

CAVALRY INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE ATHENIAN AGORA

(PLATE 14)

PERHAPS NO PLACE IN ATHENS has proved to be as rich as the Agora in illuminating the history of the city, especially with regard to its political and military institutions. In the last thirty years, particularly, the excavations in the Agora and the Kerameikos have yielded an abundance of new epigraphical evidence for the Classical and Hellenistic Athenian cavalry. Clustered in the northwest corner of the Agora and undoubtedly proximate to the as-yet-undiscovered cavalry headquarters (*hipparcheion*), these inscriptions affirm the importance of the Athenian cavalry in the public life of ancient Athens. The two inscriptions published below add to our expanding knowledge of this celebrated military institution.

1 (Pl. 14). An inscribed fragment of a dedicatory relief of white (Pentelic?) marble (I 7518) found on July 22, 1981, during removal of the east-west wall of Byzantine Room 1 at J/13, J/18–3/7.¹ Broken on top; surface chipped and worn. Evidence of anathyrosis on the top (a band of ca. 0.035 m) and on the right side of the stone suggests that it was deliberately recut for use as a rectangular building block. The lower edge of an equestrian relief with portions of four horses' legs and hooves is preserved, with one horse in a prancing position. The height of the relief is 0.067 m. The inscription below preserves the initial letters of six lines.

H. 0.190 m; W. 0.385 m; Th. 0.138 m.

L.H. of first line 0.02 m; other letters ca. 0.0085 m; non-stoichedon, with space between first and second lines 0.004 m.

ca. 446–403 a.

NON-ΣΤΟΙΧ.

Φ υ λ [α ρ χ ο ι]
 Ἀριστορ[---]
 Εὐθ[-----]
 Χαβ[-----]
 5 Κ[-----]
 Δ[-----]

Line 1: By its size and position this clearly represents the heading for a column of names. The shape of the letters, particularly the upsilon, the Attic lambda, and the four-bar sigma (line 2), date this relief to the period after ca. 446 B.C. and before the adoption of the Ionian alphabet in 403 B.C.² The restoration of Φύλ[αρχοι],

¹ I wish to express my appreciation to Professor John M. Camp, Director of the Agora Excavations, for permission to publish these two inscriptions, which were excavated under the directorship of T. Leslie Shear, Jr., and for his expert assistance in the examination of the stones. I also wish to thank Professors Christian Habicht, Ron Stroud, Stephen Tracy, and Malcolm Wallace for their valuable suggestions on the restoration of the texts and Professors Carol Lawton and Mary Moore for thoughts on the hippic relief. I am indebted to the referees of this article for their very helpful comments. I have been spared many errors; those remaining are my own.

² The letters conform to Wilhelm Larfeld's Period VII (445–403 B.C.): Larfeld 1902, pp. 444–450. For more recent treatment, see the charts in Clairmont 1983, pp. 56–58, where some similarities may be found (e.g., the upward sweep of the arms of the upsilon in no. 32b = IG I³ 1162, an Athenian casualty list dated to 447/6 B.C.), but there are too few distinct letters in our inscription to rule out a later date within Period VII. For example, some letters, but not all, also bear some resemblance to a casualty list dated to ca. 430 B.C.: Bradeen 1964, pp. 38–39, no. 10, lines 8–11. For other

the tribal commanders of the cavalry, is secure because of the hippic relief above and by comparison with other inscriptions of this type.³ The spaces between the phi and the upsilon and the upsilon and the lambda are 0.062 m and 0.060 m, respectively. An average of the two allows us to approximate the distance to the end of the heading as ca. 0.45 m, and factoring in the uninscribed space in the left margin (0.215 m from the left edge of the phi to the left edge of the stone) and assuming symmetry on the right, the original monument must have been at least a meter in width. The phylarchs were listed either in a single column of ten names or in two columns of five, with the phylarch heading perhaps repeated to the right.⁴ If the preserved bottom of the stone is original—and this is not certain—then the single-column option is eliminated because the space available below the last line is insufficient for five more names. However, if the inscription was formatted as a single column, then the deep indenting (ca. 0.045 m) of the left margin of the column below the heading leaves little room, if symmetry is adhered to, for any lettering in addition to the *nomina* and perhaps abbreviated deme affiliations of the phylarchs. This presents no problem: economy of prosopographical identification is characteristic of 5th-century inscriptions. For cavalry commanders attested for the 4th through the 2nd century B.C., the information is usually more complete.⁵

Line 2: The lower portion of the vertical of the tau can be faintly seen. The center diagonals of the final sigma are visible, but the surface is very worn, and the stone breaks along a line through the letter. The name of the first phylarch might be Aristos, a name twice attested as early as the 4th century B.C. in Attic prosopography.⁶ If the final letter is not a sigma, then of course the choices are nearly limitless.

