

Xenophon τακτικός? Remarks on his use of -ικός adjectives

¿Jenofonte τακτικός? Observaciones sobre su uso de los adjetivos en -ικός

Pierre Pontier¹

Sorbonne Université, Paris (Francia)

Recibido: 07-06-2024

Aceptado: 17-06-2024

Abstract

Xenophon's interest in the art of command has never diminished. This article analyzes his ambivalent relationship with “tactics”, an art he sometimes dissociates himself from, because he considers it to take the place of a much more important knowledge that ultimately encompasses it. This is also demonstrated by his subtle use of -ikos adjectives in both the *Memorabilia* and the *Hellenica*. The list of terms, often attested for the first time, confirms that the suffix suggests a specialization and an approach to a limited body of knowledge, but above all demonstrates Xenophon's singular place in the transmission of military knowledge: he is both close to Aeneas the Tactician, as well as anxious to distinguish himself from these professionals of the military art.

Keywords: Tactics, -ikos adjectives, knowledge, leadership, evaluation.

¹ (pierre.pontier@sorbonne-universite.fr) Associate Professor of Greek language and literature at Sorbonne Université (Paris). His research interests include history of ideas, philosophy, historiography of the Classical period (Xenophon, Thucydides) and reception of history in the XIXth century. He is the author of *Trouble et ordre chez Platon et Xénophon* (Paris, Vrin, 2006), editor of *Xénophon et la rhétorique* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de Paris Sorbonne, 2014) and coeditor of *Lectures du Panathénaïque d'Isocrate: de l'éloge à l'œuvre ouverte* (Cahiers des études anciennes, 61, 2023). He published also many papers on Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, George Grote, etc.

Address for correspondence: Institut de Grec, Faculté des Lettres, Sorbonne Université, 1 rue Victor Cousin, 75005 Paris (France).

Resumen

El interés de Jenofonte por el arte del mando nunca ha disminuido. Este artículo analiza su ambivalente relación con la "táctica", un arte del que a veces se desvincula, porque considera que ocupa el lugar de un conocimiento mucho más importante que, en última instancia, lo engloba. Así lo demuestra también el sutil uso que hace de los adjetivos -ikos tanto en las *Memorabilia* como en las *Helénicas*. La lista de términos, a menudo atestiguados por primera vez, confirma que el sufijo sugiere una especialización y un acercamiento a un cuerpo limitado de conocimientos, pero sobre todo demuestra el lugar singular de Jenofonte en la transmisión del saber militar: Jenofonte se sitúa a la vez cerca de Eneas el Táctico, así como ansioso por distinguirse de estos profesionales del arte militar.

Palabras-clave: Tácticas, adjetivos -ikos, conocimiento, liderazgo, evaluación.

The art of leadership is essential in Xenophon's work: whatever the subject, his reflections on this topic are consistent and often overlapping, from the *Anabasis* to the *Cyropaedia*, which often adopts a didactic tone through the character of Cyrus². Xenophon also wrote two technical treatises, the *Hipparchicus* and *De re equestri*, which deal directly with the military art. There is also the *Cynegeticus* which deals with a relatively similar subject, since Xenophon often compares war to hunting.

Diogenes Laërtius called him a τακτικός writer (2.56): the adjective seems to be aimed at the treatise of the *Hipparchicus*, in an accumulation of three terms where the first two adjectives relate rather to the other two treatises (φιλιππος καὶ φιλοκόννηγος καὶ τακτικός). Anyway, Xenophon has sometimes been considered a pioneer or inventor of the military manual³. But is Xenophon a τακτικός writer in the strict sense of the term, as we speak of Aeneas "the Tactician"? Our aim is to check and temper this opinion by first analyzing Xenophon's relationship with the military tactics and science of warfare of his time, before examining his subtle stylistic use of adjectives in -ικός, particularly in the *Hellenica* and *Memorabilia*, which constitute linguistically tangible evidence of the evolution of the language of knowledge in the Classical period and its specialization⁴.

² Secondary literature is particularly abundant on this subject. Cf. for example Luccioni 1954, Dillery 1995, Gray 2012, Sandridge 2012 about *Cyropaedia*, Flower 2012: 40-47 about *Anabasis*, and Buxton 2016.

³ Whately 2021: 17-38.

⁴ See for example Peppler 1910 on Aristophanes, Ammann 1953 about Plato, and Noël 1997.

Xenophon and «tactics» or the praise of field experience

Xenophon lived at a time when there was a flourishing of technical writings which, in the wake of medical treatises, were intended to convey a limited amount of knowledge on a specific subject⁵. He himself, who followed the conventions of this literary genre, did not hesitate to transpose this characteristic didactic style into other works. But he has a distant, even suspicious attitude towards an artificial and sophistical approach to the military art, and more specifically to “tactics”. Tactics refer specifically to the different ways of arranging an army in order of battle.

This is demonstrated by the setting of the first dialogue in Book III of *Memorabilia*, when Socrates invites one of his disciples who wishes to obtain the office of general to follow the teachings of a sophist, Dionysodorus, who promises his listeners that he will teach them “generalship” (στρατηγεῖν, 3.1.1). Dionysodorus of Chios is the perfect example of the itinerant sophist whose teaching is paid for, as opposed to Socrates; he also appears in Plato’s *Euthydemus*. On the face of it, Socrates is in favor of specific instruction in strategy, since he sends one of his disciples to learn. However, the content of the technical instruction provided proves disappointing on two points: it is incomplete, as it is devoted exclusively to “tactics” (τὰ τακτικά), i.e. the art of putting an army in order. Indeed, Socrates points out, “this is only a tiny part (πολλοστὸν μέρος) of the art of command”⁶ (3.1.6), compared to the many tasks that fall to the army commander. Moreover, this art is purely theoretical, as it does not specify the occasions when this or that formation should be adopted; to Socrates’ question on this subject (“did he only teach you tactics, or did he also show you how and under what circumstances these formations (τῶν ταγμάτων) should be employed?”), 3.1.11), his pupil answers in the negative. Socrates advises him to go and see Dionysodorus again to ask for clarification, which amounts to unmasking his incompetence or dishonesty⁷.

