THE PERSIAN ΚΑΡΔΑΚΕΣ

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Abstract: Persian troops denominated by Greek writers as κάρδακες appear infrequently in our sources for Achaemenid history, though they are recorded as having a substantial presence at Issus (333 BC). A comprehensive study of these troops is lacking and is of potentially great importance to our understanding of the military system of the Achaemenids, particularly after Xerxes' failed enterprise against Greece, and in light of the 10,000 Immortals' general disappearance from the literary record. Whether they were (a) light or heavy infantry and (b) mercenaries or native Persians has long been the subject of debate, with no particularly conclusive results. This study dismisses Strabo as a useful source on the κάρδακες, and attempts to reconcile the divergent source traditions of Arrian, who describes them as ὁπλῖται, and Callisthenes (recorded by Polybius), who writes of Persian πελτασταί at Issus. From an investigation of a wide variety of texts, together with lexicographical sources, it is possible to conclude that the hitherto enigmatic κάρδακες were general-purpose infantry not dissimilar to Iphicratean πελτασταί, and that, collectively, they constituted an ethnically diverse infantry force.

Keywords: Achaemenid Persia, kardakes, infantry, Issus

There is still much to be resolved about military terminology pertaining to Achaemenid Persia.[1] I recently sought to bring more clarity to our understanding of those infantry units described by Greek writers as the ἀθάνατοι ('Immortals') and the μηλοφόροι ('Apple Bearers'), yet also highlighted the ongoing problems associated with another group of soldiers referred to as the κάρδακες.[2] These troops, mainly owing to their appearance at Issus (333 BC) among the forces of Darius III, have sometimes occasioned passing commentary, but have not been studied in any great detail.[3] In particular, the κάρδακες have variously been described, on account of the ostensibly irreconcilable ancient sources, as members of a general Persian levy, non-Persian mercenaries or adolescent military trainees; there is also debate over whether the κάρδακες were line-of-battle infantry, as Arrian reports (*An.* 2.8.6), or a lighter style of infantry, as some have determined from (a) information provided by Strabo (15.3.18), which *locus* also seemingly points to the κάρδακες being trainee soldiers, and (b) details recorded by Callisthenes (*apud* Polyb. 12.17.7 = *FGrHist* 124 F 35), who refers to Persian πελτασταί at Issus.[4]

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[2] Charles (2011a) 114–33.

[3] Tarn (1948) 180–82.

[4] Dittberner (1907) 34 describes the κάρδακες as 'die barbarischen Hopliten', while Wilcken (1932) 102 elects 'Oriental mercenaries'. Sekunda (1992) 27 is of a similar view, though he sees them as Asiatic; likewise Segre (1938) 194; Olmstead (1948) 241; Chantraine (1999) 497; but *cf.* Sekunda (1988a) 42: 'Persian hoplites'; 49: 'barbarian hoplites'. Schmitt (2005) 2 is adamant that the 'common translation "mercenaries" is wrong', but *cf.* Schmitt (2002) 5. Bosworth (1980) 208 maintains that they were either 'the native Persian levy or an elite group of barbarian mercenaries', but makes no judgement regarding whether they were light or heavy. Ashley (1998) 225, with 61–62, writes of 'young Persians who had just completed their training', as reflected by Strabo 15.3.18, with Hinz (1975) 148: 'Kadetten'.

My principal aim is to draw together these source traditions so as to provide a measure of clarity regarding the κάρδακες.[5] A more thoroughly nuanced understanding of these enigmatic troops also has the potential to provide greater insight into the military organization of the Achaemenids; in particular, the apparent shift from a truly Persian standing army, as described in Herodotus' *Histories*, with the 10,000 ἀθάνατοι as the infantry centrepiece, to one that relied heavily on Greek mercenary hoplites to perform largely the same function. Indeed, consideration of the κάρδακες in the broader context of the Achaemenid military in its twilight years is closely tied to a number of ostensibly separate military issues. It must necessarily be said, however, that Greek sources will be used in the main, which brings with it the thorny issue of the degree to which these texts have the capacity to inform a better appreciation of the topic under investigation. In some cases, grave doubts emerge.

I. Strabo and the κάρδακες

In his *Geographica*, Strabo (15.3.18) provides information about Iranian youths who were undergoing, or had just completed, some sort of military training. This *locus* has an important bearing on our discussion of the κάρδακες:[6]

> From five years of age to 24, they are trained to use the bow, to throw the javelin, to ride horseback and to speak the truth; and they use as teachers of science their wisest men, who also interweave their teachings with the mythical element, thus reducing that element to a useful purpose, and rehearse both with song and without song the deeds both of the gods and of the noblest men. And these teachers wake the boys up before dawn by the sound of brazen instruments, and assemble them in one place, as though for arming themselves or for a hunt; and then they divide the boys into companies of 50, appoint one of the sons of the king or of a satrap as leader of each company, and order them to follow their leader in a race, having marked off a distance of 30 or 40 stadia. They require them also to give an account of each lesson, at the same time training them in loud speaking and in breathing, and in the use of their lungs, and also training them to endure heat and cold and rains, and to cross torrential streams in such a way as to keep both armour and clothing dry, and also to tend to flocks and live outdoors all night and eat wild fruits, such as pistachio nuts, acorns and wild pears. *These are called Cardaces, since they live on thievery, for 'carda' means the manly and warlike spirit* (καλοῦνται δ' οὗτοι κάρδακες, ἀπὸ κλοπείας τρεφόμενοι· κάρδα γὰρ τὸ ἀνδρῶδες καὶ πολεμικὸν λέγεται). Their daily food after their gymnastic exercises consists of bread, barley-cake, cardamom, grains of salt and roasted or boiled meat; but their drink is water. They hunt by throwing spears from horseback, and with bows and slings; and late in the afternoon they are trained in the planting of trees and in the cutting and gathering of roots and in making weapons and in the art of making linen clothes and hunters' nets. The boys do not touch the meat of wild animals, though it is the custom to bring them home. Prizes are offered by the king for victory in running and in the four other contests of the pentathla.

As can be seen, this passage contains information about the Persian education system. As a whole, the passage has nothing demonstrable to do with the κάρδακες, *unless* a single sentence embedded in the middle is genuinely part of Strabo's original text. But the most frequent view is that the statement relating to κάρδακες (i.e., καλοῦνται ... λέγεται) is a later interpolation. Some modern editors have excised it on this basis, with others merely viewing the words in

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[5] The etymology has received treatment elsewhere; see, in particular, Schmitt (2005) 3–4. Some have associated κάρδακες with MPers. *Kārdāg* (plural: *kārdāgān*), meaning 'wanderer' or 'traveller'; see Widengren (1968) 527–28; (1969) 84; but *cf.* Nyberg (1974) 112: 'trader, merchant, (perhaps) pedlar'. Szemerényi (1971) 672 asserts that the original Old

Iranian was *kāra-tāka*, an 'army-runner', but, here, an 'itinerant soldier'. This combines OPers. *kāra* ('people' or 'army') and a variant of YAv. *tak-* ('to move' or 'to run'); see also Hinz (1975) 148; Huyse (2002) 199, n.6. *Cf.* Chantraine (1999) 497: 'du perse ka/rda (?)'.