Line 3: Although difficult to see on the stone itself, the squeeze reveals the block outline of the epsilon in its properly aligned initial position.

Line 4: Only the top half of the final letter can be seen: the curving line and the vertical hasta. It could be either a beta or a rho; because the curvature is less full, more sloping than the rho found in line 2, and also because it conforms to the shape of many of the betas in this period, I have restored a beta. Chabrias may be plausibly restored, or, if the reading is a dotted rho, there are many possible names, such as Chares, Charias, etc.

Line 5: Clear traces of the lower half of a kappa, as well as the upper diagonal hasta, can be detected.

Line 6: On the squeeze, the left diagonal hasta and the apex of a letter that can be either a delta or an alpha can be detected in the proper initial letter position. I have restored a delta only because I see no signs of the crossbar required of the alpha.

This monument is a dedication by the phylarchs of the Athenian cavalry. It may be festive in purpose, as in the contemporary Panathenaic cavalcade on the Parthenon, or agonistic (perhaps the spectacular cavalry exercise known as the *anthippasia*), or it may celebrate some victorious cavalry engagement.

According to Xenophon (*Hipparchikos* 3.10–13), the *anthippasia* was a cavalry display in the hippodrome in which the cavalry was first split into two squadrons of five tribes, each commanded by a hipparch; the two squadrons then charged one another and skillfully rode through each

discussions of the letter forms in this period, see Immerwahr 1990, pp. 109–169, esp. pp. 160–164 on the upsilon and phi, and Walbank 1974.

³ For example, Meritt 1940, pp. 57–58, no. 6 (4th century B.C.), and Threpsiades and Vanderpool 1963, p. 109, no. 2, line 14 (286–261 B.C.) = SEG XXI 357. Christian Habicht informs me that there is also an unpublished fragment of Pentelic marble (inv. I 84) found in the Kerameikos in 1960 that lists hipparchs and phylarchs, with the heading Φύλαρχοι followed by the initial letters of five phylarchs.

⁴ Threpsiades and Vanderpool 1963, p. 109, no. 2, lines 14–20, has two columns of six phylarchs, with the heading of φύλαρχοι repeated twice.

⁵ Meritt 1940, pp. 57–58, no. 6, and Threpsiades and Vanderpool 1963, p. 109, no. 2 (phylarchs listed by name and demotic); Thompson 1953, pp. 49–51 (hipparchs and phylarchs listed by name, patronymic, and demotic, although the phylarch information below the heading is no longer preserved); and Vanderpool 1974, pp. 311–313 (hipparchs listed by name, patronymic, and demotic). Cf. also the ample prosopographical evidence from the participants of the festivals of the Panathenaia, Theseia, and Pythais in the 2nd century B.C.

⁶ IG II² 2405, line 9, and 10176; see Osborne and Byrne 1994, p. 60, for other references to the name Aristos in Attica.

other's ranks.⁷ Perhaps this relief honored the most illustrious squadron, that is, the five "winning" tribes and their phylarchs, and consequently we should be cautious not to assume that the other five phylarchs were listed in the inscription. In all the extant inscriptions documenting the *anthippasia*, however, only individual phylarchs or their tribes are honored. If it is indeed intended to commemorate the event of the *anthippasia*, it would be the first known example in Athenian history.

Although this relief does not depict any hoplite combatants, they may have appeared to the left of the preserved horsemen. In fact, a stylistic and contemporary parallel might be found in a cavalry relief from Eleusis usually dated to the Archidamian phase of the Peloponnesian War.⁸ Pythodoros, son of Epizelos, serving as hipparch, dedicated this monument to the Eleusinian goddesses. On it we see two friezes, an upper and lower panel, depicting engagements between hoplites and horsemen (attacking from the right).⁹ The shapes of the hooves and legs of the horses and the general quality of the composition are similar to those on the Agora relief. The central figure in the upper frieze of the Eleusis relief, shown astride a prancing mount, the pose typically used for attacking figures, may be Pythodoros himself. In both reliefs the sculptor has inserted the action into rough, undulating terrain (in the relief on the Agora inscription one of the legs of the horses to the right disappears behind an obvious mound), perhaps "as a device to heighten the ferocity of the battle."¹⁰ If the Agora monument does commemorate some military activity involving the cavalry, it is unlikely to be a casualty list, since the death of at least five phylarchs in a single engagement is extremely unlikely and certainly unparalleled in Athenian history.

Although fragmentary, this monument has genuine historical value. It may be the earliest confirmation of the reorganization of the Athenian cavalry into the canonical composition of two hipparchs, ten phylarchs, and 1,000 cavalrymen, in contrast to the earlier period (450s), when three hipparchs commanded 300 men, with no certainty that there were ten tribal commanders at all.¹¹ It may also confirm that the cavalry exercise of the *anthippasia* described by Xenophon dates back to the 5th century. In addition, although the *nomina* are badly broken, this inscription adds to our modest list of cavalry officers from the 5th century B.C.

