



The Use of Slaves by the Athenians in Warfare

Author(s): Rachel L. Sargent

Source: *Classical Philology*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Jul., 1927), pp. 264-279

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/262754>

Accessed: 06/09/2010 13:05

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=ucpress>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The University of Chicago Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Classical Philology*.

THE USE OF SLAVES BY THE ATHENIANS IN WARFARE

BY RACHEL L. SARGENT

II. IN WARFARE BY SEA

Literature has preserved only a few statements, some of them at first sight partly contradictory, which can be adduced as proof that the Athenians either did or did not employ slaves on their fleet. Inscriptions,¹ too, although in recent years they have shed much light on such phases of the navy as the dockyards, sheds, cost of outfitting a trireme, etc., are a disappointment in this present problem. So far they seem to have yielded only a few fragments of a single record which give partial information as to the personnel of certain unspecified crews. Yet when all of the evidence is arranged chronologically, with particular consideration of the context, the development of the navy in each period, and the various types of ships included in any expedition of magnitude, there will be found too few inconsistencies to warrant the difference of opinion which at present prevails.

The first significant fact which appears from a general survey of the evidence is that rowing was by no means considered one of the most menial of tasks, as is commonly asserted, for which only slaves and the riffraff of all Hellas were used.² On the contrary, this was recognized as an honorable profession,³ suited to a freeman who wished to earn money, and it was assumed that men in all walks of life had

¹ See Keil, *Anony. Argentin.* (Strassburg, 1902), pp. 199-224.

² Thus Freese (translation of Isoc. *Areopagiticus* 54), p. 213, n. 2; Porzio, "Gli Schiavi nelle Milizie," *Riv. di Filol.*, XXVI (1898), 573; and Croiset, "Affranchissements des Esclaves pour Faits de Guerre," *Mélanges Henri Weil* (1898), p. 69: "Les équipages des flottes de guerres étaient autrement composés [i.e., from those of the land army]: on y trouvait des étrangers et des esclaves, *toute la lie de la population* [italics are mine]; il y fallait une chiourme pour le dur travail de la rame."

³ Thucyd. i. 142 and 143; Xen. *Hellen.* vii. 1. 4 (about 364 B.C.): "Again, you [Athenians] are far superior to other men in experience of nautical affairs, for most of you get your livelihood from the sea; hence, while attending to your own private concerns, you are also at the same time gaining experience for encounters by sea!" (Brownson's trans.).

some practical knowledge of it.¹ Indeed, it was considered by some to an Athenian's discredit if he had never blistered his hands rowing for the state. One person in Aristophanes' *Wasps* remarks in disparagement of another (1118-19): "One who for his native land never to this day had oar or lance, or blister on his hand."² It will be observed that here handling the oar is put on a level with wielding the lance.

From the earliest beginnings of her navy³ when she had to borrow twenty ships from the Corinthians (Herodot. vi. 89) to make any kind of a showing against Aegina, Athens, to propel her ships, appears to have enrolled and paid freemen under the direction of the wealthy men serving in regular turn as trierarchs.⁴ It was the freemen of Athens, it will be recalled, who started the state on her career as the leading naval power by serving in the battle of Salamis in the new (Thucyd. i. 14) style of warships.⁵ The Areopagus, at that time, so Aristotle states, in order to put an end to the hesitating policies of the generals who were ordering each man to save himself, paid eight drachmas apiece to each man who would embark and thus made possible the battle.⁶ In the next period under the successful régime of Aristides and Themistocles, on the further testimony of Aristotle,⁷ a

¹ Herodot. vii. 161; Thucyd. iii. 18 (hoplites handling the oar); [Xen.] *Const. Ath. i. 19*: "Furthermore, owing to the possession of property beyond the limits of Attica, and the exercise of magistracies which take them into regions beyond the frontier, they and their attendants have insensibly acquired the art of navigation. A man who is perpetually voyaging is forced to handle the oar, he and his domestic alike, and to learn the terms familiar in seamanship. Hence a stock of skilful mariners is produced, bred upon a wide experience of voyaging and practice. They have learnt their business, some in piloting a small craft, others a merchant vessel, whilst others have been drafted off from those for service on a ship of war. So that the majority of them are able to row the moment they set foot on board a vessel, having been in a state of preliminary practice all their lives" (Dakyns' trans.).

² Rogers' translation.

³ Herod. v. 97; vi. 89; vii. 144; viii. 17; Thucyd. i. 14. Cf. also Keil, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-24.

⁴ For details of the system see Brillant, "Trierarchia," *Daremberg-Saglio, Dict., etc.*, V, 442-65.

⁵ Aristot. *Polit. v. 4. 8* (1304a): "On the other hand, the victory of Salamis, which was gained by the common people who served in the fleet, and won for the Athenians the empire of the sea, strengthened the democracy" (Jowett's trans.).

⁶ *Ath. Pol. 23.*

⁷ *Ibid. 24*: "Further when they subsequently went to war, there were in addition 2500 heavy armed troops, twenty guard ships, and other ships which collected tributes with crews amounting to 2000 men, selected by lot . . . [25]. Such was the way in which these people earned their livelihood" (Kenyon's trans.).

considerable part of the *δημος* was supported by the state through employment on guard and revenue ships.

