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Xenophon, Professional Military Vocabulary, and the Formation of the Literary Koine

Luuk Huitink and Tim Rood

1 Introduction

The following passage from Xenophon's *Anabasis* describes how, during the retreat of the Ten Thousand up north along a path following the River Tigris, a Persian army, which has been harassing the Greeks, finally decides to withdraw.¹ However, the Persians next make an unexpected move and occupy a high position in front of the Greeks in order to prevent them from marching on along the same route:²

ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐγίγνωσκον αὐτοὺς οἱ Ἕλληνας βουλομένους ἀπιέναι καὶ διαγγελλομένους, ἐκήρυξε τοῖς Ἕλλησι συσκευάζεσθαι ἀκούοντων τῶν πολεμίων. καὶ χρόνον μὲν τινα ἐπέσχον τῆς πορείας οἱ βάρβαροι, ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὀψὲ ἐγίγνετο, ἀπήισαν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐδόκει λύειν αὐτοὺς νυκτὸς πορεύεσθαι καὶ κατὰγεσθαι ἐπὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον. ἐπειδὴ δὲ σαφῶς ἀπιόντας ἤδη ἑώρων οἱ Ἕλληνας, ἐπορεύοντο καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀναζεύξαντες καὶ διήλθον ὅσον ἐξήκοντα σταδίου. καὶ γίγνεται τοσοῦτον μεταξύ τῶν στρατευμάτων ὥστε τῆι ὕστεραίαι οὐκ ἐφάνησαν οἱ πολέμιοι οὐδὲ τῆι τρίτῃ, τῆι δὲ τετάρτῃ νυκτὸς προελθόντες καταλαμβάνουσι χωρίον ὑπερδέξιον οἱ βάρβαροι, ἧ ἔμελλον οἱ Ἕλληνας παριέναι, ἀκρωνυχίαν ὄρους, ὅφ' ἦν ἡ κατὰβασίς ἦν εἰς τὸ πεδίον. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἑώρα Χειρίσοφος προκατεληγμένην τὴν ἀκρωνυχίαν, καλεῖ Ξενοφῶντα ἀπὸ τῆς οὐράς καὶ κελεύει λαβόντα τοὺς πελταστὰς παραγενέσθαι εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν. (Xen. An. 3.4.36–38)

- 1 LH's part of this chapter was written in the context of the 'Anchoring Innovation' research programme of the Netherlands National Research School in Classical Studies (OIKOS), which is supported by a 2017 Gravitation Grant (Ministry of Education of the Netherlands, NWO); see <<https://anchoringinnovation.nl/>>. We wish to thank Andreas Willi and the audience at the 'Beyond Standards' conference for their valuable comments on the paper from which the present chapter derives. Papers by LH's former students Daan Mulder and Henric Jansen on the language of Xenophon and Aeneas Tacticus, respectively, have also helped shape the ideas presented here; we warmly thank both of them.
- 2 The text is that of Huitink & Rood (2019); the translation is our own.

When the Greeks realized that they [the Persians] wished to withdraw and were passing the word along, the order to pack up was sounded within hearing of the enemy. And for a time the barbarians refrained from setting out, but when it was getting late, they went off; for, as a matter of fact, they did not usually think it paid to march and turn into camp at night. When the Greeks clearly saw that they were finally withdrawing, they broke camp and went on their way themselves, and accomplished a march of as much as sixty stades. And so the two armies got so far apart that on the next day the enemy did not appear, nor yet on the third. On the fourth, however, after pushing forward by night, the barbarians occupied a high position, by which the Greeks were about to pass, the spur of a mountain, along the base of which ran the road down into the plain. When Chrisophus saw that the spur was already occupied, he summoned Xenophon from the rear and asked him to come to the front and bring the light-armed troops with him.

At first sight, the passage may seem like a straightforward bit of Greek historiographical prose dealing with military matters.³ In fact, on closer inspection, it displays a surprisingly high density of unusual words and expressions:

- διαγγελλομένους ‘passing the word of command from man to man’ (LSJ s.v.): middle διαγγέλλομαι is an absolute *hapax* in this sense in extant Greek literature (the Xenophonic occurrence is cited at Suda δ 517 Adler). To convey the sense of an order being passed down the ranks, Xenophon elsewhere uses the verbs παρεγγυάω or παραγγέλλω.
- λύειν αὐτούς ‘it is profitable to them’: this is an extremely rarefied expression, equivalent to the much more common λυσιτελεῖν αὐτοῖς. Impersonal λύει (a mostly poetic alternative to λυσιτελεῖ) is construed with the accusative instead of the expected dative also at Sophocles, *Electra* 1005 and Euripides, fr. 661.28–9 *TrGF*.⁴
- κατάγεσθαι ἐπὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον ‘return to camp’: this sense of κατάγομαι is also attested at Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.18, *Symp.* 8.39 and *Cyr.* 8.5.17. However, the verb’s usual sense in the classical period is ‘put in to shore’ (i.e. of ships; so already Hom. *Od.* 3.178, and then e.g. Hdt. 4.43.5; Xen. *An.* 5.1.11).
- χωρίον ὑπερδέξιον ‘a high position’: the adjective ὑπερδέξιος occurs first in Xenophon (×8) and Aeneas Tacticus (×1), while it is common in Hellenistic and Imperial historiography.

3 See Rood (2010) for the development of the Greek ‘war monograph’ and Hau (2014) for a general characterization of the content and texture of such narratives.

4 Cf. Finglass (2007, p. 413). The f family of manuscripts of the *Anabasis* in fact reads λυσιτελεῖν αὐτοῖς, but this is clearly *lectio facillior* and so probably a gloss on the much rarer expression.

- ἀκρωνυχίαν ὄρους ‘spur of a mountain’: the noun ἀκρωνυχία, literally ‘tip of the toe(-nail)’, but metaphorically applied to part of a mountain, is found first in Xenophon (×3) and very occasionally in later authors.
- ἀπὸ τῆς οὐράς ‘from the rear’: the noun οὐρά ‘tail’ is first metaphorically applied to the ‘rear’ of a marching army in the works of Xenophon (quite frequently) and then also in Hellenistic historiography.

How should we explain this unusual diction, some of which is unique to this particular passage and some to Xenophon’s (historiographical) oeuvre more generally, while yet other items in the list occur first in Xenophon and then recur in later extant Greek literature? In this chapter, we will offer an answer to this question, which centers on the claim that, with the exception of the expression λύειν αὐτούς, all the items on the list likely belong to the professional military vocabulary as it was used by officers and soldiers in Xenophon’s time and that they were consciously adopted by him in order to achieve certain stylistic effects and to underline certain themes.

The argument is structured as follows. We will first make some observations about Xenophon’s diction in general and its place in the history of Greek prose style. We will then argue that traditional explanations of Xenophon’s often remarkable lexical choices, which tend to classify odd items as dialectisms or poeticisms and to suggest that Xenophon fell short of writing ‘proper’ Attic, need to be modified in important ways by taking account of insights in the history of the Greek language and stylistics and of Xenophon’s literary achievement.⁵ In a further step, we will argue that existing explanations also need to be supplemented by an account which brings out Xenophon’s novel use of professional, *in casu* military, vocabulary in his historiographical writings. We will elaborate on the form and structure of this vocabulary and address the question how we may identify relevant items, using *Anabasis* 3 as our main corpus. Finally, we will consider how and why Xenophon employs military terms (returning to the passage cited above) and address the implications of the findings in this chapter for Xenophon’s place in the development of Greek historiographical prose and the literary Koine.