In this dialogue, Xenophon deliberately uses the adjective τακτικός as well as the noun τάγμα (“brigade, division”), two terms that belong to a relatively specialized vocabulary⁸; it is indeed in the Xenophontian corpus that we find the first occurrences of the adjective τακτικός. Socrates’ position with this apparently well-circumscribed knowledge is ambivalent: he is quite ready to admit that “it is also a good thing to be a specialist in tactics (καλὸν δὲ καὶ τὸ τακτικὸν εἶναι, 3.1.7)”, but above all he emphasizes the limits of an overly

⁵ On the development of technical treatises, see Xen. *Cyn.* 13.1-8 especially on the writings of the sophists and Thesleff 1966, 89-113, Demont 1993, Vela Tejada 2004: 144-146. On the language of Xenophon’s treatises, see Blaineau 2014 and Gray 2018.

⁶ The translations of Greek texts are ours.

⁷ On this last point, we take up the excellent commentary of Dorion 2011: 274-275 n. 1. See also more generally the analysis of these two passages from the *Cyropaedia* and *Memorabilia* by Richter 1893: 114-120, Delatte 1933: 14-25 and Meißner 2017: 65-70.

⁸ Τάγμα is a *hapax* in the Xenophontian corpus.

theoretical, pseudo-scientific knowledge, which can only make sense on the battlefield under specific conditions that Dionysodorus is careful not to define⁹.

Xenophon re-expresses this position in an episode from the *Cyropaedia* (1.6), where we find the same distrust of paid teaching of deficient knowledge: in a reported dialogue, inserted within another dialogue dealing with the art of military leadership, Cyrus reminds his father Cambyses that he had once asked him for money to pay “the man who claimed to have taught him the profession of general” (1.6.12): when his father realized that this man had only taught him tactics, he laughed and said that tactics were useless if you didn’t care about obtaining the necessities of life, health, knowledge of the stratagems invented for war, and the obedience of your troops. The conclusion is word for word identical to Socrates’: “Tactics are only a small part of the art of generalship” (1.6.14). This inserted dialogue follows an initial discussion of men’s duties towards the gods, and then the need to provide the army essential resources. Above all, it has exactly the same narrative orientation as the passage from the *Memorabilia*, with two characters who are a Persian reflection of the Athenian couple formed by Socrates and his disciple, to whom an imposter teacher, another Dionysodorus, is added. It has even been thought that Xenophon was deliberately referring to the dialogue of the *Memorabilia* through this narrative device. But the effect of the reported dialogue is rather to highlight the fact that “tactics”, the art of disposing of troops, is what was being taught in the first place. And it is this hierarchy of knowledge that Xenophon challenges.

The outcome of the two dialogues is slightly different: Cyrus defers to his father for further learning, but the latter refers him to consulting people who are considered “specialists in generalship” (τοῖς στρατηγικοῖς νομιζομένοις... ἀνδράσι, 1.6.14), without even mentioning Cyrus’s first teacher. From a lexical point of view, the specific use of the adjective στρατηγικός to evoke specialists clearly proves that Cyrus’ first teacher was devoid of the totality of the science in question and that he is far from having completed his pupil’s education¹⁰.

The main difference between the two passages lies in the fact that Cambyses develops much more, almost in the manner of a treatise, the various points that the army commander must master. Moreover, this dialogical treatise is made more concrete by the later narrative, which dramatizes the military situations

⁹ Meißner 2017: 66, assumes that this sophistic instruction included some terminology, was based on learning rhetoric and practicing exercises or training in arms.

¹⁰ See *Cyr.* 1.6.12: τῷ φάσκοντι στρατηγεῖν με πεπαιδευκένα; the imposture is finely underlined by the use of the perfect πεπαιδευκένα, as if the education was complete. See other uses of the adjective στρατηγικός, *Mem.* 1.1.7-8, 2.6.16, 2.6.38, *Cyr.* 1.6.12, 1.6.14 and 8.4.7, *Oec.* 20.6, *Ag.* 1.17 and 10.1. The comparisons we make on this theme between the *Memorabilia* and the *Cyropaedia* are not exhaustive: we can also mention the image of the construction of the house, present in the *Cyropaedia* (6.3.25) as in the *Memorabilia* (3.1.7); it allows us to account for the most common military training, which consists of placing the best soldiers in the first and last ranks, while recalling the importance of “economic” science in the science of military command (*Cyr.* 1.6.12).

of Cyrus's conquest; it is finally completed by a kind of synthesis that appears in the last pages of the *Cyropaedia* and reflects Cyrus's thoughts: "He believed that tactics did not only consist in being able to extend the line of battle or to make it deep, or to move from column to line or, if the enemy unexpectedly broke through from the right, from the left, or from behind, to make a correct volte-face, but he still considered it tactical to disperse whenever necessary (ὁπότε δέοι), to place each subdivision where it would be most useful, and to force marches when it was necessary to get ahead (ὅπου φθάσαι δέοι)¹¹ of the enemy" (*Cyr.* 8.5.15).

It is indeed circumstances that impose changes to the army's organization: as the verbs of obligation show, it is knowledge of these material circumstances (moment, balance of forces, geographical situation) that determines the choice of tactics. The teaching of tactics is therefore essential for every soldier: but in the *Cyropaedia*, it is Cyrus alone, according to Xenophon, who delivers it – free of charge! –, not a specific teacher¹². The sequence of dialogue in the *Cyropedia* and the historical account helps to show that tactics only make sense in the field and under precise conditions that the army commander must take into account: his ability to judge, which enables him to decide on the right formation to adopt, is acquired only after long experience.