Forty or fifty years later Thucydides¹ reports that Pericles, when discussing a possible naval emergency, planned on enrolling all the citizens and the metics if necessary. There is no mention of slaves, even as a remote possibility for the crews. In those prosperous days just before the Peloponnesian War it would naturally be almost inconceivable that Athens would ever have to stoop to the enrolment policy of 406 B.C.² in preparation for an Arginusae (Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6. 24). In 428 B.C. in an actual emergency, when beginning to feel the full effects (Thucyd. iii. 3) of the war and the plague, the Athenians launched one hundred ships, according to Thucydides,³ manned with citizens—except the knights and the highest class—and with metics.⁴ There is no mention of slaves. Just after the disaster in Sicily when Athens “in all haste and making use of unpractised crews”⁵ had contrived to man thirty-six ships to cope with the Euboean situation (*ibid.* viii. 95) there is no mention that there was recourse to slaves for oarsmen. In the further account of the subsequent capture of twenty-two of these ships by Peloponnesians, an event which, it is said, caused greater consternation at Athens than any other previous loss in the war (viii. 96), Thucydides remarks that the crews were either slain or taken as prisoners, without referring to the disposal of any slaves, although he was careful to mention such a detail in two other cases—once when the eight hundred slaves captured on board Corcyra’s ships were freed (i. 55), and again when the slaves were freed on Chios’ seven ships (vii. 15. 2). Aristophanes terms sailors (or at least one section of them, i.e., *θραυίτης*) the “safeguard of the state” (*Acharn.* 162)—words hardly applicable to any but free persons. At another

¹ i. 143: “. . . That indeed might be a dangerous matter if we were not a match for them [i.e., Peloponnesians], assuming that both citizens and our resident aliens had manned our ships” (Smith’s trans.).

² See below, p. 278; all of the adults of even the wealthiest classes and all of the adult slaves were enlisted.

³ iii. 16.

⁴ Metics appear to have been employed in considerable numbers on the fleet, at least in the fifth century. Cf. [Xen.] *Const. Ath.* 1. 12: *διότι δέεται ἡ πόλις μετοίκων διὰ τε τὸ πλῆθος τῶν τεχνῶν καὶ διὰ τὸ ναυτικόν*. See Kalinka’s discussion of this section (p. 131 [ed. 1913]), wherein it is pointed out that the slaves alluded to in the passage just preceding are not to be included here with the metics. This interpretation is now generally accepted. But cf. Bauer as cited below, p. 271, n. 1.

⁵ Thucyd. viii. 95. 1 (Smith’s trans.).

time he also asserts that the poor are always ready to vote for the launching of ships and that the wealthy are against it.¹ This would be natural if the launching meant wages for the former class but chiefly increased expense and trouble for the latter. If it had been customary to enrol slaves regularly as oarsmen, it seems strange that Athens would still further have crippled herself financially by offering freedom to those slaves who had participated in the naval combat at Arginusae.²

About the middle of the fourth century Xenophon, it is true, among other novel suggestions, remarks that the ten thousand slaves whom he is advising the state as a new venture to purchase for work in the silver mines could, if trained, be used to advantage in the navy and the infantry.³ But there is no reason to think that this random suggestion bore any more fruit than his other visionary schemes,⁴ for example, that of developing a populous real estate subdivision in the barren district adjacent to the mines (*Vectigal.* iv. 50) wherein house lots would sell for as much as those in the suburbs of Athens. Demosthenes⁵ reminds his audiences of the tumultuous discussions of the assembly whenever the question was before them of launching ships to be manned with citizens or metics or freedmen,⁶ with no mention of slaves.

Finally, for the last half of the fourth century Aristotle incidentally but conclusively shows that in his time a considerable number of poorer citizens were filling the Athenian triremes, when by way of illustration he says: “. . . Of the common people, one class are husband-

¹ *Ecclesiaz.* 199.

² See below, p. 278.

³ *Vectigal.* iv. 42.

⁴ However, cf. the use of this evidence by Boeckh, *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener* (3d ed., Fränkel), I, 330.

⁵ iii (*Olynth.* 3). 4; iv (*in Philip.* i). 36.

⁶ iv. 36: καὶ μετὰ ταῦτ' ἐμβαίνειν τοὺς μετοίκους ἔδοξε καὶ τοὺς χωρὶς οἰκούντας, εἴτα αὐτοὺς πάλιν, εἴτ' ἀντρεμβιβάσκειν. There has been for years discussion about the class of persons referred to by Demosthenes as τοὺς χωρὶς οἰκούντας (see Schaefer, *Apparat. Crit. et Ezeget. ad Demosth.*, I [1824], 366). For the most complete discussion see Büchschütz (*N. Jahrb. f. Philol. u. Pädagog.*, XCV [1867], 20-21), who maintains these were freedmen not much different in status from metics, who lived apart from their masters' houses, unlike another class of freedmen, who, according to Delphian inscriptions, still lived at the house under certain obligations. Szanto (Pauly-Wissowa, III, 2438) accepts this interpretation. Busolt, *Griechische Staatskunde* (in Müller, *Handbuch*, etc. [3d ed., 1920]), now agrees with this view (p. 274, n. 3). Lipsius (*Attisches Recht* [Leipzig, 1915], p. 798) also accepts Büchschütz' statement as being essentially correct. But Kolbe (*De Atheniensium re navali quaestiones selectae* [Tübingen, 1899]), rejecting Büchschütz' interpretation, without adducing any evidence to the contrary, prefers to maintain (p. 45, n. 249) that these were slaves and that such slaves participated in the Sicilian expedition as rowers (Thucyd. vii. 13. 2).

men, another artisans . . . another are the sea-faring class, whether engaged in trade, as ferrymen or fishermen. (In many places any one of these classes forms quite a large population; for example, fishermen at Tarentum and Byzantium, *crews of triremes at Athens*) (τρηρικὸν δὲ Ἀθήνησιν). . . ."¹ This is confirmed in general for the period by Isocrates (viii. 48):² ". . . whereas, at the present day, we employ foreigners as hoplites and compel citizens to act as oarsmen."³