2 (Pl. 14). A fragment of an inscribed stele of gray Hymettian marble with veins of white (I 7551), found on August 2, 1982, in a well (J2:1) near the Painted Stoa. The central portion of the pedimental top, as well as a fragment of the left side of the stele, is preserved. It is mended from four fragments. The stele was broken at the time of its use in a feed channel. The sides are worked with a claw chisel; the top is picked.

⁷ For evidence of this display in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., see *IG II²* 379, 3079, 3130; Meritt 1946, pp. 176–177, no. 24; Pritchett 1940, pp. 111–112, no. 21; Shear 1971, pp. 271–272, pl. 57:c; Vanderpool 1974, pp. 311–313. For discussion, see Bugh 1988, pp. 59–60, and Kyle 1987, p. 46.

⁸ For historical discussion, see Bugh 1988, pp. 91–93.

⁹ For discussion of the sculpture, see Hölscher 1973, pp. 99–101.

¹⁰ Carroll-Spellecke 1983, p. 84, referring specifically to the Eleusis relief for the purposes of illustration. She comments earlier (p. 27), "Rocky terrain is used in action and battle scenes to stress the wildness of the setting and the speed of the figures. It is also especially useful in the arrangement of sinking and toppling figures. In short, landscape serves the figures and helps to clarify and explain their action."

¹¹ For discussion of the reorganization of the Athenian cavalry in the mid 5th century B.C., see Bugh 1988, pp. 39–52, and Spence 1993, pp. 9–17. Martin Robertson and Alison Frantz (1975, commentary to West Slab VIII.15) suggest that the two bearded cavalrymen on the frieze (West Slab VIII.15 and West Slab IV.8) are the two hipparchs of the newly formed Athenian cavalry, but as I have argued elsewhere (Bugh 1988, p. 78, note 135), they could also be two of the phylarchs. This is not the occasion to debate the efforts to see the young horsemen of the Panathenaic frieze either as the heroized 192 hoplites who fell at the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) or as tribal representatives of a celebration of the Kleisthenic reforms (507 B.C.) or, even most recently, as a mythic reminder of Erechtheus' chariot/cavalry(?) victory over Eumolpus (see Connelly 1996, pp. 69–71, for earlier literature); in my opinion, these theories are imaginative but simply do not persuade.

H. 0.365 m; W. 0.263 m; Th. 0.075 m.

L.H. 0.006–0.007 m; stoichedon, with an irregular horizontal checker of 0.015 m. Left margin of lines 7–9 and 12 is preserved.

ca. 330–285 a.

ΣΤΟΙΧ. 24

[Θ] Ε Ο [Ι]
 [...] Διογένου[ς.]⁸⁷
 [εἶπεν· ἀγ]αθεῖ τύχει· [δεδόχθαι]
 [τοῖς προδ]ρόμοις· ἐπ[ειδὴ]⁴
 5 [. . . καὶ Φι]λόδημος [οἱ γραμματ-
 [εὐ]οντες [τό]ν τεμπρο[σθε χρόνο-
 ν πάντα ἐφιλοτιμοῦν[το πρὸς τ-
 οὐ[ς] ἱππεῖς καὶ νῦν τῶ[ν τε ἱππέ-
 ων πάντων καὶ τῶν προδ]ρόμων κ-
 10 [α]λῶς καὶ δικαίως ἐπι[μεμελομ-
 ἐνοι εἰσιν περὶ τὴν δ[όσιν τοῦ]
 σίτου τοῖς ἱπ[π(ο)ις ἐγ]δεικνύμε-
 [νο]ι τὴν αὐτῶν φιλ[οτιμίαν πρὸ-
 [ς τ]οῦς ἱππεῖς κα[ὶ]¹⁰
 15 [.]ενου[.]¹⁵]

Line 1: The spacing of the epsilon and omicron of the invocation to the gods (ΘΕΟΙ) on the fascia of the pediment favors a line length of 24 letters. An imaginary vertical line from the apex of the pedimental top through the middle of the invocatory heading will symmetrically bisect the text into 12 letters.

Line 2: The nomen and demotic of the mover of the decree are not preserved; only the patronymic, Diogenes, remains.