[6] This view is supported by Green (1974) 228–29.

question with great suspicion, more so since the words intrude awkwardly into the description of the boys' training and bisect two sentences dealing with diet.[7] Yet Tarn dismisses this as hyper-correction, though he admits that ἀπὸ κλοπείας τρεφόμενοι should be rejected, a view followed by Schmitt.[8]

Three possible scenarios emerge that are worth discussing: (a) if καλοῦνται ... λέγεται is merely an intrusive gloss and is not appropriate to the context, it would mean that Strabo did not originally mean to assign any particular name to the Persian trainees; (b) if the words still consti-tuted an interpolation, yet were indeed appropriate to the context, it is just possible that an erudite but non-Strabonian hand, at least according to some other authority no longer extant, recognized that Persian military trainees were indeed called κάρδακες; (c) if καλοῦνται ... λέγεται *was* genuinely Strabonian, it would mean that that the κάρδακες were military trainees, and not a more regularized part of the broader Persian army. Whatever the case, the passage in question hardly supports the view that they were lightly-armed infantry; indeed, it provides no evidence that they were trained as peltasts. For example, the trainees were taught to cross watercourses while keeping their armour (witness ὅπλα) dry, presumably to prevent corrosion. One hardly thinks of Thracian-style peltasts wearing armour.[9] Furthermore, it is odd that nobody discussing the κάρδακες refers to the passage immediately following 15.3.18:

> They [it seems abundantly clear that this is a continued discussion of the so-called κάρδακες] serve in the army and hold commands from 20 to 50 years of age, both as foot-soldiers and as horsemen; and they do not approach a marketplace, for they neither sell nor buy. They arm themselves with a rhomboidal wicker shield (ὁπλίζονται δὲ γέρρῳ ῥομβοειδεῖ); and besides quivers they have swords and knives (παρὰ δὲ τὰς φαρέτρας σαγάρεις ἔχουσι καὶ κοπίδας); and on their heads they wear a tower-like hat; and their breastplates are made of scales of iron (περὶ δὲ τῇ κεφαλῇ πίλημα πυργωτόν, θώραξ δ' ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς φολιδωτός) (Strabo 15.3.19).

If we connect the two passages and accept the entirety of the text transmitted to posterity, Strabo's κάρδακες were trained to serve as officers of infantry *and* cavalry units – hence the training in both departments. Again, they were taught to wear a cuirass (θώραξ). That this was constructed of metal scales is consistent with the need to cross a stream while keeping one's armour dry. Of particular importance is that they were not specifically trained as peltasts, at least in their original Thracian sense, where small shields were the norm; indeed, the rectangular

[7] Meineke (1852) (repeated in later editions) following Corais (1819), Groskurd (1831) and Kramer (1844). The *locus* is placed between parentheses by Müller and Dübner (1853) 625, with '*Gloss.*'; note, too, Kramer (1844) 258; (1852) 280. Reference to the κάρδακες is also removed by Tardieu (1867). *Cf.* Briant (1999) 121: 'probably an interpolation', though he connects the historical κάρδακες with stealing. Hamilton and Falconer (1903) 180, n.2 also regard it as an interpo-lation: 'Cardaces were not Persians, but foreign soldiers' and 'without doubt were Assyrian and Armenian Carduci ... Later Gordyæi or Gordyeni, now the Kurds'; see also Weissbach (1919) 1934. Pliny the Elder (*HN* 6.44) calls this group Cordueni, but notes their former name. Reinach (1909) 115 associates the κάρδακες with Xenophon's Καρδοῦχοι (see *An.* 4.3 *passim*), a view supported by Segre (1938) 194, n.2; Olmstead (1948) 241; Bar-Kochva (1976) 50; Chantraine (1999) 497. But attempts to assimilate Καρδοῦχοι with κάρδακες are misguided, for Xenophon (*An.* 3.5.16) states that these

'were not subjects of the king' (Βασιλέως οὐκ ἀκούειν; see also *An.* 5.5.17), and they are described as his enemies at *An.* 4.1.8; see also Diod. 14.27.3–6. Olmstead (1948) 241 refers to a cuneiform record from Borsippa (*BRM* 1.71) relating to 'Lukshu the Kardaka' (515 BC), yet this refers to 'Lukšu the *Carian*', as Eilers (1940) 192 points out; on the context, see Waerzeggers (2006), with *BRM* 1.71 = Text 9.

[8] Tarn (1948) 180, n.180; Schmitt (2005) 3. Radt (2005) 264–65 leaves the contested lines, though places κάρδα ... λέγεται in parentheses.

[9] A peltast (πελταστής) was a light infantryman carrying a small shield (πέλτη) and a brace of javelins. Best (1969) 141 points out that peltasts could also employ a long thrusting spear and fight at close quarters, as seen in pottery art. On the traditional peltast's equipment, see Snodgrass (1967) 78–79. Sekunda (2007) 339, following Hatzopoulos (2001) 71, raises the possibility of armour-equipped peltasts under the Successors.

wicker shields (γέρρα) introduced by Strabo are referred to elsewhere, with whole units being described as γερροφόροι.[10] Their use seems to be most closely aligned with the role of general infantry, though it seems that there were different sorts of equipment called γέρρα.[11]

But even if one accepts the reference to κάρδακες, it is arguable that the entirety of Strabo 15.3.18 is of dubious reliability. The information presented is highly idealized, cannot be assigned to a specific time and arguably speaks more to Greek concepts of personal nobility than it does to Persian ones. One can easily find echoes of Spartan military training, at least as recorded by Xenophon (*Lac.* 2.1–3.5), including the need to steal food to survive (if that information was indeed provided by Strabo), endure the harshest of weather and develop self-sufficiency.[12] That the Persians placed importance on the pentathla is also dubious. Very few scholars, with the exception of Alföldi, seem to have noticed the extraordinary similarities between Strabo 15.3.18 and what Xenophon writes about the Persian education system during Cyrus' youth.[13] In the *Cyropaedia*, generally regarded as largely didactic romance,[14] Xenophon (*Cyr.* 1.2.3–14) describes the education of the Persian élite. He tells us that the youth only drink water, are taught to endure heat and cold, hunt wild beasts, and practice archery and hurling spears. Their lodgings are also far from the vulgarity of the market-places. They are classed as boys until their 16th year, after which they are regarded for ten years as youths; after this, they remain at the state's disposal for 25 years. These men fight, no longer with bow and arrow, nor light throwing spears (παλτά),[15] but with weapons for hand-to-hand fighting (ἀγχέμαχα ὅπλα), including a cuirass (θώραξ) and wicker shield (γέρρον),[16] together with a short sword (μάχαιρα) or curved blade (κοπίς) (*Cyr.* 1.2.13) – hardly the weapons of Thracian-style peltasts.[17] Their military service ceased upon reaching 50 years of age (*Cyr.* 1.2.14).[18]