The state, then, seems at all times from the fifth century on⁴ to have kept to the policy of paying freemen,⁵ that is, citizens, metics, and non-resident foreigners, to serve in the navy as oarsmen to whom of course the commanding officer could, if he desired, give additional bounties.⁶ The Athenians appear always to have taken great pride in the high standard of performance required of their crew.⁷ Little is known, however, about the method of recruiting, and in fact this department of the state, even by the time of Demosthenes, seems to have been poorly organized, without much regular or orderly procedure, for he complains: "whereas in the business of war and its preparations all is irregular, unsettled, indefinite."⁸ But it is supposed that ordinarily, when a trierarch was about to enter on his duties, he would have the prospective crew meet at a certain recruiting place. There they would assemble, bringing their own cups, strings of onions, garlic, etc. (Aristoph. *Knights* 595-600), some of them, at least in the fourth century, at times when naval service was compulsory,⁹

¹ *Polit.* iv. 4. 1 (1291b) (Jowett's trans.).

² For a discussion of this as evidence see below p. 276, n. 4.

³ Freese's translation.

⁴ That even before the battle of Salamis the state regularly paid the sailors is implied by Herodotus (viii. 17), who specially cites the grandfather of Alcibiades as being exceptionally patriotic at Artemisium because with his own money he had provided a ship and paid a crew of two hundred men to man it under his supervision.

⁵ Thucyd. i. 121, 143; iii. 17; viii. 45; Demosth. xxi (*in Mid.*). 154: ". . . Then the state finds the crews and provides tackle . . ." (Kennedy's trans.).

⁶ Thucyd. vi. 31. 3; Isoc. xviii (*adv. Callimach.*). 60; (Demosth.) l (*adv. Polycl.*). 7; li (*de Conon. Trierarch.*). 6.

⁷ Thucyd. i. 121, 143: ". . . Our crews in general are more numerous and better than those of all the rest of Hellas" (Smith's trans.). Cf. also vii. 13. 2; 14. 1; Lysias xxi (*Accept. Mun. Defens.*). 6-8; and n. 26 below.

⁸ iv. (*in Philip.* i). 36 (Freese's trans.).

⁹ See Busolt-Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde* (in Müller, *Handbuch, etc.* [3d ed., 1926], IV, I², 1207).

so incompetent that on sight they were dismissed¹ in disgust by the trierarch.²

Oarsmen on the triremes, then, were not "slavish" in any respect, nor were they called such by the contemporary authors. If there were slaves among this *ναυτικός ὄχλος*, the group, who, as Aristotle³ says, from the days of Salamis by their service made democracy stronger, obviously they were present in such small numbers as not in any sense to have been characteristic.

As for the rest of the crew,⁴ that is, the officers, designated collectively as *ὑπηρεσία*, the marines, known as *ἐπιβάται*, and sometimes even archers, *τοξόται*, extended discussion is unnecessary for there is clear evidence and general agreement that these were freemen and for the most part Athenian citizens.⁵ Moreover, the small size and general simplicity of structure of the ships,⁶ the fact that there were no protracted voyages over the open sea, but that, on the contrary, the boats were drawn up on land each night if possible where each individual superintended the cooking of his own food, made any general

¹ Demosth. I (*adv. Polycl.*), 7.

² Of course, when a trierarch was given such power certain irregularities could occur. For example, Nicias (Thucyd. vii. 13) complains to the people of Athens that over in Sicily certain trierarchs were impairing the morale of the navy by allowing sailors who wished to be free to engage in trading (vi. 31. 5) to substitute lately captured (Thucyd. vi. 62) Hyccarian slaves in their own positions at the oars. Then, too, pilots were regularly Athenian citizens (*ibid.* i. 143: *κυβερνήτας ἔχομεν πολίτας*) but one could infer that metics were occasionally so used from Demosth. xxi (*in Mid.*), 163: ". . . He did not go on board the ship which he had given, but sent out the *resident alien Pamphilus*, the Egyptian, while he himself stayed at home" (Kennedy's trans.). I should not suppose, however, that these irregularities in naval procedure should be cited as proof, as is sometimes the case, of any systematic policy.

³ *Polit.* iii. 5 (1304a).

⁴ *IG*, II, 959 (referred to more fully below, p. 278, n. 1); Thucyd. i. 143; [*Xen.*] *Const. Ath.* i. 2; *Lys.* xxi (*Accept. Muner. Defens.*), 10.

⁵ See Kolbe, *op. cit.*, pp. 40 ff. (reprinted in *Philol.*, LVII [1899], 503-52); and esp. see Busolt (*op. cit.*, pp. 572 f.).

⁶ For the most recent discussion of this, where unfortunately the evidence is not cited, see Köster, *Das Antike Seewesen* (Berlin, 1923; 254 pp.), esp. pp. 136 ff.: ". . . Infolge ihrer leichten Bauart, ihrer beträchtlichen Länge, des geringen Freibords—die Rojeport der Thalamiten lagen nur 50 m. über dem Wasserspiegel,—wenig geeignet, die hohe See zu halten oder gar auf offener See einen Sturm abzuwettern, waren sie, weil ihnen das Deck fehlte, im Prinzip noch offene Boote, also ausschliesslich für gutes Wetter berechnet. . . . War schlechtes Wetter in Sicht, so landete man; weit vom Ufer pflegte man sich ohne zwingenden Grund nicht zu entfernen," etc.; and p. 128: "Zum bereiten der Mahlzeiten ging man am Land, wie man auch zum aufschlagen des Nachlagers stets landete. An Bord konnte des beschränkten Raumes wegen nicht gekocht werden. Blieb man längere Zeit in See, so musste man sich mit kalter und trockener Kost begnügen."

staff of slaves for menial duties unnecessary.¹ As it has been estimated that only a small proportion of the oarsmen were needed at any one time to propel the ship at an even speed,² the miscellaneous duties about the vessel could be well attended to by the oarsmen not on duty in the working shift.