Lines 4–5: These lines should contain the *nomina* of the two secretaries of the cavalry being honored by this decree. Of the few known officials associated with the administration of the Athenian cavalry, the γραμματεῖς are the most likely choice. We might restore a particle, e.g., δέ, δή, τέ, or even γέ, but each presents syntactical problems and is not supported by Attic epigraphical parallels. I have restored the definite article οἱ, the resulting attributive participle serving as a substantive, even if this restoration has no exact analogues and is weakened by a close comparandum (below) using only the participle. Secretaries of the cavalry are attested in three other inscriptions, all of Hellenistic date.¹² For a parallel use of the participle, without the definite article, for the office of secretary, see *IG II²* 1272, lines 3, 9: γραμματεῶν (cf. *τραπεζιτεῶν*: *ID* 1717–1721, and *ἐφηβέων*: *ID* 1934) or, with the article, in many Attic and Delian ephebic inscriptions: οἱ ἐφηβεύσαντες or οἱ ἀλειφόμενοι (young men undergoing gymnastic training on Delos: *ID* 1928–1931, 1933, 1936); cf. also *IG II²* 1282, lines 4–6: ἐπειδὴ οἱ προ[σ]αιρε[θ]έντες μετὰ τοῦ ἐπιμελητοῦ κτλ. Other officials associated with the cavalry are the ταμίαι, “treasurers,” as in *IG II²* 1264, lines 2–3, 13, 22. However, not only would [. ταμειυ]όντες require three additional letter spaces to fill, but in *IG II²* 1264 they are clearly and descriptively identified as ταμίαι τῶν τῆς θεοῦ (i.e., Athena). It is very unlikely that “treasurers” would have appeared in such an abbreviated form in our inscription. The second γραμματεὺς is likely to be Φιλόδημος,¹³ the right hasta and apex of the lambda being clearly visible and the bottom bar of the sigma faintly so. If this is true, the name of his colleague will have filled seven letter spaces at the end of line 4 and the beginning of line 5. For a parallel to this type of nominal pairing, see *IG II²* 1256, lines 2–3: ἐπειδὴ Εὐφύλης καὶ Δέξιος γενόμενοι ἐπιμεληταὶ κτλ.

Line 6: The sigma terminating -οντες is strongly suggested by the visible bottom horizontal stroke showing marked similarity to other “double-strike” sigmas in the text. All that survives of the nu in τόν is a faint trace of the top portion of the right hasta, but it is positioned correctly in the stoichos. Although Attic inscriptions

¹² Threpsiades and Vanderpool 1963, p. 103, no. 1, line 41 (282/1 B.C.) = *SEG XXI* 525; *Fouilles de Delphes* III, ii, no. 28.III, lines 38–40 (106/5 B.C.); and Crosby 1937, pp. 460–461, no. 8, line 14 (2nd century B.C.).

¹³ This name is too well attested in Attic prosopography to suggest an identification; for a list, see Osborne and Byrne 1994, p. 453.

attest the common use of the final nu on ἔμπροσθεν before forms of χρόνος, the phrase also appears without the nu: *IG* II² 654, line 13 (285/4 B.C.) and *IG* II² 1176, lines 26–27 (ca. 360 B.C.). The shorter form will accommodate precisely the stoichedon pattern of 24 letters.

Line 7: The preposition περί is possible for πρὸς; cf. *IG* II² 423, lines 3–4: [φι]λοτιμῶνται περί τὸν [δῆμον]; *IG* II² 1187, lines 2–3: ὁ στρατηγὸς φιλοτιμεῖται περί τὸν δῆμον; *IG* II² 1202, lines 4–5: φιλότιμοι περί τὸν δῆμον; and *IG* II² 1259, line 8 (restored). But it is more likely that our inscription follows the pattern of *IG* II² 360, lines 6–7, 12–13: φιλοτιμούμενος πρὸς τὸν δῆμον; *IG* II² 1176, line 26: φιλοτιμεῖται πρὸς τοὺς δημότας; *IG* II² 1273, lines 4–5: φιλοτιμούμενο[ς] πρὸς τοὺς θιασῶτας; or *IG* II² 1277, line 31: φιλοτιμῶνται πρὸς τε τὴν θεόν; cf. *IG* II² 1281, line 13; 1282, line 16.

Line 9: There appear to be traces on the stone of the left corner of a delta.

Line 10: The lambda in καλῶς appears on the stone as an alpha, but this is probably carelessness on the part of the stonemason. Christian Habicht has suggested ἐπι[μελούμ]ενοι, as in *IG* II² 560 (restored), but this will result in a line length of only 23 letters. The use of the reduplicated perfect form, although not employed periphrastically, is paralleled in another cavalry inscription of 282/1 B.C.¹⁴

Line 11: The bottom bar and a tip of the center bar of the initial epsilon are visible. The left slanting stroke of a delta at the end of the preserved line is visible, but the presence of stray cuts on the worn surface leaves some room for doubt. It is possible, although I detect no trace of it on the stone, that it is a kappa. If it is a kappa, Habicht would restore κόμιδην, attested elsewhere in Attic inscriptions (e.g., *IG* II² 1264, lines 5–6: οἱ ἱ[ππ]ε[ῖ]ς τὸν τε σῖτον κομίσων[ται], an inscription honoring the treasurers of Athena, who assisted the hipparchs in the procuring of the grain¹⁵). This would necessitate a line length of 23 letters, however, and the omission of the definite article before σίτου in line 12. For a close parallel to this use of δόσις, see Threpsiades and Vanderpool 1963, p. 103, no. 1, lines 18–19: ἐπιμετέληνται δὲ καὶ τῆς τῶν σίτων δόσεως (here referring to the phylarchs and hipparchs of the Athenian cavalry in 282/1 B.C.).