Lastly, in a passage from the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, when Xenophon describes the various formations that the Spartan army is accustomed to taking, he emphasizes the simplicity and ease of this apprenticeship: "Most people believe that the Laconian battle order in arms (τὴν ἐν ὅπλοις Λακωνικὴν τάξιν) is most complex, but this is to suppose quite the opposite of the truth (11.5)".

He then describes the moves that are very easy for the Lacedaemonians to make, and that seem very difficult for "those who train in combat in arms" (τοῖς ὀπλομάχοις)¹³: he considers the four possible cases of confrontation, depending on where the enemy is coming from (from the front, from behind, from the right, from the left). This lengthy description corresponds closely to the passage from the *Cyropaedia* quoted above (8.5.15, see also 2.1.27). By

¹¹ This use of the verb δέω corresponds to the προσήκει present in the *Memorabilia* (3.1.11).

¹² Cf. *Cyr.* 2.1.20, διδάσκειν δὲ τὰ τακτικά. In this way, Xénophon clearly raises the question of who should teach this subject in any political regime. He shares this concern with Plato. In addition to the *Euthydemus*, which features Dionysodorus, and the *Laches*, which shows a preoccupation with the military arts, the philosopher quickly tackles the subject of teaching tactics and cavalry in the *Laws*, 813e: he indicates that the city must have masters it pays to teach these subjects.

¹³ The word ὀπλομάχος can refer to any man who fights in arms or to a military trainer. Casevitz 2008 chooses the first meaning; but see Pl. *Lach.* 183b and Theophr. *Car.* 5.10, where *hoplomachoi* are associated with sophists and musicians for display purposes; Dionysodorus, in the *Euthydemus* (271b-272a), is depicted in the same way. The meaning of the term in this passage from the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* seems to us to be close to that of these teachers by profession, and we therefore prefer the semantic orientation of Ollier 1934: 52, Lipka 2002: 198, followed by Gray 2007 and Humble 2021: 172.

pointing out that the Lacedaemonians' changes of formation are actually easy to make, provided obedience and practice, Xenophon again emphasizes how simple tactics are. In chapter 13, after showing that the Spartan king plays an essential role in deciding and indicating the tactics to be followed, he concludes by pointing out that the other peoples are mere improvisers compared to the Lacedaemonians: on the contrary, he calls the latter "professionals in the things of war" (τεχνίτας τῶν πολεμικῶν, 13.5) – a colorful expression that necessarily puts into perspective the words of those who present themselves as specialists in tactics. There is an expression very close to this qualifier τεχνίτης in the *Hipparchicus*, where Xenophon contrasts "trained specialists in the art of equestrian warfare" (ἀσκητὰς [...] τῶν πολεμικῶν ἐν ἵπικῇ ἔργων) with "profanes" (ιδιώτας, 8.1; see also *Cyr.* 1.5.11).

In fact, these three passages dedicated to tactics, taken from three different works, show through their complementary aspects the position Xenophon occupies in relation to professional teachers: he is the bearer of undeniable knowledge and experience in the subject, he probably defines himself as a στρατηγικός, but he marks his disagreement with a restrictive teaching of tactics. It is only one element within a broader vision of the art of command; learning it is necessary, but it is not complex, and it must not overshadow the essential skills and knowledge that must first be acquired to command an army effectively: a science of "situations" (τὰ συμβαίνοντα, *Cyr.* 1.6.43). Tactical order follows directly from this, which is why Xenophon didn't write a "tactics" manual as such. He displayed his technical knowledge as much as his personality in his two treatises on the horse and cavalry; he also narrated military situations in historical accounts, in which the manoeuvres are described in sufficient detail for the informed reader to be able to judge their relevance and derive knowledge from them. Xenophon is not just τακτικός in the narrow sense of the term.

A subtle use of -ικός terms: the qualities of the leader

1. Xenophon and Aeneas the Tactician

There is therefore a fundamental debate about the deceptive place of tactics in the teaching of the art of commanding an army. This debate also concerns the form of teaching. Xenophon rejects the idea of paying for the teaching of knowledge that is presented as simple, easy to understand and acquire. He was also interested in how to transpose what had previously been oral knowledge into written form. Through his own literary endeavours, he followed in the footsteps of Aeneas the Tactician, a native of Stymphalus, whose work has unfortunately only been preserved in part, but who seemed to cover all the

subjects mentioned in both the *Memorabilia* and the *Cyropaedia*, and where “tactics” also constitute only a small part of the knowledge on display. So, in addition to the preserved book on poliorcetics, Aeneas would also have written a book devoted to preparation, another to financial means, another to encampment, one dedicated to harangues, and finally one devoted to tactics. This treatise or treatises would have been written in the 350s, shortly after the *Hipparchicus*. Little is known about the author: he may be alluded to in a passage of the *Hellenica*, or he may be a homonym (*Hell.* 7.3.1)¹⁴. Xenophon and Aeneas may have had a more or less formal personal relationship, or even exchanged ideas¹⁵.

In any case, Aeneas’s treatise is an undeniable major witness to the evolution of prose, thanks to its variety of vocabulary, which the demands of the genre partially impose. The interpretation of this stylistic peculiarity remains debated, however¹⁶. Xenophon’s lexical wealth and the different uses he makes of this vocabulary according to each work have also been recognized¹⁷: as far as military facts are concerned, he develops lengthy descriptions of military strategies and troops in order to deliver practical knowledge in this field¹⁸.