So much for the negative evidence as to the use of slaves in the navy! What little positive evidence exists has proved so intricate that widely divergent views have been expressed upon it.

It was formerly the fashion, following Boeckh, when Athens was supposed to have been faced with an acute housing problem due to the traditional 365,000–400,000 slaves (commonly thought to have been owned in 322 B.C.) to relegate many of them regularly to the navy as well as to other branches of warfare.³ Others, notably Niese,⁴

¹ Even on a short voyage such as that to Eretria, it is seen that the Athenians did not take their food with them but each man had to assemble his own from the surrounding districts. This appears to have been the regular custom, for the enemy planned their whole attack in advance with this in mind (Thucyd. viii. 95. 4): "When, therefore, he began his advance, the Athenians on their part began at once to man their ships, supposing that their crews were beside their vessels. But they chanced to be providing themselves with food for their breakfast, not in the market-place—for by design on the part of the Eretrians nothing was being offered for sale there—but from the houses in the furthest parts of the town" (Smith's trans.).

This certainly does not sound as though there was a group of slaves supposed to attend to the culinary department. Other passages corroborate the same fact that each soldier personally looked out for himself; viii. 100, 2; 101. 2; Xen. *Hellen.* II. 1. 25.

² See Bauer, *Die Griechischen Kriegsaltertümer* (in Müller, *Handbuch, etc.*, IV, 1, 2 [2d ed., 1891], 375).

³ Boeckh (*op. cit.*, I, 329): "... so kann es nicht befremden, wenn ein grosser Theil der Ruderer Sklaven waren . . ." (evidence cited by Boeckh: Thucyd. viii. 73; Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6. 24; Xen. *Vectigal.* iv. 42; [Xen.] *Const. Ath.* i. 11. For my discussion of this evidence see pp. 277, 278, 267; and p. 272, n. 3, respectively).

Wallon (*Histoire de l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité* [2d ed., 1879], I, 196): "Sur les flottes leur présence n'avait rien que d'ordinaire" (evidence cited: Thucyd. vii. 13; viii. 15; [Xen.] *Const. Ath.* i. 19; Isoc. viii. 48. For discussion of this evidence see p. 229, n. 2 and p. 276, n. 1; p. 278; p. 274, n. 3; p. 276, n. 4, respectively).

Richter (*Die Sklaverei im Griechischen Altertume* [Breslau, 1886], pp. 98–99) includes permanent sailors among the 50,000 slaves remaining unaccounted for when all of Attica has been crowded to capacity with his classified list of 350,000 of the 400,000 slaves which he has assigned to Athens (no evidence cited).

Fickelscherer (*Das Kriegswesen der Alten* [Leipzig, 1888], p. 118): "Ärmere Bürger dienten neben Sklaven und angeworbenen Fremden als Ruderer auf der Flotte" (no evidence cited).

Schömann-Lipsius (*Griechische Altertümer* [4th ed., 1896], p. 368): "Häufig wurden die Sklaven auch zum Kriegsdienste genommen, namentlich auf der Flotte. Meist dienten sie als Ruderer und Matrosen, oft aber auch als Seesoldaten" (no evidence cited except Boeckh, I [1st ed.], 365).

Delbrück (*Geschichte der Kriegskunst* [Berlin, 1900], p. 110): For full citation see below, p. 273, n. 5).

⁴ "Über Wehrverfassung, Dienstpflicht u. Heerwesen Griechenlands," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXVIII (1907), 503: "... Demgemäss hören wir nirgendwo von Sklaven unter der Flottenmannschaft. . . . Nur einmal haben die Athener von ihrem Prinzip eine Ausnahme gemacht" (evidence cited: Thucyd. i. 55; viii. 15. 2, 40. 2; vii. 13. 2; Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6. 24. For my discussion of this evidence see p. 277 and n. 3; p. 276, n. 1; p. 277 and n. 1, respectively).

going to the opposite extreme, argue that no slaves under any conditions were taken on to ships except in one solitary emergency (i.e., at Arginusae). A third group now maintain that slaves in moderate numbers were used as members of the crew on occasion.¹ The most recent handbook² is more specific not as to numbers but as to years. Beginning with 415 B.C. and continuing until the middle of the fourth century, Athens, it is asserted, being financially exhausted and crews being depleted, used slaves repeatedly to help man her fleet, but later did not so use them.³

But why should Athens just at the period when her slave population was the smallest,⁴ when her fleet numbered the fewest ships since the days before Salamis,⁵ and when general business conditions were such that there were many unemployed citizens and metics eager to earn the three obols or at times the drachma a day by rowing for the state,⁶ adopt the policy of using slaves repeatedly as oarsmen, later to

¹ Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 382: "Zum Ruderdienst zog man Bürger, Metöken, Sklaven, und gemietetes Volk heran" (evidence cited for presence of slaves): [Xen.] *Const. Ath.* i. 12 [but see above, p. 266, n. 4]; Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6. 24; Diodor. xi. 43 [for discussion of these see below, p. 277, nn. 1 and 5].