Line 12: Here is the one certain case where the stoichedon pattern is violated. The iota and sigma of τοῖς straddle the space of the ninth stoichos, but the stoichedon pattern is restored with the initial iota in ἵπποις. However, the stonemason then left a *vacat* where the omicron should have been. Perhaps he thought that the letter should be an epsilon and thus refer to grain for horsemen, not horses; if so, he would have had to ignore the fact that the accusative would not agree with the dative τοῖς. He may have simply forgotten to come back to it after proceeding with the rest of the text. In any case, the line has 24 stoichoi; the number of actual letters would have been 25 were it not for the uninscribed omicron. Although the surface is worn near the break on the right edge, traces of almost all of the nu can be detected after the epsilon. One form or another of ἐνδεικνύμενοι is common in Attic inscriptions; the number of letter spaces would also accommodate the perfect ἐν[δεδειγμέν]οι.¹⁶

Line 14: The top semicircle of the omicron is preserved. There is a faint trace of the apex of a letter in the stoichos following the kappa, which is almost certainly an alpha. Unfortunately, the stone breaks away at this point and the surface is worn. Considering the two military units prominently mentioned in the decree, one might suggest τοὺς προδρόμους to follow, but this restoration would leave only one letter space before -ενου in the following line. Mu is a possibility, giving us ΜΕΝΟΥ and perhaps some middle-passive participial form. Possibilities with a military connection might be κα[ὶ] τοὺς στρατευομ[έν]ου[ς] (but there are only 14 letters; cf. *IG* II² 1270, lines 5–6; 1302, lines 3, 8, 11; 1309, line b5; 1311, line 14) or κα[ὶ] τοὺς στρατευσαμ[έν]ου[ς] (*IG* II² 1155, line 3 [restored]) or any number of variations of τοὺς τεταγμένους, referring to troops stationed in the forts around Attika (e.g., see *IG* II² 1272, lines 5–6, 15–16; 1299, lines 20, 26, 32, 40–42; 1303, line 1; 1304, lines 1, 20–21, 30, 38, 41, 54–55, 62; 1305, line 2; 1306, line 2; 1308, lines 13, 16). The context in our inscription, however, is grain for the horses; the introduction of non-hippic units at this point in the text would be puzzling. In any case, there is no guarantee that καὶ is the correct restoration; other possibilities include κατὰ or καθάπερ.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first occurrence of *prodromoi* in an Attic decree and the first occurrence of the secretaries of the cavalry as dedicatory recipients, one of whom may have been named Philodemos. Fortunately, the prescript of our inscription and some of its text are

¹⁴ Threpsiades and Vanderpool 1963, p. 103, no. 1, lines 6, 14, 18–19.

¹⁵ Camp 1974, pp. 322–324, no. 3, lines 8–9: κομίζεται σῖτος.

¹⁶ E.g., Dürrbach 1921–1922, pp. 26–28, no. 18, lines 2–3.

closely paralleled in *IG II²* 1272 (267/6 B.C.), where a certain Dion, secretary to the treasurers of the *sitonikon*, is honored by the Athenian troops stationed at Eleusis. The *prodromoi* belonged to a special hippic unit attached to the Athenian cavalry in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. In our text they honor the two *grammateis* for their past *philotimia* towards the *hippeis* and the fine job they have now performed with respect to the distribution of grain allowance (σῆτος) for the horses of the *hippeis* and presumably also the *prodromoi*. Secretaries for the Athenian cavalry were usually assigned directly to the cavalry commanders, the hipparchs, as attested in three Hellenistic inscriptions. In addition to assisting in the grain distribution, they arranged for the publication of cavalry decrees and no doubt were responsible for the record keeping of the Athenian cavalry so amply documented in the lead tablets found during excavations in the Agora and the Kerameikos.¹⁷