2 Xenophon’s Prose Style: Attic or Non-Attic, or: Is That the Question?

2.1 ‘Pure’ Attic

Judgements of Xenophon’s style are premised on a specific (but often implicit) view of the nature of classical Attic literary prose, especially as it was written

5 This part of the chapter elaborates Huitink & Rood (2019, pp. 23–31, and 2020).

by fourth-century orators like Lysias and Demosthenes and, to a lesser extent, Plato in his early dialogues. It will be helpful first briefly to sketch this view and then to consider why Xenophon poses a problem for it.

As is well known, the earliest Greek prose (mythography and historiography, philosophical and medical treatises) was written in the Ionic dialect. However, the closing decades of the fifth century BCE saw the rise of Attic as a feasible alternative, as evidenced, for instance, by the speeches of Gorgias and Antiphon, the history of Thucydides and the ‘treatise’ on the Athenian constitution of the ‘Old Oligarch’. For reasons which are still in part mysterious, these and other authors broke with the tradition that the dialect in which one wrote was determined by the genre which one practised rather than by one’s own origin or that of one’s intended audience.⁶ Whatever the reasons for the shift, early practitioners still adhered to some of the established conventions of Ionic prose writing. For instance, they tended to avoid key Attic phonological markers which could be perceived as parochial, usually writing, for example, Ionic (and generally Greek) -σσ- and -ρρ- instead of Attic -ττ- and -ρρ-. Their morphology and vocabulary, too, were influenced by Ionic. For instance, Antiphon (2.1.3) once uses οἶδαμεν (‘we know’), the Ionic form for Attic ἴσμεν, also found in Herodotus and the Hippocratic corpus. Thucydides also uses many words which appear to be Ionic in origin, such as ὁμαιχμία (‘alliance’, 1.18.3, for common Attic συμμαχία), νεοχμώ (‘cause changes’, 1.12.2) and σκυλεύω (‘despoil’, 4.44.3 and elsewhere; the normal Attic word is σιλάω)—to name but a few likely candidates.⁷

To be sure, it is questionable whether ‘Ionicism’ is always the most appropriate label for such words. After all, many common Ionic words occurred in Homeric epic, the basis of which is Ionic, and Ionic diction continued to be used in high poetry, such as tragedy, so that many ‘Ionicisms’ may in fact have been perceived as ‘poeticisms’; νεοχμώ, for instance, occurs in Herodotus, which bespeaks its Ionic origin, but it is also found in Aeschylus and Euripides, suggesting that it may have had a poetic ring to it for Athenian audiences. Furthermore, Ionic and Attic spring from the same source (Ionic-Attic), so that

6 See Willi (2008, pp. 302–303), arguing that Gorgias wrote in Attic because he targeted an Athenian audience, and also to put into question hitherto unquestioningly accepted literary conventions. Willi (2010) links the use of Attic and Ionic by Athenian authors to the position they adopted in the νόμος (Ionic) / φύσις (Attic) debate of the fifth century BCE. For accounts of the emergence and crystallization of Attic as a literary language, see Adrados (2005, pp. 142–160); Horrocks (2010, pp. 67–78); Colvin (2014, pp. 163–168).

7 For ὁμαιχμία, see ὁμαιχμία at Hdt. 7.145.2, 8.140α.4. Sheppard & Evans (1876, p. 31) doubt (correctly in our view) that there is a significant semantic distinction between ὁμαιχμία and συμμαχία. For νεοχμώ see e.g. Hdt. 4.201.2, for σκυλεύω e.g. Hdt. 1.82.5.

we can hardly exclude the possibility that some ‘Ionicisms’ were primarily felt as old-fashioned ‘archaisms’ rather than as ‘Ionic’. This consideration might help explain, for example, the isolated occurrences of *σκυλεύω* in a later classical author like Lysias (12.40—a passage of considerable gravity), who does not generally show up much Ionic influence.⁸ However this may be, it is clear that earlier Attic authors like Thucydides forged a prose style based on an ‘international’ and in various respects ‘expanded’ version of Attic.⁹

Now, accounts of the crystallization of Attic as a literary language generally suppose that after careful beginnings, Attic rapidly became the main vehicle for Greek prose, not only for typically Athenian genres like forensic and political oratory and Socratic dialogue, but also for scientific treatises and historiographical narratives. For historiographers, Thucydides soon became an inescapable model, so that in the first half of the fourth century BCE not only the Athenian Xenophon, but also non-Athenian historians like Philistus of Syracuse and Ephorus of Cyme wrote in Attic (although Ctesias of Cnidus appears to have written in Ionic, following Herodotus). And, as the prestige of Attic grew, the influence of Ionic waned. For example, fourth-century authors like Lysias, Plato and Xenophon everywhere write -ττ- and -ρρ-. Such developments have led scholars to suppose that the gap between the language of literary prose and conversational Attic narrowed over time. Orators like Lysias and Demosthenes wrote speeches intended for oral delivery, while Plato often (though by no means always) appears to imitate the language of everyday conversation. Much more than their predecessors, these authors therefore give the impression of capturing vernacular Attic, which entails an avoidance of overtly archaic, poetic and Ionic forms (which may amount to the same thing).¹⁰

It is the (mostly oratorical) prose from the first half of the fourth century BCE which, from the Atticist movement in antiquity itself onwards, has usually been taken as the benchmark of ‘pure’ Attic. On this account, ‘pure’ often implicitly means ‘close to the real thing’ and acquires normative overtones, implying that it was (or should have been) an aspiration of classical prose authors to write an Attic that was ‘close to the real thing’.

8 For these considerations, cf. Willi (2010, pp. 107–108), Horrocks (2010, p. 68).

9 To follow Colvin’s (2014, pp. 163–164) characterization of Thucydides’ style.

10 Colvin (2014, p. 166). He suggests that if a word or form is shared between the orators, the spoken sections of Aristophanic comedy and Athenian prose inscriptions (or between at least two of these three sources), this is conclusive evidence that it was current in spoken Attic. See also Richards (1907, p. 157): the orators “use, we are safe in saying, the actual Attic speech of their time, not indeed in all its colloquial idiom and ease, but in its serious and slightly formal shape”. For Plato’s conversational style, see Thesleff (1967, pp. 63–66).

2.2 *Xenophon the 'Halbattiker'?*

Xenophon is—or at least used to be—one of the first authors read by learners of ancient Greek, and Xenophontic diction figures heavily in (school) grammars and dictionaries.¹¹ Yet, for all that many readers of Greek are likely unquestioningly to consider him a model representative of classical Attic, it is difficult to fit Xenophon into the story of the development of Attic prose outlined above. Indeed, Xenophon's status as an 'Attic classic' was in dispute already in antiquity itself.¹² Next to brief soundbites hailing Xenophon as Ἀττικὴ Μοῦσα ('Attic Muse', Diog. Laert. 2.57) or Ἀττικὴ μέλιττα ('Attic bee', *Suda* ξ 47 Adler), we find ancient lexicographers and other scholars identifying a great many words and forms in Xenophon's works which are entirely or almost entirely alien to the rest of classical Attic prose. Usually, these comments are critical, suggesting that Xenophon fell short of writing the 'pure' Attic of which the orators were seen as the most important representatives, although some ancient scholars defended the position that, *because* Xenophon used a certain word, that word should be regarded as 'good' classical Attic even if it was not in regular use in Attic prose.