E. Meyer ("Wehrkraft, Bevölkerungszahl, und Bodenkultur Attikas" [in *Forschungen zur Alten Geschichte* (Halle, 1899), pp. 148-95], pp. 168-69): "Daneben verwandte man Sklaven [*pol. Ath.* i. 19, bestätigt durch Thukydides' Angabe über die Paralos]. Doch haben diese, anders als auf der korkyraeischen Flotte, wo ein grosser Theil der Ruderer aus Sklaven bestand [Thuk. i. 55], nur einen geringen Bruchtheil der attischen Flottenmannschaft gebildet." But see above, p. 274, n. 2, for discussion of [Xen.] *Const. Ath.* i. 19; and below, p. 275, n. 3, for "Paralus" data; and below, p. 277, n. 3, for discussion of Thucyd. i. 55. Cf. also Croiset, *loc. cit.*

² Busolt, *op. cit.*, p. 183, n. 5: "Erst zur sikilischen Expedition und nach derselben, als ein grosser Teil des *ἄλλος ναυτικός* zugrunde gegangen und der Staat finanziell erschöpft war, zogen die Athener in grösserer oder geringerer Menge auch Sklaven zu Ruderdiensten heran." This statement is further elaborated in a later volume (Busolt-Swoboda, *op. cit.*, p. 1206): "... Um die Mitte des 4Jh. war jedoch trotz der üblen Lage des Staates die Verwendung von Sklaven auf der Flotte nicht mehr gebräuchlich [Isokr. 8, 48]." With patience one can discover that these statements as originally made by Busolt in his *op. cit.*, III² (1895), 864, n. 7, were further supported by three well-known pieces of evidence: Thucyd. vii. 13 (attendant slaves deserting ships; but see above, p. 269, n. 2, and below, p. 276, n. 1); *ibid.* viii. 73 (none but free citizens on board the "Paralus"; but see below, p. 275, n. 3); Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6. 24 (slaves fought at Arginusae; see below, p. 277, n. 1).

³ This statement is obviously based upon the acceptance of Isocrates' remark (viii. 48) as literal truth; but see below, p. 276, n. 4.

⁴ See Sargent, *Size of the Slave Population at Athens in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries before Christ* (Urbana, 1924), p. 127.

⁵ For evidence as to numbers of triremes at various periods see Busolt-Swoboda, *op. cit.*, pp. 1197-98.

⁶ Thucyd. vi. 24; Xen. *Anab.* ii. 2. 36; Sargent, *op. cit.*, pp. 91 and 107 f. For evidence as to pay of oarsmen see Thucyd. iii. 17; vi. 31; viii. 45. 29; Xen. *Hellen.* i. 5. 34.

discard it? Slaves were labor involving expense. It would cost money to hire or to buy them in addition to maintaining them. The state¹ owned no body of slaves who could be assigned the trierarchs for this purpose, as was the case with the road commissioners (Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 54), and there is no evidence except for one emergency (Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6. 24) that masters were asked to contribute slaves to the state. The plan seems entirely incredible for the period specified and to have arisen from a forced interpretation of the evidence.

There are, moreover, many practical difficulties in the way of picturing a mixed crew of both slave and free for any period of years. The general plan of recruiting and of paying slaves would be hard to explain satisfactorily. Free persons who were poor enough to have to enlist in the navy for the hard work of rowing, of course, owned no slaves who could, while at sea, occupy benches beside them, and on land carry the oar-loops and cushions for them.² Were rich men supposed to contribute slaves, or did a small percentage of the crew consist of slaves hired by the state from masters on the same terms as freemen were hired,³ and likewise to be put in charge of a trierarch to be treated necessarily under the same discipline as the freemen? Or was one whole section of rowers reserved for slaves?⁴ There is no intimation of any such procedures among the Athenians. Surely a group composed exclusively of slaves working in the silver mines⁵ under a free overseer, or even a group composed both of freemen and slaves

¹ Sargent, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-21. But cf. Wilamowitz, *Philol. Untersuch.* (Kiessling and Wilamowitz, *Aus Kydathen*, Vol. I [1880]), p. 25: "Die bürgerschaft stellte hier deckofficiere, seesoldaten, matrosen, die ruderer nicht durchaus, denn von diesen brauchte man im frieden mindestens 12,000, also wurden staatsclaven dafür gekauft oder ausländer erworben" (no evidence offered for this statement). For the most recent discussion of state-owned slaves with the evidence from inscriptions fully cited see G. Jacob, "Les Esclaves Publics à Athènes," *Le Musee Belge*, XXX (1926), 57-106.

² Thucyd. ii. 93. 2.

³ See Sargent, *op. cit.*, p. 95. [Xen.] *Const. Ath.* i. 11 need present no difficulties on this point: *ἄπου γὰρ ναυτικῆ δύνάμει ἐστίν, ἀπὸ χρημάτων ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἀνδραπόδοις δουλεῖν ἵνα λαμβάνων μὲν πρᾶττη τὰς ἀποφορὰς, καὶ ἐλευθέρους ἀφιέναι.* The freedom and wages of the slaves are to be explained from their employment about the harbor as workmen, draymen, messengers, etc., especially needed as Athens was situated at some distance from the sea. There is no necessity for inferring that the reference is to pay earned on naval expeditions. By a city of commercial importance, like Athens in the fifth century, slaves would normally be hired in large numbers for such duties, as Kalinka suggests ([1913 ed.], p. 131).

⁴ For arrangement of oarsmen in three sections see Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 372 ff.