Though there are some notable differences between the Xenophontic and Strabonian accounts of Persian military training, both *loci* are highly rhetorical, and describe the same institution, be it real or imagined.[19] It follows that Strabo, at 15.3.18–19, is possibly conflating Xenophon's information with another source,[20] or else fragments of his own wider reading. If so, the equation

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[10] For example, see Pl. *La.* 191b–c and *cf.* Hdt. 9.61.3 (on Plataea); Xen. *An.* 1.8.9; *cf.* Strab. 7.3.17, where wicker shields are used by the Roxolani; and Xen. *An.* 4.3.4, where Chaldaean mercenaries in Persian service carry γέρρα μακρά. *Cf.* Bittner (1985) 160, Taf. 5a with Sekunda (1988b) 69.

[11] Tuplin (2004) 174, n.66 warns us that the γερρο-φόροι 'correspond to the standard Persian infantry ... not carriers of the large rectilinear shields used at Plataea and Mycale [both 479 BC]'.

[12] On Spartan military training, and enduring harsh weather and stealing, see Xen. *Lac.* 2.4, 2.6–9.

[13] See Alföldi (1951) 15. Hirsch (1985) 86 links the two *loci*, but contends that the extent to which Strabo can be used to confirm material in the *Cyropaedia* is 'difficult' (178–79). Gera (1993) 16 refers to Strabo 15.3.18 in the context of possible Persian source material, but does not remark on any similarity between the *locus* and the Xenophontic *locus* discussed here; likewise Friederici (1909) and Mueller-Goldingen (1995).

[14] See especially Tatum (1989) chapters 1–2, supported by Christesen (2006) 47, with, *inter alios*, Due (1989) 26; Gera (1993) 1. But *cf.* Hirsch (1985) chapter 4 and especially 62–63, 87; see also Stadter (2010) 368. Christesen (2006) 50 concedes that Xenophon selected 'from a variety of ancient traditions', but added 'freely to those traditions'. On his possible use of Iranian oral tradition, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2010) 441–44.

[15] These weapons are associated with the Persian cavalry at Xen. *Cyr.* 4.3.9, 6.2.16.

[16] Miller (1914) 23 oddly translates this word as 'a round shield', while Ambler (2001) 26 does little better: 'a shield'. *Cf.* Bizos (1971) 9: 'un bouclier d'osier'.

[17] For peltasts of the classical age, see Best (1969) 141.

[18] On the education system, see also Xen. *Cyr.* 2.3.13, with 3.3.70.

[19] Many of the broader details are presumably accurate, such as hunting being regarded as training for war; *cf.* Xen. *Lac.* 4.7. Johnson (2005) 182 sees similar-ities between the system described by Xenophon and that of Sparta, although he concedes that it is 'probably ... a Xenophontic idealization'. On the (ostensible) similar-ities to Sparta, see also Nadon (2001) 29–42; Christesen (2006) 52, 63; but *cf.* Tuplin (1994) 142–43, 150–63 with Nadon (2001) 35 and Azoulay (2007) 446–51.

[20] Schmitt (2005) 3 suggests 'maybe Hecataeus'; *cf.* Hirsch (1985) 86, 178–79, where Herodotus, Xenophon and Ctesias are mentioned, together with Aeschylus and Polycleitus (named by Strabo). Tuplin (1996b) 150 thinks that Xenophon was familiar with Herodotus and Ctesias, but *cf.* Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2010) 448–52 with Due (1989) 118 (Herodotus), 136 (Ctesias). See also Xen. *An.* 1.8.26–27, where Ctesias is mentioned, and Mueller-Goldingen (1995) 1–24; Tuplin (2004) 155.

of these trainee Persians with the term κάρδακες, if indeed it has any genuine textual basis, does not have its origins in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, while juxtaposition of the two sources casts considerable doubt on κάρδακες being related in any way to thievery, for both sources clearly emphasize the moral dimension of Persian military training.[21] If so, the view that Strabo 15.3.18 should be connected to Arrian's κάρδακες, as Tarn would have it, emerges as highly dubious.

In short, rather than suggesting that the κάρδακες were lightly-armed infantry, the *loci* discussed should be interpreted rather differently. The institution described by Strabo was not intended as a broad national service; rather, it functioned as a kind of academy for élite Persians. One would not normally expect to find the sons of the king and his satraps (Strabo 15.3.18) training and cohabiting with the offspring of the Persian commons. Since the group supposedly encompassed a number of age-groups, with 'graduation' occurring before their appointment to an officer position in their 20th (or 25?) year, if they chose a military path,[22] the total pool could have been reasonably numerous. But that is predicated on there being some kind of realistic foundation to the *loci*. On the basis of the general consensus regarding the nature of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, especially as it pertains to its description of Persian institutions,[23] there could be minimal historical worth in either his or Strabo's accounts.

II. The κάρδακες at Issus

Now, we turn our attention to Issus (333 BC), a battle waged between Alexander and the defending host of Darius III. Issus is notable for the fact that the ἀθάνατοι, the line-of-battle Persian infantry closely associated with Xerxes in the early fifth century, are altogether absent from extant accounts of the battle, although Curtius Rufus (3.3.13) refers to them – presumably erroneously – in the lead-up to the engagement.[24] Given that he based much of the *Anabasis* on the eyewitnesses Ptolemy and Aristobulus, Arrian remains our principal source.[25] His account can be supplemented by that of Curtius, despite our overall misgivings, together with even more derivative material; unfortunately, Diodorus Siculus provides no details of Darius' order of battle, and nor does Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus.[26]

Let us start with Arrian, and concern ourselves primarily with the infantry. Unlike the largely cavalry engagement at the Granicus (334 BC), Darius himself was present. The king's infantry guard or μηλοφόροι, described by Arrian (*An.* 3.11.5) as later participating at Gaugamela (331 BC),[27] are not recorded, although it is plausible that elements of this presumably 1,000-strong

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[21] Johnson (2005) 183 also notes this fundamental difference between the military training of the idealized Persia of Cyrus' youth and that of Sparta. *Cf.* Hdt. 1.136.2 with Xen. *An.* 1.9.2–6.

[22] There is some confusion between the two Strabonian passages regarding when the training is completed; on the ages recorded in the *Cyropaedia*, see Tuplin (1996b) 138.

[23] On this, see Christesen (2006) 47–65, who regards Xenophon's description of Persian institutions as deliberately didactic; *cf.* Too (1998) 302.