Ancient observations on Xenophon's diction fall into several categories. First, lexicographers occasionally note his use of items which belong to dialects other than Attic. For example, the strict Atticist grammarian Phrynichus (second century CE) states that 'Xenophon offends against his native dialect' (παρανομεῖ ... Ξενοφῶν εἰς τὴν πάτριον διάλεκτον) by using Ionic ὀδμή ('smell') for Attic ὀσμὴ (*Eclg.* 62 Fischer).¹³ Secondly, several scholars remark on Xenophon's use of poetic expressions. For instance, the second-century Atticist lexicographer Pollux (3.99) also claims that Xenophon sometimes expresses himself 'in a rather poetic manner' (ποιητικωτέρως) and cites his use of γοωμένη ('bewailing', *Cyr.* 4.6.9) in evidence.¹⁴ Thirdly, ancient critics remarked on Xenophon's use of words which became common in the Koine but were rare in classical Attic. Thus, both Phrynichus (*Eclg.* 93 Fischer) and Moeris (α 149 Hansen) condemn Xenophon for using ἀκμήν in the meaning 'still' (*An.* 4.3.26); while ἀκμήν is a

11 For school commentaries on Xenophon's *Anabasis*, see Rijksbaron (2002 = 2018, pp. 376–406).

12 The most elaborate overview of the controversy surrounding Xenophon's language in antiquity remains Münscher (1920, especially pp. 163–180). See also the contribution of Rubulotta (this volume).

13 All manuscripts in fact have ὀσμὴ on all occurrences (×17), excepting *Symp.* 2.3, where part of the manuscripts read ὀδμή. No editor has opted to 'restore' ὀδμή on Phrynichus' authority.

14 For other references to Xenophontic poeticisms, cf. Phot. *Lex.* ε 2535, Hermog. *Id.* 406.15–18 Rabe.

common word for 'still' in the Koine, the grammarians warn that anyone wishing to write proper classical Attic should use ἔτι. The fourth-century grammarian Helladius points to Xenophon's use of accusative plural νομείς (instead of older νομέας) and adds a biographical explanation, stating that 'it is not at all surprising, if a man who spent time on campaigns and mixing with foreigners debases some aspects of his native dialect' (οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν, ἀνὴρ ἐν στρατείας σχολάζων καὶ ξένων συνουσίαις εἴ τινα παρακόπτει τῆς πατρίου φωνῆς), and warning against considering Xenophon as 'a lawgiver of Attic usage' (νομοθέτην ... ἀπτικισμοῦ, *apud Phot. Bibl. cod. 279, 533b23–28*).¹⁵ Galen in a more neutral fashion notes how Xenophon 'often throws in obscure and figurative words' (παρεμβάλλει πολλάκις ὀνόματα γλωσσηματικά καὶ τροπικά, 18.414K).¹⁶

Modern scholars have often sided with those ancient commentators who felt that Xenophon fell short of writing 'pure' Attic prose and have also often adopted Helladius' explanation.¹⁷ In what remains the most elaborate and systematic study of Xenophon's diction, Gautier classifies as many odd items as possible into dialectisms (Ionicisms and Doricisms), poeticisms and Koine-isms ("éléments hellénistiques").¹⁸ Gautier suggests that the facts are best accounted for by the assumption that Xenophon soaked up many non-Attic words during the long time he spent away from Athens and used these, almost subconsciously and usually without stylistic motivation, next to their Attic equivalents. He furthermore argues that Xenophon's diverse linguistic contacts foreshadowed the large-scale societal processes that would lead to the rise of the Hellenistic Koine, which Xenophon therefore anticipated,

15 On the other hand, some Atticist lexicographers did accept Xenophon's authority. For instance, Aelius Dionysius (*Attic. Onom.* β 5 Erbse) suggests (if Erbse's supplement is correct) that βασιλίσα ('queen'), the common Koine form for classical Attic βασιλεια, is good Attic on the ground that Xenophon already used it (*Oec.* 9.1).

16 The word γλωσσηματικός can conceivably mean 'dialectal' or 'foreign' (cf. Morpurgo Davies 2002 [1987], p. 161 on the meaning of γλωσσή), which is how Rutherford (1881, p. 161) and Pomeroy (1994, p. 11) take it. However, in the relevant passage Galen compares Xenophon with Hippocrates, and the Hippocratic examples concern unusual word formations rather than 'dialectal' or 'foreign' words (and of course Hippocrates writes in Ionic, so that a reference to 'dialectal' words in Xenophon would be strange here). Elsewhere in ancient criticism γλωσσηματικός/γλωττηματικός appears to mean 'in need of glossing', 'obscure' (e.g. Dion. Hal. *Amm.* 2.2 on Thucydides, where it is coupled with τροπικός and ἀπηρχαιώμενος); cf. Gautier (1911, p. 17) and Montanari (2015, s.v. γλωσσηματικός).

17 Cf. Pomeroy (1994, p. 14): "Modern analysis of Xenophon's prose has not essentially progressed beyond the observations of the ancient critics".

18 Gautier (1911). For briefer accounts of Xenophon's linguistic peculiarities, see Rutherford (1881, pp. 160–174), Hoffmann & Debrunner (1969, pp. 137–139), Hiersche (1970, pp. 216–221), Pomeroy (1994, pp. 9–15), Gray (2006 and 2017). Much useful information is also gathered in the lexicons of Sturz (1801–1804) and Sauppe (1869).

again more or less by accident. As far as alleged ‘poeticisms’ are concerned, Gautier nuances ancient assessments by arguing that, if a word can be regarded as both a dialectism and a poeticism, it is best regarded as a dialectism on the grounds that, as we have already stated above, many words that occur in high poetry are in fact ordinary Ionic words. This way of looking at things has the benefit of absolving Xenophon of the charge of using poetic language inappropriately to some extent. Even so, there remain a number of poeticisms. Some of these are probably intended, as when Xenophon employs the poetic verb *γοῶμαι* ‘bewail’ (remarked upon by Pollux, as we have seen above) in a passage that is also otherwise notable for its *pathos*.¹⁹ Others, however, are more difficult to explain; an example is the expression *λύειν αὐτούς* from the passage quoted at the outset of this chapter. At least, our evidence makes it seem as if it is a genuinely poetic phrase and does not allow us to trace it to common usage in one or other Greek dialect.²⁰

While Gautier redresses the balance between ‘poeticisms’ and ‘dialectisms’ in Xenophon’s language, he still supposes that Xenophon simply could not do better. Indeed, in the eyes of many modern scholars Xenophon remains a “Halbattiker” (‘half-Atticist’), to use the dismissive term which Wackernagel applied to him.²¹ For instance, Bers suggests that Xenophon is “eccentric and unreliable as a guide to Attic prose usage, whether from artistic incapacity or the variety of his linguistic experience as an exile.”²² And according to Richards, reading Xenophon must have been a rather bewildering experience for ancient audiences with sufficient *Sprachgefühl* intuitively to sense the flavour of individual words: “Now Attic, now Ionic, now poetry, now prose, it is a bizarre diction peculiar to Xenophon.”²³

19 Gautier (1911, pp. 91–92). On other effective poeticisms in Xenophon, see Tsagalis (2002), Huitink & Rood (2019, p. 29). Gray (2017), on the other hand, resorts to the term ‘poeticism’ too rapidly. Xenophon’s deliberate use of poeticisms is one indication that it is not always fruitful to compare his language to that of the orators and find him wanting: whereas the orators may well have tended to eschew poeticisms to avoid sounding pompous, there is no reason why historiographers would (or should) follow suit.

