greek enemy.

These two threats combined when Sparta's enemies tried to take advantage of Helot discontent. Athens gave Naupactus, a city it had conquered and later used as a naval base, to the Messenian refugees who had left the Peloponnese on a safe-conduct at the end of the mid-fifth-century revolt. These Messenians became particularly brave and loyal allies of the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War and even afterwards. It was probably at their suggestion that in 425, Athens built a fort at Pylos, on the Messenian coast, in order to attract deserters and incite Helot rebellions. This fort was later manned by the Messenians from Naupactus, who were particularly effective at inciting their countrymen to rebel.

32 Thucydides 5.23.3.
By climbing apparently insurmountable cliffs and appearing unexpectedly in the Spartans’ rear, they also played a key role in forcing the surrender of several hundred Spartans trapped on the island of Sphacteria. These Messenians even dedicated a beautiful victory statue, now known as the Nike of Paeonius, at Olympia from "the spoils of their enemies." Although the Spartans were not named as the defeated enemies, the presence of a dedication by the Messenians—the very name was unpalatable for Sparta and its sympathizers—at the Panhellenic center of Olympia was, no doubt, hard for the Spartans to swallow.

Late in the war, the Spartans besieged Pylos and recaptured it after letting the garrison of Messenians from Naupactus and Helot deserters leave under a safe conduct. The Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War allowed the Spartans to captured even Naupactus. A generation later, however, Thebes, after defeating the Spartans at Leuctra, 371 BC, invaded Messenia and helped the Messenians build a walled city there. After three centuries of large and small rebellions, the Messenians gained their freedom through the intervention of Thebes. Sparta continued to possess Helots in its home territory, but it never

33Thucydides 4.36.
35For the controversial nature of the expression "Messenian" see Hunt, Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology, 68-69, 181.
36Diodorus 13.64.5-7; Xenophon, Hellenica 1.2.18.
37An Athenian general still possessed an overenthusiastic bodyguard of Messenians in the 390s (Hellenica Oxyrhynchia XX (XV) 3).
again subjected Messenia nor played a central role among the important Greek city-states.

The sudden conversion of the majority of Sparta's "slaves" into a Greek city state sparked considerable controversy. Most interesting for our purposes are the two types of arguments employed by pro-Messenian propagandists. A more radical, and ultimately less influential, approach accepted that the Messenians had been slaves and so denounced slavery: it was in a work about Messenia that Alcidamas, a sophist and rhetorician, argued—in one of the very few criticisms of slavery to survive from ancient Greece—that "god made all men free; nature has made nobody a slave."38 Another approach had begun well before Messenia had been freed.39 This was to separate the subjection of Messenia from usual chattel slavery: the Messenians were not like slaves at all, but were Greeks with their own mythical history going back to Nestor in the Iliad. This approach ended up prevailing since it reconciled the liberation of Messenia with its eventual position as a regular Greek city-state, led by


39 On early indications of Messenian mythology see Hunt, Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology, 76-79.
slaveholders, freed by another city, Thebes, led by slaveholders. So, the epitaph of the great Theban general Epaminondas, stated that

By my plans Sparta was deprived of its glory,
And holy Messene received back her children at last. . .
All Greece was independent and free.  

Although all Greece was "free," the epitaph did not imply that any slaves had been freed or needed to be freed, but that the Messenians had been restored to their rightful position.

**Helot Soldiers**

Among the Athenian forces, whose expedition against Syracuse ended in disaster in 413, Thucydides lists a contingent of Messenians from Naupactus and Pylos.  

The Spartan general Gylippus whose arrival in the nick of time kept Syracuse from surrender came with one thousand men from the Peloponnese and a unit of six hundred picked men from the Helots and Neodamodeis, the latter being Helots freed for military service. In a pattern that will become less surprising as the reader continues through this volume, Helots were used extensively in Spartan land armies, despite their well-earned reputation for discontent and rebelliousness.  

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40Pausanias, 9.15.6.

41Thucydides 7.57.8.

42Thucydides 7.19.3, 7.58.3.