⁵ See Sargent, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

hired to work at a fixed place under a free overseer to repair a temple,¹ does not constitute a very close parallel to a crew of about one hundred and seventy oarsmen² composed of a majority of freemen, among whom are sitting day by day a small proportion of slaves whose masters back home are to receive their wages.³ In the former cases the master could make regular trips to the mines or temple to collect wages,⁴ inspect the general treatment of his slave, and the overseer could easily house and feed the slaves separately from the free, and most important of all, guard against chances of desertion. The hazards of war, ease of desertion when bivouacking, necessity of having to maintain slaves, the small minority, in about the same style as the free majority, would perhaps all have operated to cause trierarchs to prefer as more economical to hire free labor—a fact which the general evidence would seem to substantiate. Such practical difficulties as these would seem to require a little more attention than they generally receive in discussions of this phase of military antiquities.⁵

While it is difficult to believe that Athens enrolled slaves from the time of the Sicilian expedition down to the middle of the fourth century, and at this time only, there is considerable basis for assuming, however, that there were some slaves on board certain types of warships at all times. For, as has been mentioned before, besides the men hired to do the rowing, there were enrolled to do the actual fighting, in larger or smaller numbers according to the purpose of the expedition, marines, similar in social position and in armor to the hoplites of

¹ *IG*, I, 324; II², 834b, c; IV², 834b.

² Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 372; Herodot. viii. 17; Thucyd. vi. 8; Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 24.

³ But cf. Kolbe, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁴ Andocides i (*de Myster.*) 38; see also Sargent, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁵ Bauer (*op. cit.*), after a detailed discussion of the duties, numbers, and arrangement of the oarsmen, settles the question with merely (p. 382): "Zum Ruderdienst zog man Bürger, Metöken, Sklaven und gemietetes Volk heran." Delbrück (*op. cit.*) states vaguely (p. 110): "Wenn daher in Athen ausgehoben werden sollte für einen Feldzug, so werden wir annehmen dürfen, meldeten sich für den Flottendienst stets genügend Freiwillige, Athener oder Fremde, oder es wurden Sklaven genommen." Köster (*op. cit.*) ventures no statement at all as to the personnel of the crew, whether slave or free. For remarks of Busolt-Swoboda (*op. cit.*) see above, p. 271, n. 2. E. Meyer (*op. cit.*), although assuming the regular use of slaves in the navy on scant evidence (see above, p. 271, n. 1), offers the valuable observation (p. 169): "In der Regel wurden wohl nur die Sklaven der Ephibaten und Schiffsofficiere, welche ihre Herren auf die See begleiteten, als Ruderkneche verwandt; andere Sklaven ihren Herren und ihrer regelmässigen Beschäftigung zu entziehen, hatte Athen weder Anlass noch Recht."

the land forces. These as well as the trierarchs could afford to own slaves and, what is more needed, their services, if bivouacking at night on land, or if making a raid along the coast. They could help carry the armor, extra oars, poles, and cushions, help prepare their master's food, etc. The trierarch, especially, might of course take a small staff of his own slaves along to assist with the details of his office. For even when voyaging on personal business matters, a man financially able to do so was regularly accompanied by his slave. Antiphon¹ casually mentions the attendant slave journeying with his master from Athens to Mitylene. The author of the [Xen.] *Constitution of Athens* observes,² too, that it is often necessary for a man traveling over the sea on personal business matters to take a hand at the oar himself, as well as his attendant. No doubt such attendant slaves, in time of war, were often given a chance at the oars, but there is no definite evidence on this point.³ It is inconceivable that slaves would be allowed to sit inactive during much of the voyage.

As to the probable number of such slaves on warships one cannot be exact. But the type of ship and the purpose of the expedition must have caused the numbers to vary greatly. Many of the so-called "naval expeditions," especially in the Peloponnesian War, meant little more than the launching of transports filled with marines who were to be taken a few hundred miles down the coast for short marauding expeditions by land.⁴ In these, no doubt, the practice as to slaves was the same as in the case of hoplites in the army—one to be reckoned for each master. But on triremes constructed so as themselves to be used as engine of war with the rowers assisting in the maneuvers along with ten or fewer marines, as was often the case in the fourth century,⁵ one would expect to find very few slaves. On the food and horse-bearing transports⁶ accompanying the one expedition to distant waters sent out by Athens to Sicily, and the costliest one she or any other Greek city had ever equipped (Thucyd. vi. 31), there were probably

¹ v. (*de Caede Herod.*). 24.

² i. 19.

³ But see below, p. 276, n. 2.

⁴ Thucyd. ii. 23, 56, 93; iii. 16; Diodor. xi. 84, 85; xii. 65; xiii. 11. 2.

⁵ See Busolt-Swoboda, *op. cit.*, pp. 1205 ff.

⁶ Thucyd. vi. 43 and 44.

many slaves.¹ But in emergencies where economy in money and man-power must prevail, ships were sometimes manned with an all-round crew, one, namely, that would be required to work the oars when on the sea and to fight as peltasts whenever a landing was effected.² It is not likely that such a versatile crew would need slaves.

The positive evidence, scanty as it is, admirably bears out these assumptions. In the first place, on the swift messenger ships, such as the "Paralus," on the explicit testimony of Thucydides,³ there were no slaves at all. The crew was composed strictly of none but Athenian citizens. This is to be expected on a ship where it was not a question of transporting soldiers or of engaging in naval combat but one of delivering important state messages. Skilled rowers, loyal Athenians, who were at the same time capable of defending the boat, would be the only ones needed for this permanent, high-salaried, and honorable position.⁴ Foreigners would not be trusted, and slaves would not be needed as attendants.

