

The Occasion of Arrian's *Tactica*

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ARRIAN STATES in his *Cynegeticus* 1.4 that his lifelong interests were philosophy, generalship and hunting.¹ With the topic of generalship the *Anabasis Alexandri* immediately springs to mind, but Arrian's interests in the art of command went far beyond his historical pursuits and assumed a personal and contemporary significance.² As *legatus Augusti pro praetore* of Cappadocia (ca 131–137), Arrian held a military post on the Euphrates frontier second in importance only to the governorship of Syria. To this point in his life Arrian had led one of the most brilliant public careers of the Hadrianic period, especially for a *novus homo* from Nicomedia. He had been the first Greek (known so far) to govern a western province, when he served as proconsul of Baetica in the late 120's; he became the first Bithynian to hold the consulship, probably in 129; and he was only the second Greek to command in Cappadocia. (C. Julius Quadratus Bassus was the first Greek governor, 107/8–110/11.) Nor was Arrian a novice at military command: he probably saw action in Trajan's Parthian war as a tribune and possibly served as *legatus legionis* on the Danubian frontier in the early 120's.³

In 135 deteriorating relations between Rome and Caucasian Iberia prompted Pharasmanes II to summon the Sarmatian Alani through the Caucasus in a display of force. Cappadocia was threatened. Arrian assembled his army, deterred the Alani, and Roman territory was

¹ The following abbreviations are used in this paper: HARTMANN I = Karl Hartmann, "Flavius Arrianus und Kaiser Hadrian," *Programm Augsburg* (Augsburg 1907); HARTMANN II = "Über die Taktik des Arrian," *Programm Bamberg* (Bamberg 1895); KIECHLE = Franz Kiechle, "Die 'Taktik' des Flavius Arrianus," *RGKomm* 45 (1965) 87–129; KLUMBACH = Hans Klumbach, "Zum Straubinger Römerfund," *Gymnasium* 59 (1952) 71–76; SANDER = Erich Sander, "Die Kleidung des römischen Soldaten," *Historia* 12 (1963) 144–66; STADTER = Philip A. Stadter, "The *Ars Tactica* of Arrian: Tradition and Originality," *CP* 73 (1978) 117–28; WHEELER = Everett L. Wheeler, "Flavius Arrianus: A Political and Military Biography" (Diss. Duke University 1977).

² For Arrian's military inclinations and their effect on his literary activity see Gerhard Wirth, "Zur Tigrisfahrt des Kaisers Trajan," *Philologus* 107 (1963) 291.

³ I discuss Arrian's early career in detail in Wheeler 24–53.

saved from destruction (Cass. Dio 69.15.1, cf. Them. Or. 34.8, 32).⁴ At a later time he wrote an account of his campaign, the *Alanica*, of which only a fragment describing his contingency plans remains—the *Acies contra Alanos*.⁵

So far as we know, Arrian received no official recognition for his efforts against the Alani. He could have received a vote of thanks from the Senate, public praise from Hadrian, or even the *ornamenta triumphalia*; but perhaps Arrian did not deserve commendation. The battle described in the *Acies* is merely a *plan*, not an historical account; a major engagement between Arrian and the Alani cannot be proved. Arrian, however, served an emperor jealous of his generals' accomplishments, especially in the East, where success would immediately provoke comparison with Hadrian's abandonment of Trajan's conquests.⁶ Conceivably we find a rather obscure reference to the Alan campaign on Hadrianic coins bearing the legend *EXER(CITUS) CAPPADOCIAE S.C.* Weber conjectured that these coins commemorated Hadrian's review of the Cappadocian forces in 129, but the issue dates to the period 134/5–138, probably too late to recall an event of 129.⁷ This type appeared in a series commemorating a number of provincial armies although not all of them: Africa, Pannonia, Egypt and Arabia were not included.⁸ If the Cappadocian

⁴ See most recently A. B. Bosworth, "Arrian and the Alani," *HSCP* 81 (1977) 217–55; Professor Bosworth was extremely kind in sending me a draft of this paper before its publication. I cannot agree with his views concerning either Roman-Iberian relations or the *Acies* (see n.5 *infra*). See Wheeler 54–135, 149–58, 169–75, 213–59, 283–305.

⁵ *Flavii Arriani Quae extant omnia II: Scripta Minora et Fragmenta*, ed. A. G. Roos with additions by G. Wirth (Leipzig 1967) 177–85. I have argued in detail that the *Acies* (despite its peculiar style) must derive from a literary work which can only be the *Alanica*: Wheeler 272–76. *Contra*, A. B. Bosworth, "Arrian's Literary Development," *CQ* n.s. 22 (1972) 185 n.2, and *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 247–48; Stadter 119. I wish to thank Professor Stadter for allowing me to read his paper before its publication.

⁶ Festus, *Brev.* 20; Jordanes, *Romana* 270; *Epit. de Caes.* 14.10; Eutrop. 8.6.2, cf. 8.7.1.; and *Hist. Aug.*, *Hadr.* 21.8: *Expeditiones sub eo graves nullae fuerunt; bella etiam silentio paene transacta.*

⁷ Wilhelm Weber, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Hadrianus* (Leipzig 1907) 234; *BMC, Imp.* III, cxviii, 498 no.1673; *RIC* II, 458 no.914; Anne S. Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet II* (Oxford 1971) 159 no.588.