Sometimes Helots were used in large numbers for short campaigns. At the battle of Plataea, Herodotus reports that Helot soldiers outnumbered the Spartans by seven to one, thirty-five thousand Helots to five thousand Spartiates.\textsuperscript{44} I have argued elsewhere that at Plataea the Spartans, professional soldiers with a fearsome reputation, fought in the front rank while the Helots made up the rear seven ranks of a typical Greek phalanx. Traditional scholarship, on the other hand, assigns the Helots a less important role as light-armed troops on the periphery of the battle.\textsuperscript{45} In later campaigns in the Peloponnese, the Helots were again mobilized \textit{en masse}, along with the Spartans.\textsuperscript{46} It is not clear whether these Helots served in the same formation as the Spartans hoplites—though at other points we definitely hear of Helot hoplites.\textsuperscript{47} Again our information on these mobilizations is scanty, deriving in each case from a few words in Thucydides. Such mobilization was probably an unrewarded obligation, although occasionally Helots gained or hoped for rewards for particularly meritorious service.\textsuperscript{48}

In a different pattern of mobilization, the Spartans recruited smaller numbers of Helots, as professional hoplites for distant and lengthy campaigns. These Helot soldiers were typically rewarded, either before or after their service, with freedom from the obligations of Helotry. They served in their own separate units in armies consisting typically of a few Spartan leaders,

\textsuperscript{44}Herodotus 9.10.1, 9.28.2, 9.29.1.
\textsuperscript{45}Peter Hunt, "The Helots at the Battle of Plataea," \textit{Historia} 46 (1997): 129-144 includes a discussion of previous scholarship.
\textsuperscript{46}Thucydides 5.64.2, 5.57.1.
\textsuperscript{47}Thucydides 7.58.3.
\textsuperscript{48}Thucydides 4.26.5, 4.80.3.
mercenaries, and allies. At the peak of Spartan imperial power, in the early fourth century, the Spartans had as many or more armed Helots in service at a time, probably three thousand, than they had full citizens in total, under three thousand. These helot soldiers allowed Sparta to fight the long and distant campaigns they were unwilling to undertake otherwise.

Ironically, the Spartans were unwilling to leave the Peloponnese in force because of their fear of Helot rebellions. By promising freedom to some Helots and having them fight distant campaigns for them, the Spartans selected and co-opted—or at least removed—some of the most martial Helots. The Spartans themselves were also able to stay near home and supervise the rest more closely. The loyalty of helot soldiers is impugned in a couple of our sources, but neither rebellions nor large-scale desertion seems to have occurred during the five decades when they were a pillar of Sparta’s military presence abroad. Sparta may have finally gone too far when it promised freedom to several thousand Helots to help fight against the Theban-led army, which was to liberate Messenia; many of these Helots soldiers deserted to the enemy.

The organization of Helot society with its families, local communities, and traditions made them a greater threat than the chattel slaves of other Greek states. Indeed other cities were advised not to import too many slaves from one

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49Talbert, "Role of the Helots," 26 for numbers of Neodamodeis; Cartledge, Agesilaus, 38, 167-168 for population of Spartans.

50Xenophon Hellenica 3.3.6, 6.1.14, Xenophon, Agesilaus 2.7-8.

51Xenophon, a contemporary with Spartan connections, claims that Sparta enlisted six thousand helots (Xenophon, Hellenica 6.5.28-29, cf. Diodorus 15.65.6), but there were many desertions (Plutarch, Agesilaus 32.7).
place. The factors that made Helots safer to arm than chattel slaves were also no doubt complex. Two deserve mention here. The state, as a representative of the community of full Spartans, was very powerful in comparison to the individual. So, individual Spartans had less power or will to oppose the mobilization of Helots from their estates. Second, the home ties that Helot soldiers possessed could also serve as hostages for their good behavior. So, their rebelliousness and their military service for Sparta were not irreconcilable poles of Helot behavior, but were linked by their special position as subjected but not quite enslaved Greeks.