Word lists have been compiled from Aeneas the Tactician’s treatise, to show its stylistic peculiarities. The suffixation processes we associate with technical vocabulary, for example, action nouns in -μα, -σις, -σία, -μός, agent nouns in -τήρ or -τωρ, diminutives and adjectives in -ικός or -τός, are decisive in the appearance of a large number of hapax. Most of the vocabulary used is similar to that of “other authors close to the common language” (Xenophon, Polybius, Aristotle, etc.) and a table shows the terms that first appear in Xenophon and Aeneas¹⁹.

Those terms include two -ικός adjectives, παρασκευαστικός and ποριστικός. It is worthwhile to understand why the two authors have these two new terms in common, and, subsequently, to see what brings Xenophon closer to or distinguishes him from Aeneas in his use of adjectives in -ικός. As Chantraine explains, the suffix -ικός “expresses belonging to a category and thus plays a classificatory role”: the suffix was of great help in building a philosophical and technical vocabulary²⁰. As early as the 420s, Aristophanes

¹⁴ See the overviews by Lane Fox 2018 and Shipley 2018.

¹⁵ See Whitehead 2002: 36 and Shipley 2018: 58.

¹⁶ See the reasonable conclusion of Groninger 1938: 329. Vela Tejada 2018 has a different view of Aeneas as a precursor of *koinè*.

¹⁷ See Gautier 1912: 150-152 and Dillery 2016: 249: “Xenophon likes technical terms that he employs very rarely or even one time only”.

¹⁸ See Anderson 1970, Riedinger 1991 (l’“interprétation militaire” des *Helléniques*, 207-243) and Pontier 2006: 253-283.

¹⁹ Vela Tejada 1991: 289-291. He explicitly repeats tables established by L.W. Hunter and S.A. Handford, *Αἰνεῖου Πολιορκητικά, Aeneas on Siegecraft*, Oxford, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1927 (*non vidi*).

²⁰ Chantraine 1956, 128.

was forging new words with this suffix to mock what he perceived as a linguistic fad associated with youth and sophistry, both in the *Knights* (1378-1381) and in the *Clouds* (483, 728, etc.). The specialization of knowledge and the writing of technical treatises led to a multiplication of these new words²¹. Aeneas uses five -ικός terms not attested before him or Xénophon: παρασκευαστικός (7.4, 8.5, 16.22, 21.1, 40.8), ποριστικός (14.2), ἐνεδρευτικός (1.2), δηλωτικῶς (14.2), προνοητικῶς (18.11).

2. The use of -ικός adjectives in the *Hellenica*

Xenophon himself uses a large number of adjectives of this type, with a certain disparity between works: there are far fewer in the *Hellenica* and *Anabasis* than in the *Memorabilia*, which can also be explained by the subject matter of the works and by the greater stylistic sobriety of the literary genre. A fortiori, the presence of such adjectives in these historical works is all the more significant. But not all these terms are of comparable interest. For example, place names or adjectives can lead to a competitive use of adjectives in -ικός: Chantraine cites three identical examples in the *Hellenica* where the term Λακωνικός is used to refer to the Lacedaemonian garrison (2.4.4; 2.4.10; 4.8.35). It is difficult to explain why Xenophon preferred (or not) the adjective in -ικός rather than a simple toponym.

From the list we have made of terms not derived from an ethnic or place name, we have selected some terms that Xenophon is the first to use in the *Hellenica*.

1. πελαστικός

There are four -ικός adjectives which are often used to designate categories of the army, very widely attested in the *Hellenica*: τὸ ναυτικόν²² for the navy (1.1.32, 1.5.10, 1.5.18, etc.: 43 occurrences in all in the *Hellenica* out of the 55 found in the Xenophontian corpus), τὸ ὀπλιτικόν for infantry (7 occurrences out of 13 in all, a term also found in Thucydides), τὸ ἵππικόν for cavalry (30 out of 111, a term also found in Thucydides), and above all τὸ πελαστικόν for light infantry (4 out of 9 occurrences in the *Hellenica*).

Unlike the other three mentioned, the term πελαστικός actually appears in the 4th century, in Xenophon's works. Thucydides uses the term πελαστής but not the adjective. This lexical appearance testifies to the importance of peltasts in the conflicts of the time, and to Xenophon's interest in this mode of combat. The term is used in the maneuvers that led to the disaster of the Amyclaeian battalion, which was cut to pieces by the peltasts led by Iphicrates in 390.

²¹ Peppler 1910 about Aristophanes, Lane Fox 2018, 45, Vela Tejada 1991: 306-308, Vela Tejada 2018: 115.

²² The term is already attested in Herodotus (3.17, 3.19, etc.).

Οἱ δ' ἐκ τῶν Κορινθίων ἄστεως, Καλλίας τε ὁ Ἴππονίκου, τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὀπλιτῶν στρατηγῶν, καὶ Ἴφικράτης, τῶν πελταστῶν ἄρχων, καθορῶντες αὐτοὺς καὶ οὐ πολλοὺς ὄντας καὶ ἐρήμους καὶ πελταστῶν καὶ ἵππέων, ἐνόμισαν ἀσφαλὲς εἶναι ἐπιθέσθαι αὐτοῖς τῷ πελταστικῷ.

As for the others, from the city of Corinth, whether Callias son of Hipponicos, who commanded the Athenian hoplites, or Iphicrates, who commanded the peltasts, as they saw them to be few in number, devoid of peltasts and horsemen, they considered it safe to attack them with the peltastic category (4.5.13).

The adjective is within the indirect discourse introduced by ἐνόμισαν, which reproduces the reasoning of Callias and Iphicrates in relation to the given situation. The chiefs' internalized choice is for the safest and most effective category of soldiers according to the battle to be fought: those occupying Corinth can hurl projectiles at the army presenting its uncovered front if it advances towards them, and peltasts can easily evade the hoplites because they are lighter. Nor do they run any risks, thanks to the absence of the threat of the riders. This intellectual process of strategic selection of an army corps is perfectly expressed by the use of the adjective πελταστικός²³: in the narrative, the course of the battle is exactly as planned.