Who, then, were these *prodromoi*? Literally, “front-runners,” an advance force, skirmishers, scouts, couriers—all these terms have been applied to them, and to a large extent their military duties could involve all of these.¹⁸ In Athens they are recorded first in Xenophon’s *Hipparchikos* (1.25), usually dated to the 360s. Xenophon advises the hipparch that if he wants his ten phylarchs to distinguish themselves (φιλοτιμεῖσθαι) in command of well-equipped regiments, he himself should arm his *prodromoi* as well as possible (ὀπλοῖς ὥς κάλλιστα)¹⁹ and should train them rigorously (ὥς μάλιστα) in the use of the javelin. The *prodromoi* may also be equated with the reconnaissance scouts (πρόοδοι) mentioned later in the same treatise (4.5). By the 330s the *prodromoi* were included in the annual *dokimasia* of the Athenian cavalry by the Council of 500 (*AthPol* 49.1). In the *Athenaion Politeia* we learn that the Council inspected the *prodromoi*, and those men who it determined to be unfit to “prodrome” (προδρομεύειν) were rejected. What then follows in Aristotle’s account is the inspection of the *hamippoi*, a specialized unit of foot soldiers who cooperated closely with the cavalry, presumably with both *prodromoi* and regular *hippeis*. Any soldier found deficient by the Council was refused his pay (μισθοφορία). This light infantry, better known from the Boeotian army (Thucydides 5.57, Xenophon 7.5.24), is mentioned at *Hipparchikos* 5.13, where Xenophon advises the hipparch to convince his city of the tactical advantages of utilizing such a force of *hamippoi*. There is, however, no evidence that the Athenians possessed or used *hamippoi* at the battle of Mantinea in 362 B.C. In his commentary to *Athenaion Politeia* 49.1, P. J. Rhodes suggests that this infantry corps was introduced in Athens sometime between 362 and ca. 350 B.C.²⁰

It has been plausibly suggested that the *prodromoi* were introduced to take the place of the mounted bowmen (ἵπποτοξόται), a force of two hundred that Athens employed in the 5th and early 4th centuries B.C.²¹ They are mentioned three times in Thucydides (2.13.8, 5.84.1–2, 6.94.4) and once by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* (3.3.1), where they are described as being closely attached to the hipparchs and having the honor of charging the enemy first. After this they do not appear in our sources again as part of the Athenian military organization. Sometime between the 390s and 360s, therefore, it is probable that the Athenians disbanded their corps of mounted bowmen and replaced them with *prodromoi*, perhaps also numbering two hundred.²²

¹⁷ Braun 1970 and Kroll 1977a.

¹⁸ Pritchett 1971, pp. 130–133.

¹⁹ Cf. *IG II²* 1303, lines 15–16 = *SEG* XXV 157.

²⁰ Rhodes 1981, p. 566.

²¹ Sekunda (1986, p. 54) theorizes that “the *prodromoi* or ‘Scouts’ were a branch of the Athenian cavalry raised in the winter of 395/4 to replace the horse-archers, who were disbanded after the battle of Haliartos.” This may be too precise. It depends on Sekunda’s belief that Dexileos, a young horseman killed in the fighting around Corinth in 394 (*IG II²* 5222) and memorialized by an inscribed funerary relief set up by his parents in the Kerameikos (*IG II²* 6217), can be identified as a *prodromos*. There is no proof of this. In the inscription, Dexileos is called a *hippeus*; for discussion, see Bugh 1988, pp. 136–139. For a discussion of the size of the Athenian cavalry in the 390s, see Németh 1994.

²² Sekunda (1986, p. 54), however, interpreting the Dexileos inscription that cites the young man as “one of five,” suggests that five horsemen were recruited from the regular cavalry to serve in the elite corps of *prodromoi* attached personally to each hipparch. But this would mean a total of only ten *prodromoi* in all! There remains the question, too, of whether the *prodromoi* were members of the regular cavalry. See Kroll 1977b for a contrary view.

There are several possible explanations for this change: (1) the Athenians, to say nothing of the rest of Greece, never felt completely comfortable with mounted archers. This arm requires many years of specialized training to be effective (remembering that a man must shoot arrows from a moving base without stirrups) and was usually viewed as a non-Greek weapon of war. The problem, however, is not with the use of the bow and arrow, which in fact became a fixture in ephebic training from the 330s (*AthPol* 42.3) down through the Hellenistic period: it is the combination of horse with archer. (2) Second, there is the cost. A fragment of a Lysianic speech, *Against Theozotides*, dated to 403/2 B.C., records that the per diem allowance for a mounted bowman was raised to eight obols; if correct, that figure is at least two obols (and perhaps four) more than the allowance for a regular *hippeus* in the 4th century. The Athenians may have concluded that it demanded less time and less money to field a light cavalry force than one of mounted bowmen. Besides, *prodromoi* could provide much of the same tactical benefits as their predecessors.