[24] Atkinson (1980) 102, 123–24 views their presence as historical, while Devine (1985b) 33 also includes them. Space precludes a discussion of this matter here, but the Immortals' seemingly anachronistic appearance is discussed in detail by Charles (2011a) 129–30. Heracleides (*FGrH* 689 F 1 = Athen. 12.514b–c) writes of ἀθάνατοι *ca.* 350 BC in his *Persica*, though the context is uncertain.

[25] *Cf.* Devine (1985a) 48. Arrian surely used Ptolemy for Issus; see *An.* 2.11.8, with Hammond (1992) 399.

Aristobulus is not attested, although he was presumably consulted. On Arrian's sources, see Bosworth (1980) 198–99, including a papyrus epitome (*P.Oxy.* 1798 F44 = *FGrHist* 148). Troops referred to as oἱ ξένοι are referred to at col. iii, line 3 and col. iv, line 17, but these are Greek mercenaries, as per Grenfell and Hunt (1922) 133.

[26] Diodorus (17.31.2) merely states that Darius' infantry force was 400,000 strong, with 100,000 cavalry, and that he had not requested levies from the upper satrapies (Diod. 17.39.3); *cf.* Arr. 3.8.3–6, where the new contingents for Gaugamela are listed.

[27] Also described at Diod. 17.59.3; for commentary, see Charles (2011a) 126–30. Curtius fails to record them in any of Darius' armies, though he mentions *doryphoroe* at 3.3.15, which *could* be equivalent to δορυφόροι (= μηλοφόροι). This is debateable, with Collins (2001) 268, n.47, following Heckel (1992) 191–2, contending that *doryphoroe* was 'probably a later scribal miscorrection of *dorophorae* ... [a Latin transcription of δωρυφόροι] that referred to the Persian "gift bearers" ... rather than to the Royal bodyguards'.

unit were present.[28] The allegedly 30,000 Greek mercenaries, described by Arrian at *An.* 2.8.6,[29] were surely the most reliable Persian infantry available, aside from the guard, for the Greeks constituted a highly-trained professional army capable of combating Alexander's sarissa-armed phalanx.[30] These were placed in the centre, directly opposite the Macedonian phalanx, and were joined by 60,000 κάρδακες, with half arrayed on either side of the Greeks – an astonishing number given that Arrian (*An.* 2.8.6) describes these soldiers specifically as ὁπλῖται, a word normally interpreted as 'heavy infantry'. This is a matter of contention, and Tarn rejects it outright.[31] An array of 90,000 Persian line-of-battle infantry at Issus would have represented a formidable force, though one need not necessarily hold Arrian to his arithmetic; indeed, Parke has difficulty accepting the number of Greek mercenaries, while Ashby casts doubt on the numerical strength of the κάρδακες.[32]

While there has been much debate over whether the κάρδακες were (a) heavy infantry and (b) ethnically Persian or constituted of other peoples, those pursuing these matters have largely referred to *An.* 2.8.6. Yet, at *An.* 2.8.8, we find evidence of Arrian's own thoughts:

> The general mass of his [i.e., Darius'] light and heavy troops, arranged by their nations in such depth that they were useless, was behind the Greek mercenaries and the barbarian force drawn up in phalanx formation (τὸ δὲ ἄλλο πλῆθος αὐτοῦ ψιλῶν τε καὶ ὁπλιτῶν, κατὰ ἔθνη συντεταγμένον ἐς βάθος οὐκ ὠφέλιμον, ὄπισθεν ἦν τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῶν μισθοφόρων καὶ τοῦ ἐπὶ φάλαγγος τεταγμένου βαρβαρικοῦ).

There is no specific mention of the κάρδακες here, yet the barbarian force drawn as a phalanx can only be the κάρδακες introduced at *An.* 2.8.6, where they were positioned on either side of the Greek mercenaries stationed in the centre. According to Arrian, the κάρδακες were intended to perform roughly the function of line-of-battle infantry, i.e., something approximating ὁπλῖται. These troops are also specifically referred to as 'barbarians' (*An.* 2.8.8), although this obviously does not mean that Arrian is referring only to non-Persian troops.

Some have concluded that Arrian was mistaken. Milns and Fuller argue that the κάρδακες must have been lightly-armed peltasts, presumably of the type armed with throwing spears.[33] The basis for this lies in Polybius' dissection (12.17.1–18.12 = *FGrHist* 124 F 35) of Callisthenes' account of Issus. Here, the mercenaries (μισθοφόροι), to the tune of 30,000 and thus Arrian's Greeks, were arrayed with peltasts (πελτασταί) next to them on one side and 30,000 Persian cavalry on the other (12.17.7–18.2). This is different to what Arrian describes, especially given that πελτασταί, generally interpreted as a lighter kind of infantry, take the place of Arrian's

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[28] Curtius proves unhelpful. At 3.9.4, he writes that Darius was followed by 3,000 élite horsemen, 'his usual bodyguard' (*assueta corporis custodia*), together with 40,000 unspecified infantry. Ashley (1998) 225 writes that 'The two units of Darius' Royal Bodyguards totalled 2,000', possibly an allusion to the μηλοφόροι and the kinsmen cavalry (συγγενεῖς) at Gaugamela (μηλοφόροι: Arr. *An.* 3.11.5, 3.13.1, 3.16.1; συγγενεῖς: Arr. *An.* 3.11.5, 3.16.1; Diod. 17.59.2), or else a reflection of the belief that there were two units of αἰχμοφόροι (= μηλοφόροι or δορυφόροι?), as per Herodotus (7.40.2, 7.41.1, with 7.55.3); *cf.* Milns (1968) 52, with 118–19; Green (1974) 228.

[29] Bosworth (1980) 208 thinks that Arrian's figure 'derives from Callisthenes (Polybius xii 18.2)'.

[30] On this, see Curt. 3.9.2. Parke (1933) 183, n.6 observes that Greek mercenaries are not mentioned at all in Diodorus' account, and questions whether 30,000

mercenaries were present (183–84).

[31] Tarn (1948) 180.

[32] Parke (1933) 183: 'much too high'; supported by Brunt (1976) 151, n.4. Ashley (1998) 225 only credits 'about 10,000' κάρδακες. In addition, another 20,000-strong division of uncertain ethnic origin and troop-type faced Alexander's right, with other heavy and light infantry groups stationed behind the aforementioned units. Atkinson (1980) 102 places doubt on Arrian's use of κάρδακες: 'open to question'. Adams (2006) 145 contends that Arrian's κάρδακες could include the 10,000 ἀθάνατοι, but this view has little merit.

[33] Milns (1968) 52; Fuller (1958) 155, n.2, 160. Sekunda and Warry (1998) 79 also see them as 'probably lightly armed Persian infantry', as does Green (1974) 228 and Hamilton (1974) 68. Devine (1985a) 47 identifies Callisthenes' πελτασταί with Arrian's ὁπλῖται, but with no explanation.