Xenophon thus uses the adjective in -ικός to provide elements of reflection on the use of a very specific category of soldiers: for this purpose, he borrows the point of view of the army leaders, Callias and Iphicrates. He proceeds in exactly the same way for the three other uses of the term in the *Hellenica*: in 5.4.43, he takes Phoibidas's (mistaken) point of view as his starting point; in 6.1.9, he takes up the words of Jason of Pherae, who envisages the superiority of the Thessalian army over the peoples around him. Finally, in 6.1.19, the historian himself assesses Jason's imposing military forces. The analysis confirms that the use of the adjective in -ικός is strictly reserved for passages that foresee, reflect on and contemplate the advantages of an armed force.

2. μηχανητικός

The three other rare -ικός terms present in the *Hellenica* have a precise function: they all characterize an army leader. Xenophon is thus the first in preserved Greek literature to use the adjective μηχανητικός²⁴, in order to depict

²³ The term is little attested elsewhere, as confirmed by the explanation of a scholiast in a technical passage of Plato's *Laws*, which recommends the teaching and practice of war techniques (scholia to *Leg.* 813d5).

²⁴ Current editions of the *Hellenica*, which are quite old (Marchant at Oxford, 1906, Hatzfeld in the CUF at Les Belles Lettres, 1936), prefer to edit μηχανητικός rather than μηχανικός, i.e. a hapax found only in this passage of the *Hellenica* and in the *Hipparchicus* (5.2). We retain this logic, but the critical apparatus of this passage from the *Hellenica* in Hatzfeld's edition indicates the *varia lectio* μηχανικός in two manuscripts C and V. It could seem preferable to follow it: indeed, the form μηχανικός, for its

the Spartan Dercylidas in the *Hellenica* (3.1.8). The passage takes place just after the siege of Larissa, which sealed the failure of Thibron's command and his replacement: from the moment he arrived, Dercylidas understood the political situation between Pharnabazus and Tissaphernes better and faster than his predecessor, and was adept at diplomatic and military maneuvering.

Ἐν Ἐφέσῳ δὲ ἤδη ὄντος αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἐπὶ Καρίαν πορευομένου, Δερκυλίδας ἄρξων ἀφίκετο ἐπὶ τὸ στράτευμα, ἀνὴρ δοκῶν εἶναι μάλα μηχανητικός· καὶ ἐπεκαλεῖτο δὲ Σίσυφος. Ὁ μὲν οὖν Θιβρων ἀπῆλθεν οἴκαδε καὶ ζημιωθείς ἔφυγε· κατηγόρου γὰρ αὐτοῦ οἱ σύμμαχοι ὡς ἐφείη ἀρπάζειν τῷ στρατεύματι τοὺς φίλους.

[Thibron] was already in Ephesus, on his way to Caria, when Dercylidas arrived to take command of the army. He was a man of great ingenuity: they called him Sisyphus. As for Thibron, he returned home and was condemned to exile. The allies blamed him for abandoning Sparta's friends to the plunder of his army (3.1.8).

Xenophon illustrates the adjective by comparing the character with Sisyphus, “the most cunning of men” (Hom. *Il.* 6.153), and then he exposes Dercylidas' first decisions, which demonstrate a true science of leadership, resorting to γνώμη, «foresight», and bold strategic choices, rather than what corresponds *stricto sensu* to “tactics”. His ingenuity is demonstrated by his taking sides against Pharnabazus: consequently he moved his army into a land where he did not attack the “friends of Sparta” that the army led by Thibron was accused of plundering. In this context, the term μηχανητικός refers to the ingenious ways Dercylidas found to supply his army at Pharnabazus' expense.

3. ἐγχειρητικός

Conversely, his opposite and predecessor, Thibron, is judged unfavorably and negatively at the time of his lamentable death, compared to Diphridas who replaced him; the latter is considered «as a general more self-controlled and enterprising» (μᾶλλον τε συντεταγμένος καὶ ἐγχειρητικώτερος στρατηγός):

part, is attested in two other works by Xenophon, the *Memorabilia* (3.1.6; 4.3.1) and the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* (2.7), as well as very widely in later literature. From this point of view, I don't think we should follow Armand Delatte's remark, 1933: 20, who rightly says that μηχανικός is a “word proper to Xenophon”, but who establishes a difference in meaning justifying the existence of the two terms μηχανητικός and μηχανικός in the Xenophontian corpus: the former would refer solely to μηχανήματα, i.e. the wiles of war, and the latter (by proximity to ποριστικός in the text of the *Memorabilia*, 3.1.6) to the ability to provide food for soldiers, which is also in line with *Lac.* 2.7. The supposed difference in meaning between the two terms is not operative for the use of *Mem* 4.3.1, nor, above all, for our passage from the *Hellenica*, which Delatte does not mention: as we show, the adjective also refers to the faculty of finding a skilful means of supplying oneself in enemy lands. But P. Chantraine, *DELG* ad loc. [μηχανή] also retains both terms.

the deficit of lack of enterprise in Thibron is thus associated in the passage with a defect of temperance, by means of another very rare term in -ικός, ἐγχειρητικός²⁵.

4. λογιστικός²⁶

Finally, in the same way, Xenophon reserves his only use of the adjective λογιστικός in the *Hellenica* in a negative way for Phoibidas, who is seduced by Leontiades into seizing the Theban Cadmeia. He depicts his character at the very moment Phoibidas accepts the Theban's proposal, using the term that appears at the same time, in Plato and Aristotle²⁷:

Καὶ γὰρ ἦν τοῦ λαμπρόν τι ποιῆσαι πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ ζῆν ἐραστής, οὐ μέντοι λογιστικός γε οὐδὲ πάνυ φρόνιμος ἐδόκει εἶναι.