**Slaves in the Athenian Navy**

Slaves were much more commonly used in the navy than as foot soldiers. Naval warfare required far larger numbers of people than land warfare. Athens never managed to field more than sixteen thousand hoplites at any one time, but its largest naval effort required fifty thousand crew members. So, whereas hoplite service was not even imposed on the poorer half of the citizen population, mobilizing a navy required large numbers of poor citizens, resident aliens, foreign mercenaries, and slaves. The vast majority of these men were rowers: one hundred and seventy, out of a trireme's crew of two hundred, pulled at the oars. The experience, strength, skill, and morale of these rowers were central to a ship's success. Rowing in a trireme required as much skill as, if not more than, fighting as a hoplite: each person manned his own oar and precise coordination between rowers was crucial. Classical sea battles depended on maneuver and ramming rather than on boarding enemy ships or on missiles launched from the decks. The pride of the unmatched Athenian navy was its skill at the maneuvers that set up ramming opportunities: the *periplous* (the

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sailing-around) and the diekplous (the sailing-through-[then]out). In contrast, those navies that depended on the fighting men on their decks could be considered old-fashioned, if not incompetent. So the ship itself with its metal ram was the main weapon of naval warfare and it was the rowers that wielded it. Rowers did not individually possess weapons and thus slave rowers did not present the threat or require the rewards that slave infantry usually did. But rowers more than anybody else were the fighters in naval battles—and were acknowledged as such in contemporary sources.

Although the use of slaves in Greek classical navies was their most important role, evidence for the practice is brief and scattered. For example, out of one thousand prisoners captured from the navy of Corcyra at the battle of

\[\text{\footnotesize Thucydides 1.49.1-3.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize E.g. Aristophanes, Wasps 1097,1118-19, Xenophon \[pseud.\], Constitution of the Athenians 1.2. See Hunt, Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology, 124-126 for further examples and discussion.}\]

Sybota in 433 BC, eight hundred were slaves.\textsuperscript{56} Later, the Athenian general Phormio brought back to Athens the "free men out of the captives from the naval battles" against a mainly Corinthian navy.\textsuperscript{57} Among the half-dozen other pieces of evidence for slave rowers, one stands out: in a large, allied navy under Spartan leadership in 411, the Syracusan and Thurian crews demanded their back pay most vociferously since they "were mostly free men."\textsuperscript{58} This statement implies two things: the Syracusan and Thurian crews contained slaves and, more startling, the crews of the other ships contained more slaves than free sailors.

The Athenian navy, about which most is known, was no exception to the practice of using slaves as rowers. The two official state ships are described as "having only free citizens in their crews," marking them out as an exception.\textsuperscript{59} Our only Athenian crew roster, although fragmentary, records the names and status of a squadron's crew members.\textsuperscript{60} Between twenty and forty percent of the rowers on the different ships are slaves. Rather than being a record of the exceptional use of slaves, as some scholars have argued, this inscription confirms that Athenian ships, like those of every other Greek navy, had a significant proportion of slaves among their rowers. Nevertheless, these Athenian ships

\textsuperscript{56}Thucydides 1.55.1.
\textsuperscript{57}Thucydides 2.103.1.
\textsuperscript{58}Thucydides 8.84.2.
\textsuperscript{59}Thucydides 8.73.5.
\textsuperscript{60}This inscription, originally IG 22 1951, is now IG1\textsuperscript{3} 1032. The most complete discussion is still D. R. Laing Jr., \textit{A New Interpretation of the Athenian Naval Catalogue IG II2 1951}, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), but Graham,"Thucydides 7.13.2" and "Thucydides 7.13.2: addendum," focus on the slaves and include recent bibliography.
were not "slave galleys." The majority of the crew was free, either Athenian citizens or foreigners, mainly from the subject cities of the Athenian empire. The slaves were not chained to their benches nor driven by the whip.

How did a promiscuous group of slaves, citizens, and foreigners end up providing the crews for the Athenian navy? Two patterns emerge: first, a proportion of slaves served regularly in the typically dominant Athenian navy; second, in the desperate circumstances of the Arginusae campaign in the late Peloponnesian War, the Athenians needed to mobilize their slaves en masse for a relief force; to accomplish this they promised them freedom and eventually gave them citizenship, a far more disruptive and controversial practice.

To muster a large navy was an ambitious undertaking for the rather rudimentary classical state, most of whose officials were chosen annually by lot.\textsuperscript{61} The ships were manned by a complex process that was anything but uniform. The officers, archers, and hoplite marines were provided by the state. The captain of a trireme, the trierarch, was chosen not for nautical skill, but for his wealth: he was financially responsible for the ship. The state provided a hull, necessary equipment, and the base salary for the crew, but the incidental expenses and final responsibility for outfitting and manning a ship were the trierarch's. In some cases, trierarchs recruited volunteers and paid extra bonuses to attract skillful rowers. In other cases, the state drafted citizen rowers and assigned them to different ships.\textsuperscript{62} These draftees did not make up the full