⁸ *BMC, Imp.* III, 497–504; *RIC* II, 457–62. An hitherto unknown type in this series has recently been found: *EXERCITUS ALEXANDRI(NUS)* without *S.C.* See Angelo Nicolini de Fazi, "Moneda inedita del emperador Hadrianus de la serie 'Adlocutiones' a sas tropas," *Gaceta Numismatica* (Barcelona) no.44 (Mar. 1977) 74–76 (*non vidi*), summarized in *NL* 99 (Mar. 1978) 64 no.333.

army earned recognition on the coins from the Alan campaign of 135, it was indeed an obscure reference to Arrian's activity.

The following year, 136, Arrian composed a short treatise entitled *Τέχνη τακτική*, his contribution to military theory. It is a peculiar work consisting of two parts. In the first section Arrian described the organization, drill and formations of an Hellenistic phalanx, while paraphrasing and often reproducing parts of an earlier treatise by Aelianus Tacticus, published about thirty-five years before and dedicated to Trajan.⁹ The second section, an original composition of Arrian, recounted contemporary Roman cavalry exercises; its technical nature defied translation until 1964.¹⁰

The seemingly disjointed structure of the treatise and Arrian's purpose in writing it have puzzled scholars for years. Schwartz believed it was an official report to which Arrian added the section on the Hellenistic phalanx to satisfy Hadrian's military interests. Davies asserts that Hadrian commanded Arrian to write the section on the cavalry exercises, while according to Bosworth Arrian simply reedited a standard textbook for military antiquarians.¹¹ Others claim a practical purpose for the work.¹² Certainly the *Tactica* contains many contemporary references and possesses demonstrable relevance to the warfare of the period, but none of the explanations offered hitherto will account for the treatise as a whole.

⁹ Aelian's *Τακτική θεωρία* was quite similar to the *Τέχνη τακτική* of Asclepiodotus, a student of Posidonius, who earlier had composed a work of the same title. See K. K. Müller, "Aelianus 10," *RE* 1 (1894) 482–86, and "Asclepiodotus 10," *RE* 2 (1896) 1637–41; *PIR*² A 120; H. Köchly/W. Rüstow, *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller* II.1 (Leipzig 1855, repr. Osnabrück 1969) 77–79, 87–88; W. A. and C. H. Oldfather, in *The Illinois Greek Club, Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander* (LCL, London 1923) 230–43; Alphonse Dain, *Histoire du texte d'Élien le tacticien* (Paris 1946) 15–36; and Stadter 117–18. For a discussion of the whole problem see Wheeler 338–50, where I refute the theory of Dain, accepted by Stadter, that Aelian and Arrian independently used a lost *Tactica* derived from Posidonius' treatise. This lost *Tactica*, if it existed at all, cannot be conclusively dated to a period before Aelian.

¹⁰ Charles Guischartt declined translating this part of the *Tactica* in volume II of his *Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains* (Lyon 1760), and a century later Köchly and Rüstow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.9), did not include it in their *Griech. Kriegsschriftsteller*. Franz Kiechle, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1), offered the first translation and commentary.

¹¹ E. Schwartz, "Arrianus 9," *RE* 2 (1896) 1233; R. W. Davies, "Cohortes Equitatae," *Historia* 20 (1971) 754; A. B. Bosworth, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 183 and *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 242–44.

¹² Guischartt, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10) II 194 n.h.; Adolf Bauer, *Die griechischen Altertümer: Die Kriegsaltertümer* (Munich 1893) 297; Max Jähns, *Geschichte der Kriegswissenschaften vornemlich in Deutschland* I (Munich 1889, repr. Hildesheim 1966) 99; Johannes Kromayer/Georg Veith, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung der Griechen und Römer* (Munich 1928) 14; Kiechle 108–09; Stadter 119.

I would argue rather that a unifying theme is to be found in Hadrian's *vicennalia*, although Arrian's ulterior motive in writing the piece, his desire for recognition, precludes assigning to the work a simplistic purpose. We must begin with the conclusion of the treatise, for the opening lines of the *Tactica*, which may have contained a dedication, are now lost. Arrian writes in 44.3:

ὥστε ἐς τήνδε τήν παρούσαν βασιλείαν, ἣν Ἀδριανὸς εἰκοστὸν τοῦτ' ἔτος βασιλεύει, πολὺ μᾶλλον ξυμβαίνειν μοι δοκεῖ τὰ ἔπη ταῦτα ἢ περ ἐς τήν πάλαι Λακεδαίμονα

ἔνθ' αἰχμὰ τε νέων θάλλει καὶ μῶσα λίγεια,
καὶ δίκαια εὐρύαγνια καλῶν ἐπιτάρροθος ἔργων.