κάρδακες. But the difference in terminology could be misleading. By the Hellenistic era, and specifically after the late fourth-century reforms of the Athenian Iphicrates (Diod. 15.44.2–3), 'peltast', while originally describing either a javelineer or lightly-equipped soldier carrying a small shield (πέλτη) and thrusting spear, had seemingly evolved into an '"ersatz" hoplite' – though this view is not without its critics.[34] These πελτασταί performed a line-of-battle function, even if they could not adequately supplant traditional heavy infantry units optimized for hand-to-hand fighting.[35] The equipment of the κάρδακες could potentially have led some writers, such as Callisthenes, to have equated them with the 'front-line "Iphicratean" peltasts', as Sekunda describes them, thereby leading to the appearance of Persian πελτασταί *en masse* in Polybius.[36] The terms used by Callisthenes (at least as reported by Polybius) and Arrian are therefore reconcilable, even though most commentators ignore this possibility.

Further material is provided by Curtius. In his order of battle (3.9.1–5), he writes that, on the Persian right, Darius stationed 20,000 slingers and archers together with the cavalry and, presumably inside these men, 30,000 Greek mercenaries. On the extreme left were 20,000 barbarian infantry (*barbari pedites*) under the Thessalian Aristomedes, which troops Schmitt regards as Arrian's κάρδακες.[37] A further force of 40,000 infantry (*pedestris acies*), identified outright by Atkinson as the κάρδακες, was stationed close to Darius and his élite cavalry somewhere towards the left wing.[38] Six thousand javelin-throwers and slingers were scattered across the field in the van, while other infantry and cavalry units were placed in indeterminate positions.

How, then, to reconcile Curtius' account with that of Arrian? First, the number of mercenaries is identical.[39] Here, at least, is a common thread. Second, Curtius writes of 20,000 + 40,000 infantry aside from the Greek mercenaries and missile troops. This seems to add up to Arrian's 60,000 κάρδακες. A further clue could be provided by Curtius 3.2.4, which deals with the build-up to Issus. Here, we read that Darius led 100,000 Persians to the field, of which 30,000 were cavalry. If we subtract the 10,000 Immortals that Curtius (3.3.13) believes were also marshalled, we are left with 60,000 men. In addition, Curtius shows a willingness to label light infantry as *funditores*, *sagittarii* and *iaculatores*, so there is no cause to imagine that the other 60,000 undefined *pedites* were of similar type. Both writers therefore describe 60,000 κάρδακες in their own way, even if they cannot agree on their exact placement. Furthermore, Arrian writes that the κάρδακες were split into two groups arrayed around the central core of 30,000 Greeks, something largely reconcilable with Curtius' two groups of 20,000 and 40,000 unspecified infantry, although

[34] Sekunda (2007) 328. Juhel and Sekunda (2009) 106 point out that, while πέλτη originally meant a small, round leather shield, it had become 'small, round bronze shield' by the Hellenistic era. Diodorus (15.44.3) suggests that the πέλτη was retrofitted to existing hoplite units; see also Nepos (*Iph.* 1.3–4), with the additional detail of metal cuirasses being exchanged for linen ones. There is a view, however, that what Diodorus and Nepos describe was a misunderstanding of Ephorus and a temporary arrangement for the Egyptian campaign; on this, see Stylianou (1999) 342–46, and 345 in particular.

[35] See Juhel and Sekunda (2009) 106, with commentary on a number of corroborating Livian passages. Arrian's *Tactica* (3.4) also suggests that πελτασταί sat somewhere between hoplites and true light infantry.

[36] Sekunda (2007) 328, with 339; he admits that representations of so-called Iphicratean peltasts are 'rare'; but see Sekunda (1994) no. 206 (Athens,

National Museum 3708). On peltasts in Antigonid armies, see Hatzopoulos (2001) 66–69. Asclepiodotus (*Tact.* 1.2), writing in the first century BC, regards πελτασταί as soldiers lying between heavily-armed hoplites and very light missile troops, and observes that their shields are smaller than hoplite ones, and their spears shorter. Arrian's *Tactica* (3.4) suggests much the same thing, and differentiates πελτασταί from 'real' hoplites.

[37] Schmitt (2005) 2. Devine (1985a) 48 is even more explicit; *cf.* Sekunda (1992) 52.

[38] Atkinson (1980) 207. Darius, and indeed most Persian kings, normally commanded from the centre, as per Arr. *An.* 2.8.11. Curtius also places Darius on the left at Gaugamela (4.14.8), again contrary to Arrian (3.11.5); on this, see Devine (1985a) 48, who reduces this force to 10,000 men and merely labels them as 'infantry'. In a diagrammatic representation on 58, these 10,000 become 'Persian Guard Infantry'.

[39] See, specifically, Curt. 3.2.9.

determining their positions in relation to each other is clearly hopeless. That the group of 20,000 is described as *barbari* also helps us little, since Curtius may not necessarily be referring to non-Persians – as Arrian also seems to be doing at *An.* 2.8.8.[40] Overall, there is no firm evidence from these *loci* to suggest that the κάρδακες were anything other than general infantry.

Where some scholarly reasoning on the role of the κάρδακες gets unstuck is recourse to the assumption that, because the Macedonians under Alexander's direct command were able to penetrate their line (Arr. *An.* 2.10.4), they must have been light infantry. Fuller contends that, if they were indeed line-of-battle infantry rather than traditional-style peltasts, Alexander would not have ordered a cavalry charge,[41] but there is some debate over whether the charge was indeed conducted by horsemen.[42] Whatever the case, the more generally accepted view reflects a common misconception that 'heavy infantry' refers solely to weight of equipment rather than role in battle.[43] At Issus, the κάρδακες need not have been particularly heavily armoured, but they must have been equipped with equipment permitting them to maintain their line – it is difficult to believe that the large and presumably dense formations in question were composed of Thracian-style peltasts. If peltasts they were, they must have been closer to the Iphicratean type.

That the κάρδακες could not withstand a cavalry assault, if the charge was indeed conducted by horsemen, whereas ὁπλῖται could *normally* do so,[44] speaks not so much to these men being light infantry; rather, it suggests that they were not of particularly good quality or had little heart for the fight. Even Fuller admits that a hoplite phalanx could be charged effectively if 'in disorder'.[45] Perhaps Alexander was aware of the less-than-élite status of the κάρδακες or the possible inadequacy of their weapons,[46] and so anticipated that they would crumble before a well-timed assault. Arrian (*An.* 2.10.3) tells us that it was Alexander's intention to terrify the Persians (τοὺς Πέρσας) on Darius' left wing – presumably the κάρδακες – with the speed of his onslaught so that, by moving quickly to close quarters, the efficacy of the archers placed either in front or behind them might be negated.[47]

At least at Issus, the appearance of the κάρδακες on either side of the centrally-positioned force of Greek mercenaries suggests that they were intended to occupy, in as much as they could, the role of general infantry, and at least afford some sort of protection for the flanks of the main hoplite force. Although Arrian has been lambasted for describing the κάρδακες as ὁπλῖται, he may have had some cause to do so.[48]

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[40] Curtius uses the terms *Persae* and *barbari* interchangeably; on this theme, see Briant (1999) 120.