\textsuperscript{62}Regular conscription of citizens for naval service is mentioned in the fourth century: Demosthenes [pseud.] 50.6, 50.7, 50.16. The inscription, IG 1\textsuperscript{3} 1127-1131, suggests a regular draft of citizens—as opposed to emergency levies—already in
complement of rowers and one trierarch claimed in court that many of them were of inferior quality, so he was forced to hire good men in their place.\textsuperscript{63}

Hence, the type of people who rowed in triremes was not a matter of state policy. Rather, the use of slaves might be at the discretion of an ambitious trierarch trying to put together a crew to do him credit—there were races at the start of naval expeditions and having the admiral choose to ride on a particular trireme was a great honor. Or a thrifty trierarch might try to minimize his expenses, but still fill the benches. In either case, the officers and marines were usually citizens from the richest third of the citizen body and used to having slaves with them. Our one crew roster indicates that many of the slaves aboard belonged to these citizens. So in manning a trireme, a trierarch would hire as rowers some slaves of the officers he had been assigned. There were also slaves who belonged to other rowers, probably urban artisans or farmers put out of work by the war, both of which classes often owned slaves.\textsuperscript{64}

Finally, there seem to have been some slaves without masters on board their warships. Their supervision may have been informally assigned to a relative or friend of their master—and the whole crew had a stake in a full and competent complement for maximum speed in battle and cruising.

\textsuperscript{63}Demosthenes [pseud.] 50.7.

Nevertheless, such slaves were trusted in situations in which flight was relatively easy, since triremes, built for mobility and little else, pulled ashore every night and often for lunch. Family ties might keep some loyal. Early in the war, fugitive slaves might well be enslaved again, if they appeared, speaking broken or accented Greek, in another city-state's countryside. When the Spartan alliance, with Persian financing, started manning a large navy and needed crew members of whatever provenance, and when desertion to them became easier with the establishment of the Spartan fort at Decelea in Attica, masters were under more pressure to grant their slaves significant incentives or lose their slaves.

As in many urban, commercial slave systems, monetary incentives with the possibility of eventual manumission were a crucial part of the control a master could exert on his slaves. How might such a system work for slave rowers? To begin with, they were paid at the same rate as the free. A fifth-century passage, although difficult to interpret, suggests that, as in many commercial and urban slave societies—compare the jornal system of Latin American slavery—masters allowed their slaves to keep some of their wages and eventually buy their freedom: "In a state relying on naval power it is inevitable that slaves must work for hire so that we may take profits from what they earn, and they must be allowed to go free."66

Although we have no evidence about the way that a Greek slave's wage was split between master and slave, we know or can estimate the usual pay for a rower, the cost of subsistence, the length of the sailing season, and the

66 Xenophon [pseud.], Constitution of the Athenians, 1.11.
replacement cost of an average slave. A reasonable guess—and it is no more than that—might also assume a master interested in profit, but also in a motivated rather than desperate slave. In such a case, a slave rower who brought in no additional cash during the off season might be allowed to keep one sixth of his gross salary. He could then afford his freedom after about seven years. His master would pocket twice as much in profit each year and recoup the slave's price when the slave paid for his freedom.\(^6\)\(^7\)

The closest parallel in Athens to the mixed crews of triremes appears in the work records for the construction of the Erechtheum temple, also during the

\(^6\)\(^7\) These rough calculations for the classical period require several assumptions, which I regard as likely enough but neither certain nor applicable to all cases: A rower's full wage at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War was 6 obols/day. I assume 3 obols/day for the slave's living expenses. Although we have references to 2 obols/day as a subsistence wage, I allocate a bit of extra money for clothes and incidental expenses. So 6 -3 = 3 obols to be divided by master and slave. Our hypothetical master takes 2 obols/day and the slave 1 obol/day. A sailing season of 100 days—assuming the slave is with a large summer navy rather than a smaller year-round squadron—yields the slave 100 obols/year. 750 obols is an average slave price, so a thrifty slave can afford his freedom after 7 1/2 years of rowing. On rowers' wages see the discussion and bibliography in Margaret L. Cook, "Timocrates' 50 talents and the cost of ancient warfare," Eranos 88 (1990): 69-97. On the sailing season see Rosivach, "Manning the Athenian Fleet," 41-44. See Hanson, Other Greeks, 68-69 with 451 fn. 36 for bibliography on slave prices.
late Peloponnesian War. There, we find slaves, foreigners, and citizens in ratios similar to those on our crew list. The three different classes again received equal pay for equal work—something slave masters probably insisted on. Although a few managerial jobs were reserved for citizens, slaves typically followed the trades of their masters.