¹ *Ibid.* vii. 13. 2 (these are here mentioned as having early deserted the ships [cf. 75. 5] in Sicily: οἱ δὲ θεράποντες, ἐπειδὴ ἐς ἀντίπαλα καθεστήκαμεν, αὐτομολοῦσι . . .). There seems to be little basis for assuming that these attendants were accompanying the expedition with the duties solely of oarsmen. The description of the whole fleet as given by Thucydides (vi. 31 and 44, and elsewhere) emphasizes the elaborateness of the equipment over that of any other expedition, and by way of comparison he cites the more meager equipment of the one hundred ships sent up to Potidaea (cf. iii. 17). There would thus be more slaves needed than was usual on a shorter and less elaborate expedition. But cf. Kolbe's use of this as evidence that slaves were regularly members of the rowing section of the crew (*op. cit.*, pp. 43 f.). Moreover, it is surprising to note, in view of Thucydides' definite statement about the presence of these slaves, Niese's sweeping assertion (*op. cit.*, p. 503): "Bei der grossen Sizilischen Expedition von 415 v. Chr. wurden trotz dem grossen Bedarfe Sklaven nicht auf die Schiffe geschickt."

² Thucyd. iii. 18; vi. 91; Xen. *Hellen.* ii. 1.

³ viii. 73. 5: . . . τοὺς Παράλους, ἄνδρας Ἀθηναίους τε καὶ ἐλευθέρους πάντας [ἐν τῇ νηὶ πλέοντας]. This has always been the most important piece of evidence used by writers arguing for a customary use of slaves as oarsmen. From this it has been assumed that on all other ships at all other times part of the crew were slaves. Cf. Boeckh, *op. cit.*, I, 329: "Als etwas besonders wird bemerkt dass die Seeleute der Paralos lauter Freie sind"; and Kolbe, *op. cit.*, p. 43: "Denique addendum est servos quoque remigium praestitisse. Hoc inde efficitur, quod Thucydides apertis verbis praedicat omnes qui Paralum navem complebat et Athenienses et liberos fuisse." Niese, *op. cit.*, p. 501, interested in proving that no slaves at all usually worked on the fleet, rather ineffectually, in a footnote, tries to explain away the contents of this important statement: "Wo das ἐλευθέρους nicht in Gegensatz zu einer etwaigen unfreien Bemannung steht (dies wird schon durch das Ἀθηναίους zur Genüge angedeutet), sondern auf das Verhalten der Paralier hinweist."

⁴ Harpocration, s.v. Πάραλος: . . . μία τῶν παρ' Ἀθηναίων πρὸς τὰς δημοσίας χρείας διαπεμπομένων τριήρων. . . οἱ δὲ ἐπιβεβηκότες αὐτῆς ἐκαλοῦντο Πάραλοι, οἱ διὰ ταύτην τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν τέτταράς τε βολοὺς ἐλάμβανον καὶ τὸ πλεῖον μέρος τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ οἴκοι ἔμενον.

However, in such a combined naval and land expedition¹ as that which set forth for Sicily, the several thousand hoplites and cavalry on board (Thucyd. vi. 43) took along attendant slaves,² and no doubt on such a long journey these assisted in the rowing. Nicias, in his letter to Athens complaining of misfortunes befalling his crew, mentions (vii. 13. 2) that of the desertion of these and other slaves. Their absence and not their presence is what he cites as unusual. Sixty years later when naval as well as land warfare had been revolutionized by such men as Iphicrates through the use of the more mobile peltasts, and when economic conditions³ were such that the number of citizens wealthy enough to serve as hoplites had decreased, whereas the number of poorer citizens who could be advantageously employed by the state was probably larger, it is possible that Isocrates did with some degree of truth exclaim: "Besides if at that time [i.e., fifth century] they were manning triremes, they put on board *foreigners and slaves* [italics are mine] as sailors, but sent out citizens to serve as hoplites; whereas at the present day, we employ foreigners as hoplites, and compel *citizens* to act as oarsmen."⁴

In cases of emergency where the man-power of the city was not enough to supply the quota for the fleet, in the one case of the kind

¹ Thucyd. vi. 31. 3: "Whereas this expedition as one likely to be of long duration was fitted out for both kinds of service, according as there might be need of either, with ships and also with land forces" (Smith's trans.).

² *Ibid.* vii. 75. 5 (see p. 274, n. 3 above).

³ See above, p. 271, n. 6.

⁴ viii (*De pace*). 48 (Freese's trans.). Too much weight should not, of course, be put on this chance oratorical flourish. On the face of it, it is not strictly true. For in the good old days referred to of the fifth century, there is abundant evidence that citizens, too, served as sailors and that metics served as hoplites (Thucyd. ii. 13. 6). But no doubt a larger proportion of foreigners were used in the 400 triremes in use at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (Busolt-Swoboda, *op. cit.*, p. 1198) than in the much smaller navy in 356 B.C. (in 389 B.C. only 50 triremes; and in 356 B.C. probably about 283 [*op. cit.*, p. 1199], and once (at Arginusae) slaves were formally enrolled—enough evidence perhaps for an orator's sweeping assertion! But see Busolt-Swoboda (*op. cit.*, p. 1207) where Athens' whole policy in the navy in this respect to slaves is made to hinge on this statement (see above, p. 271, nn. 2. 3).