[41] Fuller (1958) 155, n.2; with Milns (1968) 52; Atkinson (1980) 208.

[42] See Hammond (1992) 403, who argues that the charge was conducted by Alexander's 'élite Infantry Guard', as Kromayer and Veith (1929) 369 first suggested; *cf.* Wilcken (1932) 103; Milns (1968) 79; Lane Fox (1973) 457; Green (1974) 230; Hamilton (1974) 68; Bosworth (1980) 213; Devine (1985a) 52–53, n.80.

[43] On this, see Charles (2004) 127–28.

[44] Tarn (1948) 181; he cites, for example, the failure of the bow- and javelin-equipped Persian cavalry to penetrate the Greek hoplite line at Plataea (Hdt. 9.49 *passim*), but these were mainly mounted archers (ἱππ-οτοξόται), and thus not comparable with Alexander's élite cavalry – if such was indeed the force used. Plataea was also a case of constant harassment (see, for example, Hdt. 9.52.1), not a cavalry 'charge'.

[45] At Cunaxa (401 BC) the peltasts were over-run by the Persian cavalry, but they were allowed to do so for

tactical reasons; see Xen. *An.* 1.10.7. But *cf.* Thuc. 7.30.2, where Thracian soldiers employing light-infantry tactics, not described as peltasts *per se*, were able to beat off a Theban cavalry attack.

[46] On this, see Atkinson (1980) 208. With regard to the inefficiency of Persian weapons, see Arr. *An.* 1.15.5, with Diod. 17.53.1.

[47] According to Arrian (*An.* 2.11.4), the rout on the Persian left prompted Darius' withdrawal. On archers being behind the κάρδακες, see Hammond (1992) 406.

[48] The term ὁπλῖται could mean any soldier *other than* a light infantryman, particularly one carrying the ὅπλον. By describing the κάρδακες as ὁπλῖται, Arrian need not necessarily mean that they were 'classic' hoplites, especially since we cannot expect Persian infantry to cohere exactly with Greek types. They were presumably equipped with some sort of thrusting weapon and a shield of reasonable proportions, perhaps a type of γέρρον. That said, vase paintings depict Persian soldiers with a crescent-cut shield not dissimilar to the original Thracian πέλτη; see Sekunda (2007) 327, fig. 11.1.

III. Other accounts of κάρδακες

In his *Datames* (8.1), Nepos claims that Autophradates, general of the beleaguered Artaxerxes II, disposed of an army including 100,000 *Cardaces* (i.e., κάρδακες), who are described as infantry (*pedites*), and 3,000 slingers 'of the same kind' (*eiusdemque generis*). These fought against the rebel forces of the satrap Datames in 367 BC, only a generation before Issus.[49] Sekunda uses this *locus* to affirm that the 'the Persian military institution of the *Kardakes* was established during the period of Datames' command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force [and before his treachery against the Great King became manifest]' – a view which is difficult to confirm.[50]

What the specific information means, however, is problematic. Tarn concludes that Nepos' *genus* is nothing more than 'a mere misunderstanding',[51] while Head contends that it refers to the 'particular status or origin' of the troops, a belief reflected in Rolfe's translation: 'of the same nationality'.[52] While Head's interpretation appears sensible from an interpretative perspective, it may not reflect what actually took place. Sekunda merely describes the 100,000 as 'barbarian hoplites', but he argues, somewhat puzzlingly, that the 3,000 slingers were 'Kurdish'.[53] If *genus* is indeed read as 'nationality', this would imply that the 100,000 were also Kurdish. At the very least, the use of *pedites*, in juxtaposition with *funditores*, suggests that the *Cardaces* were intended by Nepos as 'regular' infantry and, if not exactly Greek-style hoplites, were not light infantry either.[54]

Hesychius (K 788), in his fifth-century AD lexicon, also provides a brief description: οἱ στρατευσάμενοι βάρβαροι ὑπὸ Περσῶν. καὶ ἐν Ἀσίᾳ οὕτω καλοῦσι τοὺς στρατιώτας, οὐκ ἀπὸ ἔθνους ἢ τόπου ... ('the barbarians campaigning under the command of the Persians; and in Asia they denominate the soldiers thus, not from a race or location'). Some details have been lost, yet it is clear that he means that κάρδακες was a generic term for a *type* of soldier (if not merely a generic soldier), and that the name did not derive from an ethnonym or toponym. This would prompt us to conclude that Nepos, with *genus*, really did mean a 'kind' of solder, and not ethnic group – especially since he makes a distinction between κάρδακες and those with a specific ethnic origin.[55] However, although it is tempting to give credence to Hesychius' definition, in his explanation of ἀθάνατοι (= A 1531), he refers to these troops as cavalry, a statement of no utility for the Achaemenid era, thereby putting his ability to provide accurate information about our period into question.[56]

In his lexicon, Photius of Constantinople, writing in the second half of the ninth century AD, likewise provides a definition, which in turn derives from the second-century AD Atticist lexicographer Pausanias: οἱ στρατιῶται ἐν Ἀσίῃ· λέγονται δὲ καὶ οἱ φύλακες κάρδακες ('the

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[49] The Latin, which reads *habebat barbarorum equitum uiginti, peditum centum milia, quos illi* [i.e., the Persians] *Cardacas appellant, eiusdemque generis tres milia funditorum*, does not necessarily prevent the *equites* from also being κάρδακες, which would contradict Arrian's testimony, although the general sense is of *pedites*. Guillemin (1961) 82 translates *Cardacas* as 'les miliciens mercenaires'.

[50] Sekunda (1988a) 42; he connects the creation of the κάρδακες to the army raised in Akê by Datames before his rebellion, as per Nep. *Dat.* 4.1 (this was handed over to the mercenary commander Mandrocles at *Dat.* 5.6); repeated at 49 and also at 52, where the formation of the κάρδακες is assigned to '373/2'. Sekunda's surmise is rejected by Briant (1996) 1064 and Schmitt (2005) 3.

[51] Tarn (1948) 180, n.2.

[52] Head (1992) 43; Rolfe (1984) 159; at 158, n.c1, Rolfe describes these men as 'mercenary tribes

belonging to the barbarian tribes of the Persian empire'. Briant (1999) 120 equivocates with 'of the same people/category'; *cf.* Atkinson (1980) 208: 'ethnic group'. Note, too, Bosworth (1980) 208: 'the Cardaces were of the same species as the preceding cavalry, i.e., native Persians'.