It should be noted, however, that a new reading of the Hibeh papyrus containing the speech *Against Theozotides* suggests that the daily allowance for a mounted bowman was lowered from two drachmas to eight obols, not raised from two obols to eight obols.²³ If this is correct, the issue would be reduced to one of fiscal austerity consequent to the Peloponnesian War, and this speech could no longer be used as evidence for an ideological or class distinction between the regular horsemen and the mounted bowmen. But the reading is not secure, and W. T. Loomis's reliance upon it, along with a dubious interpretation of Lysias 15.6 on Alkibiades the Younger's membership among the mounted bowmen, to support the thesis that the *hippotoxotai* "seem to have had even greater prestige than the *hippeis*" (p. 232) is inconsistent with the combined testimony of Thucydides (2.13.8) and Aristophanes (*Knights* 225). These writers make it perfectly clear that the two hundred mounted bowmen are to be distinguished from the elite and canonical aristocratic corps of one thousand. In any case, the fact remains that the maintenance of a *hippotoxotes* at eight obols per diem would have been more costly than for a *hippeus* at any time in the Classical period and would have encouraged the Athenians to consider more economical options.

In my 1988 discussion of the *prodromoi*, I minimized the active military importance of the corps,²⁴ viewing them primarily as scouts or as "couriers" (Xenophon, *Hipparchikos* 1.25, Loeb trans.). This new inscription offers an opportunity to reexamine the evidence, particularly Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia* 49.1, where it is clear that the city of Athens took its inspection of *prodromoi* and *hamippoi* as seriously as it did the inspection of the regular horsemen: the context and intent is military preparedness. In addition, one cannot conclude from *Hipparchikos* 1.25 that the *prodromoi* were infrequently or indifferently trained in the use of the javelin but only that the hipparch bore primary responsibility for this instruction, just as he would have expected the phylarchs to be responsible for the training of their tribal regiments.

Moreover, *prodromoi* attested elsewhere at almost exactly the same time may offer close parallels to their counterparts in Athens. These are the four Macedonian (or, less likely, Thracian) squadrons (ἵλαι) of *prodromoi* that figure prominently in the early campaigns of Alexander the Great.²⁵ In addition to their reconnaissance duties (Arrian 3.7.7), Arrian reports that they led the charge at Granikos (1.14.5–7) and were actively engaged in the major battles at Issos (2.9.2) and Gaugamela (3.12.3). They also formed part of the advance striking force of Alexander before the final battle with Darius III (3.8.1–2) and went in pursuit of the king afterwards (3.18.2, 3.20.1, 3.21.2). They apparently carried the long spear called the *sarissa* and are thus known in our sources as *sarissophoroi* (Arrian 1.14.1, 6; 3.12.3, with Q. Curtius Rufus 4.15.13). It is also worth noting that when Alexander ordered his *sarissophoroi* against the Scythian horse archers, they were placed in some

²³ Loomis 1995.

²⁴ Bugh 1988, appendix D; similarly, Kroll 1977a, p. 125: "any role they may have had in active combat was quite secondary."

²⁵ For discussion, see Bosworth 1980, pp. 18, 110–111, 352, and Worley 1994, pp. 155–157.

difficulty until he interjected light infantry troops and mounted javelin throwers (ἵππακοντισταί) to limit the maneuverability of the Scythians (Arrian 4.4.6–7). This use of light infantry precisely defines *hamiphoi* in battle and is supported by Arrian's terminology: ἀναμίξας τοῖς ἵππεύσιν and οἱ φίλοι ἀναμεμιγμένοι τοῖς ἵππεύσιν. Although the Athenian *prodromoi* did not wield the *sarissa*, they may have functioned like Alexander's *prodromoi*, and they were armed like his *hippakontistai*. It should also not be forgotten that the Athenian *hippotoxotai* had had the honor of skirmishing with the enemy first—just as Alexander now employed his *prodromoi*.

The Athenian *prodromoi* are attested epigraphically as late as the mid 3rd century B.C. on several lead tablets connected with the state evaluation of Athenian cavalry mounts.²⁶ From these we may have the names of two *prodromoi*, Charias and Antimachos. On the other hand, in his study of the lead tablets from the Agora, John Kroll has argued that the expressions Χαρίου προδρόμου (Kerameikos inv. 565) and Ἀντιμάχου προδρόμου (Kroll no. 62) refer to the horses “of the *prodromos* of Charias” and “of the *prodromos* of Antimachos” and not “of the *prodromos* Charias” or “of the *prodromos* Antimachos.”²⁷ That is to say, “Antimachos and Charias were probably cavalry officers and their *prodromoi* (unnamed) their mounted aides” (p. 127). The choice between the two possibilities is no longer so clearcut, however, particularly if we grant a higher status to the *prodromoi* than has previously been imagined. The proposer of our decree, known only by his patronymic Diogenes, is likely to have been a *prodromos* himself.

It is quite possible that the corps of *prodromoi* had been minimalized by the time of the lead tablets, since we know that the canonical one-thousand-man Classical Athenian cavalry had fallen to only two hundred by 282/1 B.C. and had only been raised to three hundred in that year with difficulty.²⁸ We can perhaps assume a corresponding numerical reduction in *prodromoi* and a subsequent loss of military importance. This scenario will also provide a *terminus ante quem* of 282/1 B.C. for our inscription, because it should belong to an age when the numbers of *prodromoi* were sufficient to justify the expense and importance implied in commissioning this stele. Certainly its letter forms conform to those found in Attic inscriptions in the period from the late 4th to the early 3rd century B.C.