Indeed, he was a man much more in love with brilliant action than with life; however, he did not pass for being strong in calculation, nor very reasonable (5.2.28).

Other terms could have characterized the character's lack of intelligence, but, as part of his reflection on good and bad army leaders, Xenophon preferred to use this adjective to evoke the ability to evaluate, foresee and calculate of which he judges Phoibidas to be completely lacking²⁸.

At the beginning of the *Memorabilia*, this same term λογιστικός appears strikingly among many similarly formed words.

Τεκτονικὸν μὲν γὰρ ἢ χαλκευτικὸν ἢ γεωργικὸν ἢ ἀνθρώπων ἀρχικὸν ἢ τῶν τοιοῦτων ἔργων ἐξεταστικὸν ἢ λογιστικὸν ἢ οἰκονομικὸν ἢ στρατηγικὸν γενέσθαι, πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα μαθήματα καὶ ἀνθρώπου γνώμη αἰρετὰ ἐνόμιζεν εἶναι.

For when it came to becoming a carpenter, blacksmith, farmer, commander of men, specialist in the evaluation or calculation relating to such activities, administrator or general, he considered all such activities to be knowledge and that they could be acquired through human intelligence (1.1.7).

If we follow the logic of the accumulation of these terms, which mark specialization in a “knowledge” (μάθημα), the first three refer to trades that produce things, while all those that follow explain the art of command,

²⁵ After Xenophon, the term is attested only twice in Pollux (2.154) and Stobaeus. For a rehabilitation of Thibron and Xenophon's possible bad faith towards him for personal reasons, see the recent article by Tuci 2022.

²⁶ Plato also uses the word at the same time.

²⁷ See for example Plt. *Theat.* 144e1, Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1139a12-15.

²⁸ This kind of miscalculation appears also in 5.4.43, see *infra*.

which is the most important: the last two, οἰκονομικός and στρατηγικός, refer to the two fields of application of the art, the home and the army, which Xenophon often brings together. In the middle of the sentence, the two adjectives ἐξεταστικός and λογιστικός therefore have the function of defining in a complementary way what this ability to administer and govern consists of. They evoke two different activities. The term ἐξεταστικός, which also appears for the first time in the Xenophontian corpus, refers to the activity of “evaluating” men’s actions, in accordance with a parallel use of the adjective found in the *Œconomicus* (12.19). The other term λογιστικός refers to a specialization in the field of calculation, with as its probable object the “activities” (ἔργα) that precede it in the sentence²⁹. This ability to do calculations is practical knowledge; it is also part of the “projections” of actions that a leader must know how to do.

This is exactly what the army leaders (or decision-making assemblies) of the *Hellenica* do: Lysander (2.4.28, 3.4.2), Tissaphernes (3.2.18), the Lacedaemonians (3.4.27, 3.5.5), Pausanias (3.5.23), Jason (6.1.5, 6.1.7, 6.1.11, 6.1.19), the Theban leaders (6.4.6, 6.4.12, 6.5.24), the Athenians (7.4.2) and Epaminondas (7.5.5-6, 7.5.14) “assess” exactly what they are able to do based on their means or networks of alliances. Phoibidas conducts himself and acts in every way the opposite without evaluating or considering the consequences of his act: the technical term denied λογιστικός thus serves to emphasize the irrational nature of the act. This last case confirms that the use of rare terms in -ικός is a way of characterizing the individual but above all of drawing the reader’s attention to the knowledge and qualities of anticipation necessary for the proper exercise of command. In a way, it is a didactic tool.

The art of ordering and knowledge

The *Memorabilia* is Xenophon’s work with the largest number of different -ικός terms, which is due to the importance of the question of knowledge in this context³⁰. Two passages deliberately accumulate this kind of adjectives. The first, as we have seen, defines the types of knowledge that can be acquired by human intelligence, with a progression from craft skills to the knowledge that Xenophon describes on other occasions as “royal”³¹, the art of command, but whose final term in the enumeration here is the adjective στρατηγικός. The only passage where we observe such a concentration of different adjectives in

²⁹ See Dorion, Bandini 2000: 4 n. 19, on the difficulties of the grammatical construction of this sentence.

³⁰ See Pepler 1910: 431, who counts 68 terms in *Memorabilia*, out of a total of 136. The variety of the terms is also remarkable in the *Oeconomicus* (36) and the *Hipparchicus*, for different reasons.

³¹ *Mem.* 2.1.17, 4.2.11. Cf. Dorion 2013: 147-169.

-ικός is in the chapter 1 of Book III also devoted to the art of leadership. When Socrates demonstrates to his disciple that tactics constitute only a tiny part of the art of military command, he indeed justifies himself thus:

Καὶ γὰρ παρασκευαστικὸν τῶν εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τὸν στρατηγὸν εἶναι χρῆ, καὶ ποριστικὸν τῶν ἐπιτηδείων τοῖς στρατιώταις, καὶ μηχανικὸν καὶ ἐργαστικὸν καὶ ἐπιμελῆ καὶ καρτερικὸν καὶ ἀγχίνου, καὶ φιλόφρονά τε καὶ ὠμόν, καὶ ἀπλοῦν τε καὶ ἐπίβουλον, καὶ φυλακτικὸν τε καὶ κλέπτῃν, καὶ προετικὸν καὶ ἄρπαγα καὶ φιλόδορον καὶ πλεονέκτην καὶ ἀσφαλῆ καὶ ἐπιθετικὸν, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ φύσει καὶ ἐπιστήμῃ δεῖ τὸν εὖ στρατηγήσοντα ἔχειν.

For the general must also be able to see to the preparations for war, able to provide food for the soldiers, resourceful, hard-working, diligent, enduring, quick-witted, both benevolent and cruel, frank and devious, good guardian and thief, liberal and plunderer, generous and greedy, prudent and enterprising, among other qualities that he who wishes to be a general must possess, whether by nature or through science (Mem. 3.1.6).