[53] Sekunda (1988a) 49.

[54] This is supported by Hammond (1992) 399, with 404, n.33. See also some puzzling commentary provided by Best (1969) 137.

[55] From this, Schmitt (2005) 2 contends that they 'did not belong to the contingents recruited from various tribes living in the empire', and supports Briant's view, (1999) 121, that they 'certainly are troops not levied hastily but armed uniformly and carefully'. That they provided 'a true "phalanx of hoplites"' is more debatable.

[56] On the Sassanian élite cavalry, see Charles (2011b) 289–313.

soldiers in Asia; the guards are called κάρδακες as well').[57] This is not dissimilar to what Hesychius tells us. Note, too, the information provided by Aelius Dionysius, another second-century AD lexicographer: οὐκ ἴδιόν τι γένος, ἀλλὰ οἱ μισθοῦ στρατευόμενοι βάρβαροι ('not a distinct race, but those barbarians serving in the army for pay').[58] This is also quoted by the Byzantine Eustathius at *Comm. Ad Il.* 2.869, with οὐ δίκαιόν τι γένος confusingly in place of Aelius Dionysius' οὐκ ἴδιόν τι γένος.[59] Given that Aelius Dionysius himself quotes a certain Theopompus, who could be an Athenian comic poet with a floruit beginning *ca.* 410 BC and ending *ca.* 370 BC, this could comprise evidence that the κάρδακες predated Datames' reforms.[60] Yet one cannot put too much faith in this, for Bosworth and Tuplin propose that 'Theopompus' was the fourth-century BC historian.[61] What can be made of these *loci* is uncertain, though there is a general sense that the κάρδακες were not 'ethnic' troops, but merely soldiers under Persian command.

The only other extant references to κάρδακες relate to the age of the Successors. Troops so-denominated are attested by Polybius (5.79.11, 5.82.11) among the forces of the Seleucid king Antiochus III at Raphia (217 BC).[62] Here, they were commanded by Lysimachus, a Galatian (Polyb. 5.79.11), which need not suggest that the troops themselves were Celts. These κάρδακες, together with a group of Lydians, are clearly labelled as javelin-throwers at Polyb. 5.82.11 (ἀκοντιστάς), and were therefore light infantry of a sort.[63] But it is impossible to draw too much from these *loci*. Tarn warns that the κάρδακες at Raphia 'had nothing to do with the Cardaces at Issus', and were 'certainly barbarian mercenaries of some sort'. I am inclined to accept this.[64] Yet the function of a Hellenistic group of infantry does not help us much with determining their role under the Achaemenids. The only real interest, however circumstantial, is that they were operating in the Levant, where the κάρδακες fought under Darius, and where Autophradates' force for the Egyptian expedition was presumably assembled.[65]

IV. Drawing the threads together

There seems to be no compelling reason to accept either of the propositions most commonly associated with the κάρδακες: (a) that they were light infantry or (b) that they were of a single ethnic origin, and were not ethnic Persians. Briant takes this a step further. After consulting Hesychius (*s.v.* κάρδακες = K 788), he contends that the κάρδακες, which he believes were composed of *both* ethnic Persians and subject peoples, constituted what could be termed 'an

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[57] See text at Erbse (1950) 188 (K 14) = Paus. *fr.* 222. Briant (1999) 121 provides 'guards (or garrisons)' for φύλακες.

[58] = 368.38–40, and line 39 in particular; see text at Erbse (1950) 125 (K 11).

[59] Edition of van der Valk (1971) 581.

[60] On the comedian as source, see Erbse (1950) 44, 248–49; Kassel and Austin (1989) 748.

[61] Bosworth (1980) 208; Tuplin (1996a) 147, n.32.

[62] On the *locus*, see Walbank (1957) 609. On κάρδακες under the Seleucids, see Bar-Kochva (1976) 50, 216–17, 229–30.

[63] These troops were placed on the far left wing, near 2,000 horsemen and assorted light infantry (Polyb. 5.82.11). Widengren (1968) 527, oddly writes that 'Polybius V 79,11 betrachtet sie als besoldete Krieger'.

[64] Tarn (1948) 181. Tarn (182) wonders if they called themselves κάρδακες because the name meant 'manly warriors', as per Strabo 15.3.18. These men were possibly placed in a military settlement by Antiochus, according to one interpretation of a letter of

Eumenes II of Pergamum published by Segre (1938) 190–99. Walbank (1957) 609 provides qualified support. Others suggest that, because the villagers were liable for taxation, they were the remnants of an Achaemenid military colony or the descendants of 'genuine' κάρδακες; see Bar-Kochva (1976) 217; Keen (1998) 64–65; Tietz (2003) 346–52. This is described as 'convincing' by Schmitt (2005) 3; *cf.* Launey (1949) 486, n.4: 'peut-être'; see also Magie (1950) 1026.

[65] That (a) κάρδακες operated in the Levant and (b) troops so called were also marshalled for Egyptian service in the same area may be coincidence, and not a concrete indication that κάρδακες always originated from the region in question. Note, too, that several of Datames' other contingents were Anatolian (all named specifically according to their ethnicity) (*Dat.* 8.2), the very place of the village of κάρδακες (see n.64). Interesting, too, is that the commander of the κάρδακες under Antiochus III was a Galatian. Again, these similarities may be coincidental, and need not mean that the κάρδακες hailed from Asia Minor.

imperial infantry', a conclusion hinted at earlier by Browning and Widengren.[66] I have previously credited this and commented that 'it is possible that the ἀθάνατοι, by the time of Darius III, could have been replaced by an even larger infantry force more genuinely representative of the empire's ethnically diverse inhabitants'.[67] Briant does not make any connection with the apparent disappearance of the ἀθάνατοι, but the notion is worth advancing since it offers a context into which the κάρδακες might be placed. The increased reliance on Greek mercenaries might also be adduced – the superiority of Greek hoplites over élite (or at least regular) Persian line-of-battle infantry was clearly demonstrated at Thermopylae (480 BC). A failure to best Greek hoplites also occurred at Plataea (479 BC), where Persian infantry, perhaps including the μηλόφοροι,[68] proved no match for the Spartan and Athenian heavy infantry. In view of the changing military circumstances, it is possible that, over time, the ἀθάνατοι were replaced by Greek mercenaries, supplemented by the κάρδακες.