20 Gautier (1911, pp. 142–143) assumes that Xenophon found so many words in common between the high poetry on which he had grown up and dialects other than Attic (especially Ionic), that he lost the ability to discern between normal dialectic words and genuine poeticisms, so that he became prone to borrowing expressions from the poets without stylistic justification.

21 Wackernagel (1907, p. 5).

22 Bers (1984, p. 13).

23 Richards (1907, p. 159).

2.3 *Towards a New Account of Xenophon's Diction*

For all that there is a broad coalition behind it, the assumption that Xenophon would have written proper Attic prose if only he had known how to do so is unsatisfactory. In general, as Dover, one of the few dissenting voices, already observed, “acquaintance with many varieties of a language is as likely to sharpen the ear for differences as to blunt it, especially in so articulate a writer”.²⁴ There are good *prima facie* reasons to take Dover’s observation seriously. First, recent scholarship has established beyond doubt that Xenophon did not operate in isolation from Athenian literary culture, but that he was deeply aware of the works of, for instance, Plato and Isocrates.²⁵ This means that it is unlikely that he had simply forgotten what ‘proper’ Attic prose looked like. A further reason to assume that Xenophon had not simply become insensitive to the differences between the various Greek dialects is his habit, which has in fact long been noted, of occasionally putting recognizably Doric words and phrases in the mouths of Spartan speakers, such as when he makes the Spartan general Chirisophus use Spartan Doric *τελέθειν* instead of Attic *γύγνεσθαι* in what is also in other respects a particularly ‘Laconic’ speech (*An.* 3.2.3).²⁶ This suggests that Xenophon was sensitive to, and could artfully exploit, dialectal variation.

To arrive at a different account of Xenophon’s lexical choices we should first of all abandon the idea that the style of both the fourth-century orators and that of Xenophon bears a direct relationship to their respective speech habits. Given how ancient Greek literature generally worked, that idea does not sound very plausible to begin with.²⁷ Let us first take the often implicit assumption that the Attic written by orators like Lysias and Demosthenes is ‘close to the real thing’. The problem here is that it is not clear what ‘the real thing’ is supposed to be. Even if we leave aside the variations which must have existed in the speech of, say, city and country dwellers, young and old, men and women, the period under consideration was one of increasing linguistic diversity.²⁸ Owing to the Athenian empire and trading, non-Attic Greeks converged on Athens and Athenians spent more time abroad, and both sorts of interaction must have affected speech habits. The ‘Old Oligarch’ observed already in the

24 Dover (1997, p. 110).

25 See Danzig, Johnson & Morrison (2018) (Plato), Tamiolaki (2018) (Isocrates).

26 See Gautier (1911, p. 134). For further examples and analysis, see Hiersche (1970, pp. 217–218), Colvin (1999, pp. 70–73), Gray (2014, pp. 327–328 and 2017, p. 224), Huitink & Rood (2019, p. 30 and 2020, p. 432).

27 See now, e.g., Prauscello (2019), on the problems involved in scholars’ efforts to identify ‘epichoric’ Boeotian features in Pindar.

28 See Niehoff-Panagiotidis (1994, pp. 201–218), Crespo (2010, pp. 126–130), Colvin (2014, pp. 109–111).

closing decades of the fifth century BCE that non-Attic speakers were leaving their mark on Attic:

ἔπειτα φωνὴν πᾶσαν ἀκούοντες ἐξελέξαντο τοῦτο μὲν ἐκ τῆς τοῦτο δὲ ἐκ τῆς· καὶ οἱ μὲν Ἑλληνες ἰδίᾳ μᾶλλον καὶ φωνῇ καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ σχήματι χρόνται, Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ κεκραμένη ἐξ ἀπάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων. ('Old Oligarch' [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 2.8)

Furthermore, hearing every form of speech they have selected one thing from this one and another thing from that one. And the Greeks in general prefer to use their own kind of speech and lifestyle and customs, but the Athenians use one mixed out of that of all the Greeks and barbarians.

A specific development was that the Athenian administration of much Ionic-speaking territory in the empire started to produce a convergence of Attic and Ionic, which remained the language of diplomacy and international commerce after the loss of the empire. It can be traced in official inscriptions from the fourth century BCE found in Attica and elsewhere. This so-called 'Großattisch' ('Great Attic'), which can best be described as a 'modern Ionicized Attic', stands at the basis of the Hellenistic Koine.²⁹

Since we can discern little of this variation and development in the formal prose of the classical orators over the course of the fourth century BCE—in fact, notwithstanding the differences between various authors and speeches, it is the uniformity of their language which is most striking—it may be concluded that their diction is a much more "highly polished *Kunstsprache*" than is often assumed.³⁰ It is even 'pure' in the sense of being 'purist', that is standardized, considerably removed from everyday speech and operating with a 'purged' lexicon, the result of a conscious effort to select from co-existing forms. Among the words and forms which the literary Attic used in formal prose tended to avoid were items which were perceived as vulgar (spoken mostly by the lower strata of Athenian society), or as poetic, archaic, and Ionic (these three often amounting to the same thing). The orators created a distinctive Attic prose style, which was different from that of other types of Attic literature (such as tragedy). It was in part an ideological construct, formed in

29 The term 'Großattisch' is Thumb's (1974 [1901]), still a standard account of the formation of the Koine. The description of it as 'modern Ionicized Attic' is Horrocks' (2010, p. 74). For the epigraphical material, see Schlageter (1909).

30 So recently Hafner (2018, p. 23). Cf. Schlageter (1909, p. 46), calling Attic literary prose from the first half of the fourth century BCE "sehr stark puristisch". Willi (2014) locates the first 'Atticism' (in the sense of a normative set of rules about what constitutes 'good' Attic) in the fourth century BCE.

reaction to the convergence of Attic and Ionic; presumably, certain words were targeted for elimination precisely because they were not exclusively Attic and could be perceived as belonging to a different dialect.³¹

Against this background, Xenophon's lexical choices begin to take on a different appearance. Some 'dialectisms' (especially 'Ionicisms') and supposedly newfangled 'Koine-isms' discerned by ancient and modern critics may in fact have been part of spoken Attic for a long time, but subsequently avoided by most early fourth-century prose authors. This could, for example, be the case with his use of ἀκμήν ('still'), which was condemned, as we have seen, by some Atticist lexicographers. The word was already used, however, by Aeschylus (fr. 339a Radt), possibly as a colloquialism. As Niehoff-Panagiotidis has argued, this means that we should reckon with the possibility that the word had remained in use in vernacular Attic but was shunned by most fourth-century authors as a vulgarism.³² Another example may be the 'Ionicism' σκυλεύω ('despoil') for Attic σιλάω, mentioned above. It is not only found in Lysias, but also in Plato (*Resp.* 469c) and Xenophon (*Hell.* 2.4.19, *An.* 6.1.6) and is adopted into the Koine (it is frequent in Polybius and the Septuagint). All of this makes it likely that the word had a career in the Attic vernacular independent from its use in Ionic, but that it was generally rejected in fourth-century Attic prose in favour of σιλάω, perhaps precisely because σκυλεύω was also (and therefore could be perceived as) Ionic. If this is true, σκυλεύω is part of what Adrados has called a "subterranean" Attic vocabulary, parts of which we encounter in tragedy and even Thucydides, but which then only comes into view again in our literary sources with Xenophon and the later dialogues of Plato, who appears to have adopted a new prose style in his old age.³³