For a further example of Isocrates' exaggerated utterances see also his additional remarks in the same oration on the fifth-century naval policy (79): "For who could have endured the brutal insolence of our fathers, who gathered together the greatest idlers from the whole of Hellas, men steeped in every kind of villainy, and manned their triremes with them, thereby earning the hatred of the Hellenes, while they drove out the most respectable of the inhabitants of the other cities, and distributed the property amongst the vilest of the Hellenes" (Freese's trans.)?

recorded in literature, that of the often-mentioned Arginusae in 406 B.C., slaves were enrolled on the one hundred and ten ships sent out by Athens.¹ The character and social origin of the sailors upon this occasion is made such a matter of comment by Xenophon that their enlistment must have been quite as unprecedented as was that of the wealthiest class; and these slaves were later given their freedom under the same rights as the exiled Plataeans.² Evidently Athens felt that the men who helped her in the navy should be free. At another time she freed all the slaves who were on board the seven ships of Chios (Thucyd. vii. 15. 2) which had assisted her in the blockade. Similarly, Corinth freed the eight hundred slaves found on Corcyra's ships in 432 B.C.³

Over in Sicily in 296 B.C. Dionysius, in another critical situation, set free all the slaves of the Syracusans and with them manned sixty ships.⁴ Yet at the time at which he had made his first gigantic preparations, under no pressing necessity, he had not resorted to slaves but for one half of his navy had used citizens both as pilots and as oarsmen, and for the other half had hired foreigners.⁵ Such was Corinth's procedure, too, at the beginning of her troubles with Corcyra. Rowers were assembled, not from her large slave population, but from her own citizens and from all parts of the Peloponnesus and Greece.⁶ Freemen were used, then, whenever time and man-power permitted.

Inscriptions, as has been stated previously, up to this time have

¹ Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6. 24: ". . . Putting aboard all who were of military age, whether slave or free; and within thirty days they manned the one hundred and ten ships and set forth. Even the knights went aboard in considerable numbers" (Brownson's trans.).

² Aristoph. *Frogs* 694 (Schol.); [Demosth.] lix (*in Neaera*). 104.

³ Thucyd. i. 55. 5. The presence of these eight hundred slaves in Corcyra's fleet (as well as those in the fleet of Chios where no numbers are mentioned) has often been used as evidence that many were also present at all times in Athens' navy (cf. Porzio, *op. cit.*, p. 574). In either case, as it is not specified, the slaves may have been on board as assistants to their masters, although it would be conceivable in the case of Corcyra that they had been forced to call upon slaves to assist in the revolt. At any event, as at Athens in 406 B.C., the very wealthiest were on these ships—two hundred and fifty of the most prominent families, so Thucydides states.

⁴ Diodor. xiv. 58. 1: Διονύσιος δ' ἐν ταῖς Συρακούσαις τοὺς δούλους ἐλευθερώσας, ἐπλήρωσεν ἐξ αὐτῶν ναῦς ἐξήκοντα.

⁵ *Ibid.* 43. 4: τῶν δὲ παρασκευασθεισῶν νεῶν μακρῶν αἱ μὲν ἡμίσεις αὐτῶν εἶχον πολιτικούς κυβερνήτας καὶ πρωρείς, ἔτι δὲ τοὺς ταῖς κώπαις χρησομένους, ταῖς δ' ἄλλαις ὁ Διονύσιος ξένους ἐμισθώσατο.

⁶ Thucyd. i. 31 and 35.

contributed little additional information. Important fragments¹ of one, found on the Acropolis, and generally thought to date from the last of the fifth century,² contain names of a part of the crews of at least five triremes. The designations of the ships are missing, as is also the statement as to the purpose of this memorial tablet. Officers, citizen sailors with deme names, foreign sailors, and slaves with masters' names are included in the fragmentary lists, but, unfortunately, it is not possible at present even to determine the relative numerical proportion of the slave and the free members.³ The conjecture⁴ long ago made that this is, perhaps, an inscription commemorating Arginusae is a plausible one in view of the literary evidence as to slaves in the navy. At any rate, it is safe to assume that it was set up to commemorate some outstanding event in military history, so that the personnel of the crew may not have been typical of the ordinary battleship. In its present condition the inscription can add little certain information to the question at hand.⁵

In conclusion: There is abundant evidence to show that Athenian triremes were manned at all times in the fifth and fourth centuries by crews habitually referred to in a general way by the contemporary writers as though composed entirely of a group of free- and well-trained men; in the one serious emergency where it is known that slaves, as well as the wealthiest citizens, were enrolled, the case is so specifically cited by the writer as though unusual, and it is known that the surviving slaves were given their freedom; furthermore, slaves, as attendants, are known to have accompanied travelers over the sea on peaceful missions, lending a hand at the oar when necessary, and in war, on at least one occasion, are known to have accompanied their masters overseas to Sicily, without the historian's making

¹ *IG*, II, 959.

² Köhler, "Aus den attischen Marineinschriften," *Athen. Mitteil.*, VIII (1883), 178 ff.; Sundwall, "Liste athenischer Marinebesatzungen," *Jahrb. Arch. Inst. Anzeig.*, XXX (1915), 124 ff.

³ For analysis of names see Sundwall, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

⁴ Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁵ Sundwall, *op. cit.*, p. 136: "So kann das Urteil über diese Frage vorläufig nur ein ungewisses bleiben . . ." and p. 137: "Die Metökennamen und die Slaven- und Besitzernamen liefern uns keine sicheren zeitlichen Anhaltspunkte, so interessant sie auch sonst sein können, die Herren sind natürlich meistens Athener, aber beim Fehlen des Demotikons ist die Identität recht unsicher."

more than casual mention of the fact. Therefore, in view of this and the body of general evidence it seems reasonable to state that the oarsmen singing "Rhyppapae" (Aristoph. *Frogs* 1071) and blistering their hands for democracy and a day's pay in the Athenian navy were under normal conditions citizens, metics, and foreigners. Slaves were present, as attendants only, on the ships, at the wish and usually at the expense of the marines, officers, and especially the trierarch. Hence the practice in this respect for both land and naval warfare was practically identical. Military service meant freedom. The latter was normally presupposed or else followed immediately upon the former. In consequence the fantastic numbers for the slave population of Athens in antiquity cannot be bolstered up by assigning tens of superfluous thousands to the army or to the fleet.

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE
NAPERVILLE