The only distinction of skill and wages among rowers was that between the men in the highest row of oarsmen, the thranitai, and the men in the other two rows. The thranitai, sitting on outriggers more out than up from the second row, had the most difficult rowing job. Aristophanes singles the thranitai out for praise as the saviors of the state, while, in another play, he has fun at the expense of the lowest row, whom he says are farted upon. Thucydides mentions that trierarchs paid bonuses to attract the best thranitai. If there were any distinction between slaver and free among the rowers on a trireme, it might be that the thranitai tended to be free while slaves were relegated to the lower rows. In the absence of evidence either way, such a hierarchy among the rowers cannot be ruled out. The demands of military efficiency, however, can also be compelling: one can easily imagine sloppy, weak, or ill free thranitai being sent down in favor of fit slaves. In any case, the numbers probably never worked out exactly enough to allow a consistent distinction between slave and free rowers.

This system did not always produce ideal crews. When the Athenians on the Sicilian expedition captured the town of Hyccara, they enslaved the

69Aristophanes, Acharnians 161-162, Frogs 1074.
70Thucydides 6.31.3.
population. Some rowers bought these slaves—slaves were typically cheap at the time of capture—and convinced their trierarchs to take them as substitutes for themselves.\textsuperscript{71} Experienced rowers therefore left the foundering Athenian expedition against Syracuse. The ships were stuck with extremely unmotivated slave rowers without individual masters responsible for them and with no training or experience in naval warfare. Moreover, other slave rowers were deserting.\textsuperscript{72} But the fleet’s disintegration included not only problems with the slaves, but also with the Athenian allies who came on the campaign “expecting to make money rather than to fight” and who were also deserting.\textsuperscript{73} Not only slaves, but anybody who could, was abandoning the Athenians as their prospects in Sicily faded. Up until this point, the mixed crews of slaves, foreigners, and Athenians seem to have functioned perfectly well.

This regular and usually uncontroversial use of slaves in the Athenian navy seems worlds away from the tension and conflict usually associated with arming slaves—often in the teeth of violent opposition from slave owners. Indeed, Athenian practices did not disrupt the system of slavery, but were integrated into pattern of incentives, mainly for skilled urban slaves. The factors that made this system work were several. There was plenty of rowing—or better-paid work—to go around in imperial Athens. Citizens sometimes had to be drafted for the navy and supplemented with foreigners as well as slaves. So, the free poor, whose clout in democratic Athens was considerable, were not typically deprived of jobs by slave rowers. Seasonal naval service allowed slave-

\textsuperscript{71}Thucydides 7.13.2. Note that these replacements were done entirely on the authority of the trierarch against the will of the general in charge.

\textsuperscript{72}Graham, ”Thucydides 7.13.2,” 257-259 on Thucydides 7.13.2.

\textsuperscript{73} Thucydides 7.13.3.
owners keep their slaves more fully employed and the wartime interruption of agriculture meant that farmers, too, were happy to have paying work for their slaves rather than being upset about losing needed labor.

From the slave’s point of view, to be a rower was to earn a wage in a society with no sanctions against manumission. The power of the Athenian navy was also a significant factor. For much of the classical period, and especially in the first seventeen years of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenian navy rarely faced a significant challenge to its supremacy. So rowing in the navy may have seemed a job like any other.

**Arginusae and Its Aftermath**

Near the end of the Peloponnesian War, different circumstances evoked a categorically different pattern of recruitment, bitterly contested and disruptive of Athenian slavery. Athens, having already lost two large navies in Sicily and with much of its empire in revolt, was challenged at sea by a Spartan-led navy subsidized by the Persian king. In 407, the Spartans began to pay a higher salary and thus to outbid the Athenians for foreign rowers, probably the most numerous class of rowers in the Athenian navy. They probably also recruited many of the more than twenty-thousand slaves, who had fled from Athens to Decelea, but no longer had a home to which they could easily return.74 Experienced slave rowers may also have deserted directly from the Athenian to the Peloponnesian fleet, where they would be free men and might hope to keep their entire pay. So, in the spring of 406, the Athenians fleet was able to man only seventy ships instead of the more than one hundred of the year before; the Spartan fleet grew from ninety to one hundred forty and then to one hundred

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seventy.\textsuperscript{75} The Spartans chased and then blockaded the smaller Athenian fleet at Mytilene. A single Athenian trireme managed to run the blockade and get the news to Athens.