Although the status of individual forms and words can be a matter of dispute given a shortage of evidence, the general trend is clear. From the account sketched here, Xenophon does not emerge as an author who simply could not do better, but as one who consciously broke with the purism of Attic literature and admitted a wider variety of words and forms. Xenophon adopted a style which was closer to the international 'Great Attic' which would evolve into the Koine than that of some of his Athenian predecessors and contemporaries. By using co-existing forms (such as an occasional πορσύνειν next to παρέχειν) Xenophon furnished his style with a non-Attic patina, which signals to the reader that they are not dealing with a parochial Attic work.³⁴ It is significant in

31 See Hunter (1927, p. xlvi), Niehoff-Panagiotidis (1994, pp. 219–220), Adrados (2005, pp. 156–160).

32 Niehoff-Panagiotidis (1994, pp. 204–205).

33 Adrados (2005, pp. 146, 195).

34 Cf. Willi (2012) on the inconsistent Doric of Theocritus. For the vocabulary shared between Xenophon and the 'Great Attic' inscriptions, see Schlageter (1909, pp. 46–47).

this respect that this patina is visible especially in the *Agesilaus*, *Anabasis* and *Cyropaedia*, more so than in the *Hellenica* and the Socratic works.³⁵ It appears that Xenophon forged a new style especially for works which do not deal with Athenian affairs, which are also otherwise generically adventurous, and which may well be intended to appeal to a wide audience across the Greek-speaking world.³⁶ In the case of these works, then, rather than expecting ‘proper’ Attic, we do better to regard Xenophon’s style as one possible development of the ‘international’ and ‘expanded’ version of Attic used by his predecessor in the genre of historiography, Thucydides. In the terms of the Anchoring Innovation research project, we can say that Xenophon’s innovative stylistic choices are nonetheless firmly anchored in both the changing Attic dialect of his day and in the language of his immediate historiographical predecessor.

3 Xenophon’s Use of Military Language

3.1 *Technical Military Language*

Apart from *λύειν αὐτούς* (which, to be sure, remains difficult to explain), none of the remarkable words and expressions from *Anabasis* 3.4.36–38 listed at the outset of this chapter comfortably fit the sketch of Xenophon’s diction given above, because they cannot be assigned to an obvious source in a dialect or literary genre. The fact that some of the items on the list have a metaphorical quality about them—would Galen have regarded *ἀκρωνυχία* and *οὐρά* as *τροπικά*?—and that some of them (like *ἀκρωνυχία*, *ὑπερδέξιος* and the prefixed verbs *διαγγέλλομαι* and *κατάγομαι*) are compounds—if compounds of common types—may at first suggest that Xenophon’s own creativity is at work here. However, that assumption soon leads to difficulties: it is unclear why Xenophon would see fit to use such flourishes of language in what is ultimately a rather routine passage of military narrative. Furthermore, the fact that a fair number of the odd words and expressions recur in Koine literature also speaks against the idea that Xenophon coined them himself, because there is no good reason to assume that Xenophon’s diction had quite so much influence on later literature.

35 Cf. Gautier (1911, pp. 130–136). Tuplin (1993, pp. 193–197) shows on the basis of the distribution of a number of Xenophon’s stylistic peculiarities that it is impossible to explain the difference with an appeal to the (in any case very uncertain) chronology of Xenophon’s works.

36 For *Anabasis* as a generic experiment, see especially Bradley (2001), for *Cyropaedia*, see Huitink (2018, pp. 468–472). In the case of *Agesilaus* a specifically Spartan audience may also be targeted. Suggestive in this respect is the fact that *Agesilaus* displays a number of non-Attic words for which the corresponding passages in *Hellenica* employ ‘properly’ Attic synonyms: Gautier (1911, p. 134), Tuplin (1993, pp. 194–195).

For these reasons we should like to argue that Xenophon's literary experiment in *Anabasis* and elsewhere extended to his adoption of words and phrases that are anchored in the living professional or 'technical' military vocabulary from his time. Xenophon's use of 'technical' vocabularies is in fact well-documented, including his use of military terms.³⁷ Gautier already pointed out that a fair number of genuine 'Doricisms' can in fact be understood as originating from specifically Spartan military roles and institutions.³⁸ An example are the πεντηκοντῆρες ('platoon commanders', ostensibly of a unit of fifty) who appear in the *Respublica Lacedaemonorum* (11.2, 13.4) and the *Hellenica* (3.5.22, 4.5.7) as well as in the *Anabasis* (3.4.21) in a description of how the Ten Thousand adopt a new formation.³⁹ Now, Thucydides (5.66.3) had also once used πεντηκοντῆρες in a description of the command structure of Spartan armies. However, an important difference with Xenophon is that the latter also uses the specific term πεντηκοντῆρες (rather than more loosely employed designations like, for example, ταξίαρχοι) in parts of his narrative in which the command structure of the Spartan army is not the main focus of interest. This testifies to Xenophon's preference for specific, specialized terms, a point to which we will return below.

The professional military vocabulary for which we should like to make a case, however, need not be traced back to a single regional or dialectal provenance or military tradition. Rather, it may be surmised that the increasing professionalization and specialization of warfare in fourth-century BCE Greece went hand in hand with the development of a more or less technical vocabulary designed to give expression to changes in tactics and organization and to facilitate communication between officers and soldiers, who were increasingly often mercenaries originating from various parts of Greece; the Ten Thousand are, of course, the most famous example of such an army.⁴⁰ While war and warfare were no doubt more a part of everyday life for many people in ancient Greece than for people in most modern Western societies, it seems that in Xenophon's lifetime a class of 'specialists in war' (professional soldiers, officers, often mercenaries) emerged, which is a precondition for the development of a specialized, professional language.⁴¹

37 See Gautier (1911, pp. 150–153), Lipka (2002, pp. 46–47), Gray (2006, p. 428), Dillery (2016, pp. 249–250). See, however, Huitink & Rood (2016) for some qualifications to Xenophon's precision in the case of military ranks.

38 Gautier (1911, pp. 35–47, 151).

39 In *Anabasis*, the term may reflect a restructuring of the lines of command on the basis of a Spartan model (proposed by the Spartan general, Chirisophus), but the relation to that model is loose; see Huitink & Rood (2019, p. 161).