Eight different adjectives in -ικός are used in the passage, exactly as in the first passage from Book I, but in three different types of use. The first two terms, παρασκευαστικός and ποριστικός, are given significant prominence in the sentence and have a special, even programmatic status, as they concretely define practical domains for the exercise of these virtues: they both include an object in the genitive, or even a recipient in the dative (τοῖς στρατιώταις). The first, παρασκευαστικός, is the only attestation in the Xenophontian corpus and the first in time.

As we have seen, the word appears at the same time in the treatise of Aeneas the Tactician, where it refers four times to a lost book of his work dedicated to the material preparations for war, in the field of land use and management for war purposes³². The meaning is the same in *Memorabilia*³³. As for the term ποριστικός (which is also present at the same time in Plato's *Gorgias*, in 517d6), it evokes the financial means necessary to materially maintain an army. Aeneas also uses this exact term to refer to a lost book of his (14.2, see also *Cyr.* 1.6.7-17).

The next three, μηχανικός, ἐργαστικός and καρτερικός, are inserted into an enumeration of five qualities that differently and more vaguely characterize the conduct of the army leader: Xenophon employs these three terms, which comprise the same number of syllables, with obvious rhythmic intent. The first

³² Cf. 7.4, 8.5, 21.1 et 40.8. See on the content of this lost book Whitehead 2002: 111-113.

³³ Delatte 1933: 19-20, hesitates between two meanings ("la question est difficile à trancher", p.20), one that refers to material preparation, which we retain, and which is in agreement with the passages from Aeneas the Tactician, and one that would rather concern the physical preparation of the army; however, he provides more arguments in favor of the first interpretation, cf. *Mem.* 3.4.11 and *Cyr.* 6.2.-25-40.

two, which also appear in Xenophon for the first time, refer to the resourceful and industrious character (see *Cyr.* I.6.18)³⁴. The third, καρτερικός, more ancient and better attested, refers to endurance, an essential virtue that consists in coping with the external elements (ability to endure heat, cold and fatigue) and which characterizes Socrates at the beginning of the *Memorabilia* (1.2.1).

The third part of the passage is made up of six pairs of opposing qualities that complete the portrait of the perfect general, depending on the circumstances. The use of seemingly negative terms is not surprising in a context of war, where it is legitimate to do harm to enemies and good to friends whenever possible³⁵. In this binary succession, the three adjectives in -ικός also appear for the first time in Xenophon's corpus, with different fortunes. The term φυλακτικός evokes conduct that seeks to safeguard existing property: it appears in two other passages (3.4.9 and above all *Hipp.* 5.15) and has a very wide posterity, notably Aristotelian. The same is not true of the last two qualities: the term προετικός evokes "prodigality" and is only rarely used, again by Aristotle; finally, the last term επιθετικός comes from the verb επιτίθεσθαι, which is common in military accounts to mean an attack that is launched; it refers to an "enterprising" nature endowed with a certain aggressiveness (cf. the only other use of the term in 4.1.3 to refer to the quality of dogs skilled in attacking wild beasts)³⁶.

Xenophon thus used adjectives in -ικός in different ways, depending on the direction of his development: the first use is closely related to technical military literature, as confirmed by the parallel examples of Aeneas the Tactician, who had dedicated two distinct books corresponding to these two fields; they testify to a division of different military knowledge according to fields, in this case the handling of material preparations specific to war and that of the maintenance of an army. The second usage highlights the permanent qualities that a leader must demonstrate at all times, while the third usage refers more accidentally to qualities of action according to circumstances and conflicts. This passage is part of an intellectualist reflection on the means of learning, confirmed by the presence of the term ἐπιστήμη at the end of the sentence³⁷.

The use of adjectives in -ικός in the Xenophontian corpus is associated with a reflection on knowledge characteristic of the Socratics and the 4th century B.C. In Xenophon, this reflection focuses above all on the τέχνη that interested him most consistently, the art of command. The two passages in the

³⁴ See also the word ἐξεργαστικός, *Mem.* 4.1.4.

³⁵ See Dorion 2013: 156.

³⁶ This quality is close to the word ἐγχειρητικός (*Hell.* 4.8.22, about Diphridas, cf. *infra*).

³⁷ The same conclusion can be drawn from the use of the three adjectives in -ικός in the *Hipparchicus*, which are all gathered in chapter 5: first, the three uses of ἵππαρχικός define the specialization of the cavalry commander's knowledge (5.1, associated with γινώσκειν, 5.13 with διδάσκειν and γρῆσθαι). This knowledge takes then the form of a science of deception, as shown by the three uses of ἀπατητικός in this same chapter (5.5, 5.12) and that of μηχανητικός (5.2). All three terms appear for the first time in Xenophon.

Memorabilia that deliberately overuse this kind of vocabulary have made this clear, not without literary and ideological motives: at the beginning of his work, Xenophon defends the Socratic conception of the fields of knowledge over that of the sophists; this conception is limited to “human things” (1.1.11-12), which refers positively to the knowledge that human intelligence can acquire.

As we have seen, the use of adjectives in -ικός in the *Hellenica* allows us to characterize certain leaders with effective discretion, contrasting them where appropriate. This is perfectly in line with the more theoretical analyses in the *Memorabilia*. As we have seen with the use of the adjectives παρασκευαστικός and ποριστικός, the counterpoint to Aeneas the Tactician’s treatise makes clear the possible influence this kind of treatise may have had on the way certain fields of knowledge were distinguished. But comparing the works also shows that Aeneas’s purpose is far more limited than Xenophon’s, even if we only compare his treatise with the *Hipparchicus*: he never uses these terms in -ικός to define qualities proper to the art of command.