At this point, Athens was no longer able to man a fleet by its usual methods, but rather "they voted to go to the rescue with one hundred and ten ships, putting aboard all who were of military age, both slave and free; and within thirty days they manned the one hundred and ten ships and set forth. Even the cavalry class went aboard in considerable numbers."\textsuperscript{76} Despite only having a few weeks of training, this fleet won a major victory over the Peloponnesian fleet at the battle of Arginusae. They destroyed or captured almost two-thirds of the enemy fleet and relieved the blockade of their navy.

To accomplish this feat, the Athenians had to promise freedom to their slave rowers. And, even more startling, they had to grant citizenship to these slaves. To be precise, they made the slaves "Plataeans" by giving them the same citizenship—without the right to certain hereditary priesthhoods—with which they had honored their loyal Plataean allies when the latter's city was destroyed by the Spartans. Otherwise citizenship was ideally a strictly guarded prerogative requiring proof of Athenian descent on both sides. The Athenians, however, had to take these dramatic and unusual measures to overcome two major problems they faced in 406.

First of all, they needed to motivate a larger, different, and less tractable group of slaves to train as rowers and then to fight. When the cavalry class

\textsuperscript{75} Xenophon, \textit{Hellenica} 1.5.4-8, 1.5.10, 1.5.15, 1.5.20, 1.6.3, 1.6.16.

embarked on the ships, along came their numerous slaves. These belonged to larger households and often worked farms for masters who lived in the city. They generally had had less personal contact with their masters. Even more alienated were the slaves who worked in the appalling silver mines in southern Attica. These mines seem finally to have stopped production at this point in the war; the most likely cause was the recruitment *en masse* of their slave workers to provide rowers for the Arginusae fleet. To promise them freedom was the only way to motivate these slaves. Some small portion of a rower's wage—which Athens paid less and less regularly as the war dragged on—would no longer do the trick.

Second, the Athenians needed to keep their crews. Winning the battle could not effect a lasting change in Athens' prospects as long as its rowers were deserting to the enemy for higher pay. The grant of citizenship in democratic Athens probably made staying with the Athenian navy a much more attractive option for the slaves. For slaves to return home would often be impossible after a lengthy absence—one often originally due to poverty or a military or political defeat—and would almost never entail the same rights and security as an Athenian citizen possessed. The granting of freedom and citizenship solved Athens' manpower problems, if not its financial ones, for the rescue campaign and the rest of the war—which ended in 404 BC after a crushing defeat and horrific siege.

Many patriotic Athenians may have seen the necessity—and even the fairness—of rewarding their slave rowers. The reaction of other slave owners, whose valuable property had been converted into fellow citizens, was probably one of outrage. Athens did not have many regular taxes and depended on special war taxes on capital and liturgies, such as the trierarchy, which could be extremely expensive. This wholesale liberation of Athenian slaves was nevertheless an extreme imposition.

In more modern cases, we often have copious evidence of planters' outrage at far less liberal policies than this. In Athens, we are probably right to assume similar attitudes on the part of, for example, men whose fortunes were invested in mine slaves. Unfortunately, our only hard evidence consists of an ambiguous couple of lines in a contemporary comedy, the Frogs by Aristophanes. The parabasis of a comedy, in which the author spoke in his own voice, sometimes contained serious advice. Aristophanes begins the parabasis of the Frogs by saying that it is "shameful" for men who have fought in only one naval battle to be straightaway Plataeans and masters instead of slaves. Thus, he expresses slaveholders' dismay at the liberation and enfranchisement of the Arginusae slaves. Then, however, he retreats and claims that he approves of this policy. His real goal, it turns out, was not to overturn a fait accompli, but rather

78 In Hunt, "Slaves and Generals," I argue that the resentment at the liberation of the Arginusae slaves may have contributed to the unfair trial and execution of the victorious Athenian generals after the battle.