In later years, Athens did not totally forget the usefulness of its *prodromoi*. In the 2nd century B.C. Athens reorganized its cavalry with the introduction of the so-called Tarantines, a cavalry ubiquitous in the Hellenistic period.²⁹ Although perhaps originally an innovation of Tarentum in southern Italy, later the name was generically applied to a particular type of hippic unit or its fighting mode and unquestionably referred to a javelin-throwing light cavalry (see *Suda*, s.v. ἵππική, ι 546, ed. Adler [1936]). An inscription uncovered in the Athenian Agora in 1994 bears witness to a mercenary corps of Tarantinoi serving with the Athenian cavalry in the 280s and 270s.³⁰

In the 2nd century, however, there is no doubt that the corps in Athens was composed of, and was commanded by, Athenian citizens. Not only do we have *tarantinoi* mentioned in the festivals of the Theseia and Pythais in the middle and second half of the 2nd century but also their commanders, the Tarantinarchs.³¹ Meanwhile, the regular *hippeis* continued to be led by their

²⁶ Kroll 1977a, pp. 124–127, no. 62, and Braun 1970, p. 234, no. 565.

²⁷ Kroll 1977a, p. 125.

²⁸ Threpsiades and Vanderpool 1963, p. 104, lines 7–10.

²⁹ See Launey [1949–1950] 1987, pp. 601–604, and Griffith 1935, pp. 246–250, for discussion.

³⁰ Camp 1996, pp. 252–258. Pausanias (10.20.5) reports that Athens fielded a force of 500 cavalrymen to confront the Gauls at Thermopylai in 279 B.C.; for historical context, see Bugh 1988, p. 188. This new inscription records a decree by a corps of Tarantine mercenary cavalry honoring the Athenian hipparchs and phylarchs in 282/1 B.C. John Camp (p. 257) plausibly suggests that this corps represents the two hundred additional horsemen present at Thermopylai.

³¹ *IG* II² 958.I, lines 56–59; 960.I, lines 31–32; 961.I, lines 34–35; *Fouilles de Delphes* III, ii, no. 24, line 16; no. 35, lines 3–4; no. 46, lines 1–2, 6; no. 37, line 3. Marcel Launey ([1949–1950] 1987, p. 604, note 1) suggests that Tarantinoi may be listed under the rubric ἀπ' ἵππου ἀκοντίζων in the festivals of the Theseia (*IG* II² 956, lines 90–91; 957, line 83; 958, line 95); the Panathenaia (*IG* II² 2311, line 68); and the Pythais (*Fouilles de Delphes* III, ii, nos. 37, 44). This would

phylarchs and hipparchs. I suggest that in the heady days following the conclusion of the Third Macedonian War in 167 B.C.,³² when the Athenians regained a number of their former imperial possessions through the generosity of Rome, they consciously bolstered their military capability by the introduction of a light cavalry corps reminiscent of their former *prodromoi* and perhaps modeled in part after their former Tarantine mercenary allies. As *prodromoi* had supplanted *hippotoxotai*, so in turn *tarantinoi* replaced the *prodromoi*.³³

In conclusion, this new inscription has inspired a fresh look at the organization of the *prodromoi*. This reexamination suggests an enhanced military role for them, "prepositioned" with the regular Athenian cavalry. The decree also hints at a status and self-identity more pronounced than for the mounted bowmen and bears witness to a close relationship between the *prodromoi* and the *grammateis* of the cavalry, both of whom directly served the hipparchs. On the other hand, further proof will be required to elevate the *prodromoi* to a select and elite status *within* the regular Athenian cavalry.³⁴ The literary and epigraphical evidence still sustains the view that the *prodromoi* were differentiated from the regular *hippeis* and perhaps did come from a relatively lower social and economic class, but they can no longer be dismissed as "undistinguished" (Photios, s.v. πρόδρομοι ἄδοξοι).

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take the presence of Tarantines in Athens back into the 4th century B.C., a claim otherwise unattested. On this form of cavalry training, see Spence 1993, p. 77.

³² In fact, there is a resurgence of equestrian events in festivals in this period; for the Theseia, see Bugh 1990, and for the Panathenaia, see Tracy and Habicht 1991.

³³ Even their tactical function appears to be duplicated: in the struggles between Philopoimen of the Achaean League and Nabis of Sparta in 192 B.C., in which both combatants employed Tarantines, Philopoimen used them as an advance attacking force to initiate the battle, with Lykortas, father of Polybios, as their commander (Livy 35.28.8, 29.1–2).

³⁴ As Sekunda (1986, p. 54) has interpreted the Dexileos epitaph.

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