40 For the rise of mercenaries, see Trundle (2004).

41 See Willi (2003, pp. 54, 70–71).

It is nonetheless not easy to define technical military language. One thing that needs to be emphasized is that technical military language is not the same as the ‘language of soldiers’ spoken in barracks (and often characterized by, for instance, vulgarisms). To the extent that the latter is a recognizable variety of language, it is a so-called *Sondersprache*, defined as a distinctive variety of a language spoken by a specific social group. Technical languages (or *Fachsprachen*), however, are not solely defined in terms of the social group or the social context in which they are spoken, but have a content-related component.⁴² According to Langslow in his discussion of medical Latin, for instance, all the utterances of a recognized group of specialists *that relate to their field of specialization* constitute a ‘technical language.’⁴³ Yet, such a definition is still too wide. After all, we would not want to say that, when one professional soldier talks to another about, for instance, *πολεμεῖν* (‘being at war’) or *μάχεσθαι* (‘waging battle’), those verbs are technical terms, because both clearly are words used by the population at large to talk about war and warfare.⁴⁴

Partly in response to Langslow’s wide definition, Willi in his own effort to identify the (parodic) use of technical languages in Aristophanes has suggested a number of criteria which the use of a word should meet for it to count as ‘technical.’⁴⁵ Some of those are also relevant for the professional military vocabulary which we find in Xenophon, as we will see. First, since technical language is used to facilitate communication between specialists, truly technical terms have only one meaning (i.e. are monosemous), irrespective of the context in which they are used, and bear a precise relation to other terms within the same field. Secondly, since technical language is used to exchange factual information, technical terms should be ‘expressively neutral’, that is, not bear a positive or a negative connotation. Thirdly, technical terms are not in general use (the technical German term is *allgemeingebräuchlich*) or, more precisely, they are not on the whole used by non-specialists when referring to the relevant item. In modern languages, which tend to borrow their technical terminology in many fields from Latin and Greek, technical words are often not only not in general use, but also not generally understandable (*allgemeinverständlich*)—apart from doctors, who knows at once what a ‘myocardial infarction’ is? However, as Willi argues, since Greek did not adopt

42 See De Meo (2005, pp. 171 and 187–197), an effort to outline some features of a Latin *sermo castrensis*. A standard work on *Fachsprachen* is Hoffmann (1985).

43 Langslow (2000, pp. 26–27).

44 It is worth emphasizing the point, because Barends (1955), a lexicon to Aeneas Tacticus, makes precisely this mistake, identifying both these words (and many others along the same line) as ‘technical military terms’ (marking them with †).

45 The following paragraph summarizes the relevant parts of Willi (2003, pp. 56–65).

foreign words to shape technical vocabularies, the criterion of *allgemeinverständlichkeit* does not apply to Greek technical terms: in ancient Greece, people will have been able to understand many technical terms (even if they did not always grasp the precise technical reference), and it is this fact that made it possible for an author like Xenophon to adopt technical military terms into his historiographical writings to begin with, which were aimed at a larger audience than just his fellow soldiers.

Apart from these semantic factors, formal criteria also play a role in the formation (and then the identification) of technical terms. Three main linguistic strategies are employed in the creation of technical vocabularies: giving a more specific meaning to an existing term (as when φλέβες ‘blood-vessels’ comes to mean ‘veins’, as opposed to ‘arteries’, in certain Hippocratic treatises), the coinage of new terms and, finally, the borrowing of terms from other semantic fields for reuse as metaphors and metonyms.⁴⁶ The coinage of new terms on the whole proceeds by means of productive derivational suffixes (e.g. *nomina rei actae* in -μα and *nomina actionis* in -σις) and by common compounding strategies with, for instance, prefixes like ἐν- and δυσ- or preverbs like περι- or ὑπο-.⁴⁷ Metaphors are usually based on fairly straightforward physical and conceptual resemblances.⁴⁸ Examples can be adduced from specialized military vocabulary in several languages. Consider, for instance, the Latin terms *aries* (‘ram’ > ‘battering ram’) and *testudo* (‘tortoise’ > ‘shield’ and ‘battle formation wherein the soldiers hold their shields above their heads’).⁴⁹ Other examples are the British and American ranks ‘corporal’ for the leader of a ‘body’ of troops (cf. Latin *corpus*), ‘captain’ for the ‘head’ of such a body (cf. *caput*) and ‘colonel’ for the leader of a regiment or ‘column’ (cf. *columna*).

3.2 *Some Specialized Military Vocabulary from Xenophon's Anabasis 3*

When one looks for specialized military vocabulary in Xenophon's *Anabasis 3* on the basis of the criteria mentioned in the previous section, things are not always clear-cut, since the boundary between ‘technical’ and ‘non-technical’ terms is not clearly drawn. The criterion of *allgemeingebräuchlichkeit* is particularly challenging. Take, for instance, the words σφενδόνη (‘sling’, 3.3.16, 18, 4.4, 4.18; ×10 in Xenophon's complete works) and σφενδονάω (‘to shoot with a sling’, 3.3.7, 15–18, 20, 4.14–15, 17, 27; ×24 in Xenophon's complete works). Both these words are in fairly regular use in Greek literature—the former is first found in Homer, and

46 Schironi (2019, p. 229).

47 Schironi (2019, pp. 230–234).

48 Cf. Lloyd (1987, pp. 172–214), Langslow (2000, pp. 178–201), Schironi (2019, pp. 234–239).

49 For the military vocabulary of the Romans, see De Meo (2005, pp. 171–207).

the latter is already in Pindar—and it is difficult to see what other word anyone could use to refer *specifically* to a sling or to the act of firing a slingshot. In that sense, both words are probably *allgemeingebäuchlich*. Yet, the remarkable fact remains that Xenophon uses both these words much more frequently than, for instance, his predecessors Herodotus (who uses neither) and Thucydides (both once: σφενδόνη at 4.32.4, and σφενδονάω at 2.81.8), despite the fact that all three historiographers often report battles. What seems to be going on here is that Herodotus and Thucydides tend to be less specific in their battle descriptions than Xenophon, preferring general terms like ‘weapons’ and ‘shooting’ to specific terms like ‘sling’ and ‘firing a slingshot’. It is perhaps significant in this respect that Aeneas Tacticus in his—in many ways ‘technical’—treatise on siege warfare at one point (32.8) specifies the general term μηχανήματα (‘war engines’) by καταπάλται καὶ σφενδόνας (‘catapults and slings’), suggesting that normally a general term like μηχανήματα suffices, but that for the specific tactical instructions which he gives more specialized terms are needed (even if Aeneas is talking about a larger kind of ‘sling’ than the hand-held weapons to which Thucydides and Xenophon refer). In that sense, terms like σφενδόνη and σφενδονάω are not *allgemeingebäuchlich*, and their use by Xenophon might be called ‘technical’. For assessments of Xenophon’s style, however, it is ultimately more important to observe that Xenophon differs from his predecessors by often preferring specific terms when describing war than to determine whether words like σφενδόνη and σφενδονάω are properly ‘technical’.⁵⁰

That having been said, there are nonetheless words in Xenophon’s historiographical narratives that are very likely to have been drawn from the actual living professional military vocabulary of his time, including the items on the list of remarkable words and phrases found in *Anabasis* 3.4.36–38. They include not only military ranks (which we will leave to one side), but also terms for features of the landscape and above all tactical manoeuvres. We list the most plausible candidates from *Anabasis* 3, with their places of occurrence in that book, the total number of occurrences in Xenophon’s works, and a brief explanation:

- ἀκρωρυχία (×3: *An.* 3.4.37, 38, *Hell.* 4.6.7): ‘tip of the toe(-nail)’, but here ‘spur’ (of a mountain). The word does not occur before Xenophon and rarely after