80 Aristophanes, Frogs 692-702.
that the Athenians implicated in the oligarchic coup of 411 have their full citizen rights restored. He points out that they have fought in many naval battles and not just one as many of the freed slaves had. He sums up with the argument that everyone who fights battles in the Athenian navy should be citizens with full rights. Thus, he includes both the Arginusae slaves and the suspected oligarchs in an argument based on a militaristic justification of political status.

There is little evidence that the liberation and enfranchisement of the Arginusae slaves prompted a reevaluation of slavery. Athens was, no doubt, short of slaves, especially male slaves, by the end of the Peloponnesian War. Nevertheless, the economic and political impetus behind the institution of slavery had not changed and in the fourth century Athens recovered and continued to be a slave society—mining activity reached its peak in the fourth century. A distinguished scholar has suggested that Aristophanes' Frogs may mark the introduction of a new and much more active type of slave character into Athenian comedy and that this may best be understood in the context of the rewards bestowed on the Arginusae slaves the previous year.81 All in all, Greek thinking about slaves, although it made the mobilization of slaves awkward, was flexible enough to tolerate granting citizenship to some slaves who had proved themselves worthy men. Greek ethnocentrism was not as systematic as some modern forms of racism, nor were the negative stereotypes of slaves absolute: some slaves could be just normal people who had suffered a terrible fate.82

82 Bernard Williams, Shame and Necessity (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993) 106-118 presents an interesting analysis of this strain of thought, but does not sufficiently acknowledge Greek prejudice against slaves (Hunt, Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology, 160 n. 85).
Thus, the triumph of the Arginusae slaves, was quickly forgotten or explained away.

Perhaps the most significant change in attitude due to the use of slaves—and also mercenaries, often from areas considered half-barbarian—in the military was not a raising of their status, but rather a demotion of the importance of military virtues as the final test of worth. Admittedly this shift was a matter of degree rather than a complete rejection of the congruity of social and military status. But Plato, for example, in the mid-fourth century takes aim at the quotation of Tyrtaeus, discussed above. He points out that many people who are good fighters are, in fact, stupid and brutish and that success in warfare cannot be the criterion for the judgment of individuals or of states.

At first glance, the enfranchisement of the Arginusae slaves may seem one of the greatest benefits that the war brought to chattel slaves. A garbled version of the battle is found in one of the scholia to Aristophanes: "The slaves went out and defeated the Lacedaimonians near Arginusae and recovered the bodies of the slain. As a result they were freed and nobody was allowed to hit slaves." It is hard to imagine an actual law that masters were not allowed to hit their own slaves, but already in the early Peloponnesian War, the mere threat of flight is supposed to have had a similar effect: the Clouds begins with Strepsiaes

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83 See Burckhardt, Bürger und Soldaten.

84 See Hunt, Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology, 194-202 on Plato, Laws 629a-630b and Aristotle, Politics 1255a13-16

complaining that due to the war, he can no longer beat his slaves—and thus they are sleeping late.\textsuperscript{86}

The course of events, however, did not long favor the slaves of Arginusae. The navy stayed in commission and so few of the slaves are likely to have had a chance to be enrolled officially as citizens. In the next year, the Athenian navy was almost completely destroyed by a surprise attack while beached with its crews dispersed. Only nine out of one hundred and eighty ships escaped. The Athenian citizen captives, to the number of two thousand, were massacred. Presumably, many of the Arginusae slaves did not choose to assert their citizenship at this particular juncture, although the alternative was likely re enslavement.

Indeed, there are only a few traces in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War of slaves who had been freed for military service, although the numbers of slaves used on both sides must have surpassed ten thousand.\textsuperscript{87} When the Spartan-backed oligarchy of the "Thirty" was ousted in 403, a proposal was passed to grant citizenship to the non-Athenians who had helped restored the democracy. The motion was blocked by a jury-court decision on the grounds that it was an unconstitutional proposal due to a procedural irregularity. Contributing to this reversal was the consideration that many of those to be


\textsuperscript{87}See above page XX for the minimum number of ten thousand slaves. A list of slaves from Chios, probably freed for Peloponnesian military service, has been found (L. Robert, "Sur des inscriptions de Chios," \textit{Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique} 59 (1935): 453-470. Sparta too freed Helots for naval service.
enfranchised were "manifestly slaves."\textsuperscript{88} We also possess an odd speech against a certain Pাঁcleon, who returned to Athens after a lengthy absence in the 390s.\textsuperscript{89} Pাঁcleon claimed to be a Plataean—which could mean an exile from Plataea or a slave of Plataean status like those of Arginusae—but two people claimed him as their slave. Although we have no record of the case's outcome, Pাঁcleon may have depended too much on an emergency decree from a lost war, underestimated his owner's memories and power, and possessed no proof that he had been a beneficiary of Athens' brief generosity.