This is why Diogenes Laertius’s qualifier is reductive and gives a false lead: Xenophon is not exactly τακτικός, since he is wary of the limits of this knowledge alone; he is attached to order and would probably have preferred the qualifier στρατηγικός, which is a quality he recognizes in many of his heroes (see *Oec.* 20.6, *Ag.* 1.17 and 10.1).

Bibliography

- Ammann, A.D. 1953: *-ικός bei Plato: Ableitung und Bedeutung mit Materialsammlung*, Freiburg, Paulusdruckerei.
- Anderson, J.K. 1970: *Military theory and practice in the Age of Xenophon*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, University of California Press.
- Blaineau, A. 2014: “Comment dire la technique? Procédés d’écriture et variations énonciatives dans l’*Hipparque* et l’*Art Equestre* de Xénophon”, in P. Pontier (ed.), *Xenophon et la rhétorique*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 235-252.
- Buxton, R. (ed.) 2016: *Aspects of leadership in Xenophon*, *Histos* Suppl. 5.
- Casevitz, M. 2008: *Xénophon. Constitution des Lacédémoniens, Hiéron, Agésilas, suivi de Pseudo-Xénophon. Constitution des Athéniens*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres.
- 2014: “La langue des opuscules: *Hiéron, Agésilas, Constitution des Lacédémoniens*”, in P. Pontier (ed.), *Xenophon et la rhétorique*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 269-278.
- Chantraine, P. 1956: *Études sur le vocabulaire grec*, Paris, Klincksieck.
- Delatte, A. 1933: *Le troisième livre des souvenirs socratiques de Xénophon*, Liège-Paris, Droz.
- Demont, P. 1993: “Die Epideixis über die Techne im V. und IV. Jh.”, in W. Kullman, J. Althof (ed.), *Vermittlung und Tradierung in der Griechischen Kultur*, Tübingen, Gunter Narr Verlag, 181-210.
- Dillery, J. 2016: “Response and further thoughts”, in R. Buxton (ed.), *Aspects of leadership in Xenophon*, *Histos* suppl. 5, 243-277.
- Dorion, L.-A. 2013: “Socrate et la *basilikê technê*”, in *Id.*, *L’Autre Socrate*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 147-170.
- Dorion, L.-A., Bandini, M. (ed.) 2000: *Xénophon. Mémorables. Livre I*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres.
- Dorion, L.-A., Bandini, M. (ed.) 2011: *Xénophon. Mémorables. Livres II-III*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres.
- Flower, M. 2012: *Xenophon’s Anabasis or the expedition of Cyrus*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press.
- Gautier, L. 1912: *La Langue de Xénophon*, Genève, Georg.
- Gray, V. 2007: *Xenophon on Government*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press.
- 2012: *Xenophon’s mirror of princes. Reading the reflections*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press.
- 2017: “Xenophon’s language and expression”, in M. Flower (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon*, New York-Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 223-240.

- Gronigen, B.A. van 1938: “Le vocabulaire d’Énée le Tacticien”, *Mnemosyne*, 6, 329-334.
- Humble, N. 2021: *Xenophon of Athens. A Socratic on Sparta*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press.
- Lane Fox, R. 2018: “Aineias the Author: Who, Where and When”, in M. Pretzler, N. Barley (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Aineias Tacticus*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 33-48.
- Lipka, M. 2002: *Xenophon’s Spartan Constitution*, Berlin-New York, De Gruyter.
- Luccioni, J. 1954: *Les Idées politiques et sociales de Xénophon*, Paris, Ophrys.
- Meißner, B. 2017: “Early Greek strategic and tactical teaching and Literature”, in P. Rance, N. Sekunda (ed.), *Greek Taktika: Ancient Military writing and its heritage*, Gdansk, Akanthina, 65-80.
- Noël, M.-P. 1997: “Mots nouveaux et idées nouvelles dans les *Nuées* d’Aristophane”, *Ktèma*, 22, 173-194.
- Ollier, F. 1934: *La République des Lacédémoniens*, Lyon, Bosc Frères.
- Peppler, Ch.W. 1910: “The termination -ικός as used by Aristophanes for comic effect”, *AJPh*, 31, 428-444.
- Pontier, P. 2006: *Trouble et ordre chez Platon et Xénophon*, Paris, Vrin.
- Richter, E. 1893: “Xenophon-Studien”, *Jahrbuch für klassische Philologie*, Suppl. 19, 57-155.
- Riedinger, J.-C. 1991: *Étude sur les Helléniques. Xénophon et l’histoire*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres.
- Sandridge, N. 2012: *Loving Humanity, learning, and being honored. The foundations of Leadership in Xenophon’s Education of Cyrus*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London, Harvard University Press.
- Shipley, G.J. 2018: “Aineias Tacticus in his intellectual context”, in M. Pretzler, N. Barley (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Aineias Tacticus*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 49-67.
- Thesleff, H. 1966: “Scientific and Technical Style in Early Greek Prose”, *Arctos*, 4, 89-113.
- Tuci, P. 2022: “Tibrone, un armosta poco intra-prendente? Note su un Spartano in Asia”, *Erga-Logoi*, 10, 53-92.
- Vela Tejada, J. 1991: *Estudio sobre la lengua de la Poliorcética de Eneas el Tático*, Zaragoza, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza.
- 2004: “Warfare, History and Literature in the Archaic and Classical Periods: The Development of Greek Military Treatises”, *Historia*, 53, 129-146.
- 2018: “Creating *Koine*: Aineias Tacticus in the History of the Greek Language”, in M. Pretzler, N. Barley (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Aineias Tacticus*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 96-122.

- Whately, C. 2021: “Military manuals from Aeneas to Maurice”, in J. Chlup, C. Whately (ed.), *Greek and Roman military manuals*, London-New York, Routledge, 17-38.
- Whitehead, D. 2002²: *Aeneias the Tactician. How to survive under siege*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.