⁵⁰ Cf. the acute observations about Xenophon’s style of Higgins (1977, pp. 3–6), especially p. 5 on *Cyr.* 7.1.37 παίει ... τῇ μαχαίρᾳ (‘he struck ... with his sabre’): ‘the man strikes not with any “weapon”, but with a sabre’. A good example of Thucydides’ avoidance of specific terms is found at 3.98.1: μέχρι μὲν οὖν οἱ τοξόται εἶχόν τε τὰ βέλη ... (‘so as long as the archers had projectiles left ...’), where general βέλη (‘projectiles’) is used instead of specific τοξεύματα (‘arrows’). Note also, finally, that Xenophon sometimes appears to use σφενδόνη specifically for the stone or lead ‘bullet’ used in a sling (e.g. *An.* 3.4.4; cf. LSJ s.v.); that looks ‘technical’, in that it appears to give a specific meaning to a more general term.

him; later occurrences of the word, seemingly with the less specific meaning ‘mountain top’ (e.g. Philostr. *VA* 3.1.5, *Her.* 33.41, Zonar. *Epitome* 9.16, 24), all date from the Imperial era and are best interpreted as studied imitations of Xenophon. Nonetheless, the word looks like a technical term (rather than a creative, ‘poetic’ coinage on Xenophon’s part), because it is a compound of a common type—ἀκρο-compounds are productive in the classical period (cf. e.g. Aen. *Tact.* 15.6 ἀκρολοφία ‘mountain ridge’, Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 9.5.1 ἀκροφυής ‘grown high up’)—and it is a metaphor based on physical resemblance. The narrative following the occurrence of the word helps explain the metaphor: Ξενοφῶν ὀρᾷ τοῦ ὄρους τὴν κορυφὴν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἑαυτῶν στρατεύματος οὖσαν, καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης ἔφοδον ἐπὶ τὸν λόφον ἔνθα ἦσαν οἱ πολέμιοι (3.4.41 ‘Xenophon saw that the summit of the mountain was close above their own army and that from this summit there was a way of approach to the hill where the enemy were’). The ‘spur’ (here referred to by a non-technical term, λόφος (‘hill’)), is compared to the tip of a toe, which juts out from the inset of the foot (the mountain: τοῦ ὄρους τὴν κορυφὴν), being connected to it by the middle phalanx bone (a ridge or ‘way of approach’, called ἔφοδος).⁵¹ Xenophon’s insight into the tactical situation reported in the narrative also makes clear why it is useful to have a specialized term for a ‘spur’ of a mountain, as opposed to just any kind of ‘hill’: a spur is connected to a mountain with a higher top, and possession of that top makes it possible to dislodge any troops that occupy the spur. The episode of the *Anabasis* ends with the Greeks racing a Persian regiment to the top of the mountain: they take possession of it, so that the Persians can no longer hold the spur, and the Greeks can pass by on the road which the spur overlooked. The use of the technical term at once indicates the tactical problem to be resolved.

- διαγγέλλομαι (×1, *An.* 3.4.37): ‘pass a command through the ranks’. The technical credentials of this word are perhaps less strong than those of ἀκρωνυχία. However, the very fact that the verb never recurs anywhere (παρεγγυάω or παραγγέλλω are the preferred terms in Xenophon and later literature) makes it unlikely that Xenophon coined it just for the occasion. And the verb does look technical to the extent that it may well be a new coinage based on a common type of reciprocal middle verbs; one may compare διακελεύομαι ‘exhort one another’ or διαλέγομαι ‘converse’.⁵² Furthermore, it is readily understandable that a term needed to be coined to differentiate the special way of giving an order which it denotes from other ways of giving orders.

51 Cf. the expression for ‘on tiptoes’ at Eur. *El.* 840 ὄνυχας ἔπ’ ἄκρους στάς. Compare also the common metaphor ‘foot (of a mountain)’ at e.g. Hom. *Il.* 2.824, 20.59, Pind. *Pyth.* 11.36.

52 For reciprocal middles with δια-, see Allan (2003, p. 86, n. 138).

We will return below to the question why Xenophon may have employed the term at this junction, but at the very least its use is another sign of Xenophon's attention for military *minutiae*, also noted above.

- ἐκθλίβω (×2, *An.* 3.4.19, 4.20): 'to squeeze out of line'. This compound verb has several specialized meanings in fields like medicine (it frequently occurs in the Hippocratic corpus), natural philosophy and linguistics.⁵³ It may have been adopted into the military vocabulary from any of these fields to describe the breaking of the line under pressure. The impression that it is a technical term is reinforced by the existence of the more commonly used verb πιέζω, which is in fact used by Xenophon in the same sentence: the specialized term was probably not *allgemeingebräuchlich*.
- κατὰγομαι (×4, *An.* 3.4.37, *Hell.* 4.5.18, *Cyr.* 8.5.17, *Symp.* 8.39): 'return to camp'. This is an altogether unusual sense of the word before Xenophon. We are probably dealing with an existing word which took on a specialized meaning when used among military 'specialists'. Given its normal sense of bringing ships from the high seas to land, it may have been imported from the navy. Alternatively, there may be a metaphor at work here: 'putting into harbor' is a common way of saying 'reaching safety' in Greek literature (e.g. *Theogn.* 1274 ἐνωρμίσθην) and soldiers may well have conceived of their camp that way. If there is any mileage in that explanation, the word may offer a glimpse of 'soldier speak'.
- οὐρά (×14, *An.* 3.4.38, 43): 'tail', but here 'rear of a marching army'. The metaphor is frequently employed by Xenophon, and it then recurs in Polybius, where οὐρά is the general term for 'the rear' of an army (whether it is on the march or not—a slight standardization of the metaphor). The fact that both Xenophon and Polybius use the term more likely points to both authors drawing on living military vocabulary than to Xenophonic influence on Polybius. The supposition that οὐρά is a technical term is reinforced by the fact that we also find a specialized word for the 'commander of the rearguard', οὐραγός (*An.* 4.3.26, 29, *Cyr.* 2.3.22, 3.3.40) and by the fact that Polybius in addition knows a verb οὐραγεῖν ('lead the rear' or 'be in the rear').
- ὀπισθοφυλακέω (×11, *An.* 3.2.36, 37, 3.8): 'to guard the rear', 'be in the rearguard'. Again, a word which first occurs in Xenophon, and which is very frequent in Hellenistic and later historiography. The compound testifies to the increasing specialism of Greek armies and the differentiation of functions which must have accompanied that process. The 'rank' ὀπισθοφύλαξ is also first attested in Xenophon (e.g. *An.* 3.3.7).
- πλαίσιον (×12, *An.* 3.2.36, 4.19, 22, 28, 43, 44): 'hollow square'. This formation comprises hoplites on all four sides of a hollow square, with the middle taken

53 Cf. LSJ s.v.

up by light-armed troops or baggage and non-combatant camp-followers. The word originally refers to a rectangular frame used in construction, so we are dealing with a building-metaphor, based on physical resemblance.⁵⁴ Thucydides describes how Brasidas extricates a Spartan army from mountainous Lyncestis using this formation (4.125.2–3), but does not use the word there, perhaps testifying to his avoidance of ‘technical’ terms. Thucydides does, however, twice use the phrase ἐν πλασιῶν in relation to the Athenians in Sicily (6.67.1, 7.78.2). Later authors seem to call (a variation of) this formation πλινθίον (e.g. Arr. *Tact.* 29.7–8), another brick metaphor.