Xenophon (*Oec.* 4.5), who had a reasonably informed understanding of the contemporary Persian military system owing to his involvement in the doomed enterprise of Cyrus the Younger, also provides further contextual information. He makes Socrates state that the governors of those regions providing tribute supplied maintenance (τροφή) for a specified number of horsemen, archers, slingers and γερροφόροι, which word seems to mean 'general-purpose infantry'.[69] These soldiers were required so that the king could control his subjects and protect the empire in the event of invasion. This implies a standing army or ready reserve, perhaps to compensate for the apparent disappearance of the 10,000 ἀθάνατοι – if indeed this *locus* is meant to reflect a post-Xerxes actuality. In a subsequent remark (*Oec.* 4.6), Xenophon writes that the king annually reviewed his 'mercenaries' (witness μισθοφόροι, which need not necessarily mean the Greek mercenaries),[70] in addition to all the other troops in his service (οἷς ὡπλίσθαι προστέτακται), save those occupying the city garrisons.[71] From this, there is room to conclude that what Arrian called the κάρδακες were, if not extemporaneously drafted levies, those troops whose maintenance was provided for by the Great King's subject peoples – which also suggests that these units were comprised of soldiers from the more long-standing, and thus less potentially rebellious, parts of the empire. The bulk of these were possibly equipped in a broadly similar way to Iphicratean πελτασταί, thereby resulting in the ostensibly irreconcilable terms used by Arrian and Callisthenes (=Polybius) to describe what appear to be the same troops.[72] That said, the same pool of troops could conceivably have also provided other troop-types, as seems to be suggested by one interpretation of Xen. *Oec.* 4.5–6.

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[66] Briant (1996) 121; *cf.* Briant (1999) 121, where the principles of educating young Persians (as per Strabo 15.3.18) 'were extended to young men from other parts of the empire'; note, too, Browning (1888) 46: 'Cardacas were a standing body of infantry, like the Turkish Janissaries', with Widengren (1968) 527: 'stehende Truppe'. See also Head (1992) 43: 'troops from a new source of manpower, perhaps new regiments of Iranian or tribal mercenaries'.

[67] Charles (2011a) 126.

[68] On this supposition, see Charles (2011a) 123–24.

[69] Marchant (1923) 393 translates γερροφόροι as 'light infantry', while Pomeroy (1994) 123 gives 'light-armed troops'; likewise Chantraine (1949) 47: 'voltigeurs'. Tuplin (1987) 211 concludes that almost all infantry in Persian service carried γέρρα; see also 221, n.177, on evidence for γέρρον-carrying lighter infantry: 'Normally these terms [*sc.* 'hoplite' and 'peltast'] are not used of oriental troops but confined to Greek heavy infantry and Thracian (or Greek imitation

of Thracian) light-armed soldiers'. There is no nuance in Tuplin's commentary regarding post-classical πελτασταί, as discussed in n.36, with text. On the use of γέρρα, see also nn.10–11.

[70] Despite the use of μισθοφόροι, Tuplin (1987) 171, n.12 holds that, here, 'μισθοφόροι is apparently restricted to citadel garrisons. I find value in his statement (222) that 'so long as we stick to Greek sources it is hard to escape the feeling that the term "mercenary" is used to designate "outsiders" as distinct from forces proper to the state that is doing the hiring'. Of course, Xerxes used Greeks during his invasion, but not as the main component of his infantry force; see Barkworth (1992) 164.

[71] On this passage, see Hirsch (1985) 9–11. *Cf.* Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.15–16, where Cyrus proposes a yearly review of men, arms, horses and chariots, with Xenophon suggesting that this regulation was still in force.

[72] This is worthwhile to consider in the context of Xenophon's claim (*Cyr.* 1.2.15) that there were almost

All this, however, is problematized by the fact that the κάρδακες are only twice described in a genuinely operational context, this being their appearance at Issus and in Autophradates' army. From this, we might seem to have a clear *terminus post quem* for their institution, though one cannot be sure enough to offer a definite date, despite Sekunda's bold attempt to nominate *ca.* 373/372 BC.[73] It is noteworthy that Diodorus (16.40.6), in a narrative that he oddly assigns to 351/350 BC, does not mention κάρδακες as part of the army, which supposedly included 300,000 Asiatic infantry, sent to Egypt by Artaxerxes III in 343 BC – a date after which the κάρδακες clearly existed. Their non-appearance at Gaugamela is also notable, particularly given that this turned out to be Darius' final roll of the dice. We allegedly have a captured description of the entire Persian contingent (*An.* 3.11.3 = *FGrH* 139 F 17), in which no κάρδακες appear, but this constitutes a rather different army-description than is preserved for Issus, particularly with respect to the former's emphasis on ethnicity. Of course, the κάρδακες might not have existed as an infantry force after the Issus debacle, or, alternatively, they were not a type of soldier suited for what Darius had in mind for Gaugamela, where scythe-bearing chariots were intended to form the main offensive force, with emphasis also given to a large cavalry contingent.[74] Finally, if the κάρδακες did indeed first appear some time after Xerxes' failed expedition, one wonders why they are not mentioned at Cunaxa, the more so given that Xenophon seems to be aware of the category, if not the name, of the κάρδακες.

V. Conclusion

In sum, the κάρδακες must remain somewhat enigmatic. Despite our effort to reconcile often conflicting source traditions, establishing a firm view is predicated on assigning greater validity to some pieces of information. Rather than supporting the belief that the κάρδακες were light infantry, the evidence indicates that they are better understood, in the main, as general-purpose infantry, though it is not impossible that the term could refer to other troop-types,[75] as one interpretation of Xen. *Oec.* 4.5–6 might suggest. Their deployment at Issus suggests that they were expected to take their place on either side of the Greek mercenary heavy infantry, the possible replacements of the ἀθάνατοι, and were therefore not acting as light infantry. These circumstances are what presumably prompted Arrian to describe the κάρδακες as ὁπλῖται, even if they did not exactly correspond, in their combat role, to the more usual modern interpretations of the term.[76] That Arrian provides the only extant account of the κάρδακες in battle means that it is simply not possible to draw any watertight conclusions about their role, but is arguably enough to affirm that they were not merely untrained recruits, as one interpretation of Strabo would have it, and not exclusively Thracian-style peltasts. The question of ethnicity, however, is more difficult to resolve. They were possibly of mixed ethnic origin as per Briant,[77] but were likely to have been commanded by Persians, to be used when circumstances demanded, as is possibly indicated by Xenophon (*Oec.* 4.5–6).

120,000 Persians in the empire, something which Barkworth (1992) 159 interprets as 'those men of military age'. Miller (1914) 23, n.1 contends that Xenophon is referring to 'the nobility only, the so-called "peers" (ὁμότιμοι), and not the total population'; see also Nadon (2001) 39–41.

[73] Sekunda (1988a) 52.

[74] See Charles (2008) 18; on the chariots, see Arr.

An. 3.8.6; Curt. 4.9.4; Diod. 17.53.1.

[75] Head (1992) 43 contends that '*kardakes* slingers as well as *kardakes* hoplites might ... have existed'.

[76] The same might be said for the general modern interpretation of Callisthenes' πελτασταί, which could also refer to a 'medium' type of infantry; see n.36 above.

[77] Briant (1999) 121–22.

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