Two former slaves turned up in the Ten Thousand, the army of Greek mercenaries that fought for Cyrus in his abortive attempt to seize the throne of Persia in 401 and then had to fight their way out of the center of the Persian empire. Xenophon, an Athenian mercenary who recounts the expedition, mentions a certain Apollonides, an officer of Lydian origins, whose Greek was the dialect spoken in Thebes.\textsuperscript{90} The likeliest explanation of this description is that Apollonides was a Theban slave, imported from Lydia, a common source of slaves, who had won his freedom or escaped during the war. Without a home to return to, but apparently with enough military experience to be an officer, he had joined the mercenaries raised by Cyrus.

At another point, the Ten Thousand were on the verge of attacking a people called the Macronians, who were defending a stream crossing in difficult terrain.\textsuperscript{91} An unnamed ex-slave from Athens, a member of the light-armed

\textsuperscript{88}Aristotle, \textit{Ath. Pol.} 40.2. See also Phillip Harding, "Metics, foreigners or slaves? The recipients of honours in IG II\textsuperscript{2} 10," \textit{Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik} 67 (1987): 176-182.
\textsuperscript{89}Lysias, \textit{Against Pাঁcleon} (23). See also Lysias, \textit{Against Simon} (3) 5 and 33.
\textsuperscript{90}Xenophon, \textit{Anabasis} 3.1.26, 3.1.31.
\textsuperscript{91}Xenophon, \textit{Anabasis} 4.8.4.
infantry, stepped forward. He had realized that this was his original homeland and the Macronians were his people. He arranged a truce and safe-conduct for the army. Xenophon did not record his fate, whether he continued on with the mercenaries or decided to stay with the Macronians. The chain of events that led a slave from Athens to be a soldier with the Ten Thousand might have involved the rewards to the Arginuae rowers or the desertion to Decelea or the arming of baggage carriers during the march of the Ten Thousand. As a slave soldier, at whose no doubt fascinating story we can only guess, he provides a fitting end for our account of the classical period.

**Conclusion**

The arming of slaves in classical Greece took many forms. Slaves served as armed police and unarmed hoplite attendants. They were armed as foot soldiers in crises, especially during sieges, but occasionally even as hoplites. The discontent of Sparta’s Helots was taken advantage of by its enemies; at the same time, Helot soldiers were crucial in its land forces, fighting regularly as hoplites and allowing Sparta to undertake lengthy and distant campaigns. Slaves rowed in Greek navies, both as a regular practice and in mass levies in emergencies. Although the participation of slaves in the military went against a strong strain of Greek thought that stressed a link between military service and political right, in extremis, Greek states did not hesitate to enlist their slaves. Such practices, so contrary to Greek citizen militarism, tended to be neglected in our sources.

The Macedonians’ defeat of Athens and its allies at the battle of Chaeronia in 338 BC, brought to an end the Classical period. The old Greek city-states entered a period of domination by large kingdoms and their professional or mercenary armies. The Hellenistic kingdoms resulting from the conquests of Alexander the Great were not essentially slave societies. Their Greek-speaking elite still owned slaves, but the rural economy was dominated by a dependent
peasantry. Patterns and consequences of arming slaves changed as a result.\textsuperscript{92} The Roman Republic and Empire, which eventually subjugated the Hellenistic Kingdoms and united the Mediterranean, has its own long and complex history of arming slaves spanning more than seven centuries.\textsuperscript{93} Roman slaves managed to stage massive slave revolts.\textsuperscript{94} They were nevertheless occasionally freed for emergency infantry service, used regularly in the navy, and involved in civil wars. Although some continuities are obvious, differences in the scale of the Roman empire, the distribution of slave ownership, military forces, and ideology about slavery and citizenship meant that the conditions and consequences of arming slaves were quite distinct from those in the small, independent city-states of classical Greece.