- **στόμα** (×50, *An.* 3.4.42, 43, 44): ‘mouth’, but ‘front’ of a formation in military usage. Like οὐρά, this word is a metaphorical technical term which Xenophon uses often and which recurs in Polybius. Eustathius (*Comm. in Iliadem* I 743.7–10, IV 335.8–10 Van der Valk) wrongly adduces the Homeric expression πολέμου/πτολέμοιο στόμα (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 10.8, 19.313—in fact ‘war’s deadly jaws’) as a parallel. Closer are the uses of στόμα for the ‘point of a weapon’ (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 15.389, Eur. *Supp.* 1206), or the expression κατὰ στόμα ‘face to face’ (e.g. Hdt. 8.11.1, Eur. *Heracl.* 801). The usage for the front of an army may or may not be linked to Hellenistic military uses for the ‘edge of a weapon’ (which has its own metaphorical extensions (Ael. *Tact.* 13; Ascl. *Tact.* 3.5; Polyb. 10.12.7, with Walbank 1967, p. 214)). *Hell.* 4.3.4 describes a clever manoeuvre of the Spartan king Agesilaus: ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐκώλυον τῆς πορείας οἱ Θετταλοὶ ἐπελαύνοντες τοῖς ὀπισθεν, παραπέμπει ἐπ’ οὐράν καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος ἵππικὸν πλὴν τῶν περὶ αὐτόν (‘When the Thessalians, by charging upon those who were behind, kept interfering with his progress, he sent along to the rear the horsemen who were at the front, except those about his own person’); but the parallel passage in *Agesilaus* (2.2) replaces ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος with the non-technical ἀπὸ τοῦ προηγούμενου στρατεύματος (‘from the part of the army leading the way’). One suspects that the genre of the encomium, to which *Agesilaus* belongs, is less receptive to technical military terms than actual historiographical narrative.
- **ὑπερδέξις** (×8, *An.* 3.4.37): ‘higher ground’. This word does not occur in extant literature before Xenophon, while Xenophon uses it eight times (in *Hell.*, *An.* and *Ages.*). One reason to assume that it is technical is that Aeneas Tacticus (1.2) also uses it in his military treatise, and that Polybius employs it frequently. There are several other reasons to suspect that the word was adopted into literature from living military professional vocabulary. First, the word is a compound of a familiar type, which, as we have seen, is compatible with one common way in which technical terms come into existence. Secondly, the word has a clear technical reference: on all its occurrences, it

54 See Dover (1993, p. 290).

does not simply refer to any 'higher ground', but to 'higher ground' considered as a tactical position. Thirdly, it is easy to see that it is useful to have a specialized term to refer to this particular tactical position, given the special advantages which occupying a high place brings to the troops occupying it and the special problems which it poses to the troops passing or attacking it. A fourth indication that the word is a technical term is that it is expressively neutral: originally, it must have meant 'higher ground on the right-hand side', which is the side poorly protected by shields, which were carried in the left hand, and so it probably had a negative connotation.⁵⁵ However, in the usage which we encounter in our texts, ὑπερδέξιος is a standardized and objective term for 'higher ground'.

- φάλαγξ (×101, *An.* 3.3.11, 4.23, 26): 'formation of hoplites in battle order'. Given how well-known this formation is, it is surprising to find that the word φάλαγξ does not occur in the required sense before Xenophon. This possibly Doric sense of φάλαγξ⁵⁶ also occurs in Aeneas Tacticus (29.9), but not in either Herodotus or Thucydides (who describes the formation in detail at 5.71, but eschews the word); it passes into the Koine. Homer uses φάλαγξ once in the singular (*Il.* 6.6), but more usually in the plural, to refer loosely to 'a line of troops' (cf. also Tyrtaeus 12.21 West). The use of the singular to refer to a whole hoplite formation may have a metaphorical origin, as the basic meaning of the word appears to have been 'log' (as at *Hdt.* 3.97.3).⁵⁷

3.3 Conclusion: Xenophon's Use of Military Vocabulary

Further terms from *Anabasis* 3, which may also belong to the professional military vocabulary, could be adduced, but our discussion of the most likely candidates in the previous section suffices to allow certain patterns of usage to be discerned. They are not unlike those found for the 'dialectisms' and genuine 'poeticisms' treated in Section 2 of this chapter. In general, the fact that Xenophon drew on technical military diction in *Anabasis* and elsewhere to a significantly greater extent than Herodotus or even Thucydides is indicative of how Xenophon sought to develop a less elevated style for his historical narratives and how he imbued them with a tinge of realism. In that sense, the effect is comparable to his use of many words that belong to 'Great Attic'. Furthermore, the items discussed above show an interesting division of distribution: some, like φάλαγξ, οὐρά and στόμα, are widely used by Xenophon throughout his works. They resemble the

55 Cf. Pritchett (1971–1991, Vol. 4, pp. 76–78), Whitehead (2001, p. 99).

56 Gautier (1911, p. 40).

57 Cf., somewhat differently and less plausibly, Σ D Hom. *Il.* 4.254, glossing φάλαγγας: τάξεις στρατιωτῶν εἶπεν ὁ ποιητής, ἐπειδὴ τὸ παλαιὸν ξύλοις ἐμάχοντο, φάλαγγας δὲ ξύλα ἐκάλουν οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ('The poet means lines of soldiers, since in earlier times they used to fight with wooden weapons and the people of old used to call wooden things *phalanxes*').

seemingly random ‘dialecticisms’, in that they give the work a certain ‘patina’, in this case one that suggests a conscientious and precise historian is at work, who is an expert in the military matters which frequently are the subject of his stories and who knows ‘how to talk the talk’, as it were.

Perhaps most interesting, however, are those words which, not unlike the deliberate poeticisms discerned by ancient and modern critics, are only used occasionally: these include, in the passage with which this chapter started, at least ἀκρωνυχία and διαγγέλλομαι and perhaps also ὑπερδέξιος and κατάγομαι. If poeticisms are occasionally inserted to achieve *pathos*, what is the effect of those rare words here? As for διαγγέλλομαι, we should observe that the term is used in a context which thematizes various ways of giving orders. In particular, by passing their order down the ranks, from man to man, the Persians probably wished to conceal their plans from the Greeks (in vain, as it turns out). By contrast, the Greeks use a herald (ἐκήρυξε), because they *want* the Persians to hear: their purpose is to see if the Persians will indeed retreat.⁵⁸ The use of the terms ἀκρωνυχία and ὑπερδέξιος here is also not a coincidence, we think. They occur in a context in which the character Xenophon finds new ways of dealing with a difficult and unfamiliar tactical problem: by formulating the problem in ‘proper’ military terms, Xenophon is indirectly characterized as a professional and good general who knows how to tackle tactical issues. As for the use of κατάγομαι, finally, if it is true that it has connotations of reaching ‘the safety of the camp’, it may point to the eagerness with which Persian armies normally make for their camps at nightfall.

In sum, then, Xenophon appears to have consciously adopted military professional vocabulary into his historiographical narratives and so to have opened up a new chapter in the history of Greek prose style—Polybius, for one, followed suit.

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58 For Xenophon's interest in this aspect of tactics, cf. *Eq. mag.* 4.9: τάς γε μὴν ἐξαγωγὰς τοῦ ἵππικου ἦρτον ἂν οἱ πολέμιοι αἰσθάνοιντο, εἰ ἀπὸ παραγγέλσεως γίγνιντο μάλλον ἢ εἰ ἀπὸ κήρυκος ἢ ἀπὸ προγραφῆς (‘The advance of cavalry is less likely to be detected by the enemy if orders are not given by a herald or in writing beforehand, but passed along’).

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