The fragment of Terpander (fr.6 Bergk = fr.4 Diehl), which ends the treatise, and the reference to Hadrian's twentieth year are intentionally juxtaposed. As Arrian states, the verses apply very well to Hadrian and reflect his interests in military training, Hellenic culture and law. Even the selection of Terpander fits Hadrian's preference for archaic authors.¹³ Hadrian's twentieth year fell in 136, and these concluding lines of the treatise suggest that the ostensible motive of the *Tactica* was to provide an occasional piece celebrating the emperor's *vicennalia*.¹⁴

Apart from Arrian's *Tactica* Hadrian's *vicennalia* is not attested in literary sources, and the exact date of the renewal of Hadrian's *tribunicia potestas* is not known, although it coincided very closely with the calendar year. Hadrian, however, became the first emperor since Tiberius to wear the purple for twenty years. Such an anniversary demanded celebration, as calendars of the Imperial cult and coins testify.¹⁵ Anniversary issues of coins did not enjoy great vogue in the

¹³ Hartmann I 37. Military interests: Cass. Dio 69.3.2, 5.2, 9.1–6; *Hist. Aug.*, *Hadr.* 10.2–11.2, 21.8–9; *ILS* 2487, 9133–35; Hellenic culture: *Hist. Aug.*, *Hadr.* 1.5, 13.1–2, 6, 14.8–11, 16.10–11; Cass. Dio 69.3.1, 16.1–2; law: *Hist. Aug.*, *Hadr.* 8–9, 18, 21.1, 22.11; archaic preference: *Hist. Aug.*, *Hadr.* 16.2, 5–6.

¹⁴ *Tact.* 44.3 gives a precise date for the treatise. This is the only work of Arrian for which an undisputed date of composition can be determined. Although Arrian mentions the death of Cotys II of the Bosporean kingdom in *Peripl.* 17.3, an event which can be assigned to 131/2, this reference does not offer more than a *terminus post quem* for the treatise. See Wheeler 200–01, 205 n.219, 396.

¹⁵ The *vicennalia* was celebrated 13 December 136 on a calendar of the Imperial cult, *P. Oslo* III 77, lines 15–16 = E. Mary Smallwood, *Documents . . . of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian* (Cambridge 1966) no.147, which is close to 10 December, the traditional date for renewal of the *tribunicia potestas*.

first three decades of the second century, but *vota soluta* and *vota suscepta*, common legends for announcing an anniversary, began to appear about 137. Strack believes there was an unusual abundance of *aurei*, which suggests a *congiarium*.¹⁶ Thus Hadrian by no means passed over the anniversary in silence, and I suggest that neither did the governor of Cappadocia.

It in no way speaks against the occasional nature of the piece that the treatise was apparently not directly addressed to Hadrian. The opening lines of the *Tactica* are lost, and Arrian always refers to Hadrian in the third person.¹⁷ He is called βασιλεύς in *Tact.* 32.3, 42.2, 4, 44.1, but he is mentioned by name only in *Tact.* 44.3, the very place where Arrian makes reference to the *vicennalia*. Just as Arrian is usually taciturn about himself in his works, he is equally reluctant to make direct reference to contemporary figures. Nor did the genre of military theory written under the Empire require that a treatise be addressed to the reigning emperor.¹⁸ Moreover, Arrian wrote the *Tactica* in Cappadocia and he would have had no opportunity to recite his piece for Hadrian. Although we have no basis by which to judge the extent of Arrian's literary fame in the 130's,¹⁹ it seems probable that a treatise by a man already as prominent in public service as Arrian, and holding a major military command, would

¹⁶ Michael Grant, *Roman Anniversary Issues* (Cambridge 1950) 99 with n.2; H. Mattingly, "The Imperial 'Vota'," *ProcBritAc* 36 (1950) 158–59, 184 nn.15–16; and especially Paul L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts, II: Die Reichsprägung zur Zeit des Hadrian* (Stuttgart 1933) 184–87. *BMC, Imp.* III nos.775–77, 782; Strack nos.286–89, 699–700, 469, 248, 675, 249, 269–71. Mattingly offers some alternative explanations for the legends *vota soluta* and *vota suscepta*, but his arguments are not compelling, and he often concedes Strack's views for the *vicennalia*. If Strack's date of 137 for the coins is correct, then Hadrian waited for the completion of his twentieth year before issuing most of the anniversary coins, and he did not anticipate his *vicennalia* on the coins, a common practice in the Late Empire. For our purposes, the date of the *Tactica* is 136, Hadrian's twentieth year. Whether most of the anniversary coins appeared in 136 or 137 has no bearing on our argument. Arrian's treatise need not have a direct correlation to the anniversary issues.

¹⁷ Noted by Stadter 119.

¹⁸ Karl Hartmann, II 20, claims all new military works had to be addressed to the emperor. Excluding Arrian's *Tactica*, four of the nine military tracts written during the first four centuries and preserved *in toto* or in extensive fragments were not addressed to an emperor: Frontinus' *Strategemata*, Ps.-Hyginus Gromaticus' *De Munitionibus Castrorum*, Onasander's *Στρατηγικός* and Heron's *Βελοποιικά*. For the redating of Heron to the second half of the first century see E. W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises* (Oxford 1971) 208–09.

¹⁹ I do not accept Bosworth's date for the *Anabasis Alexandri* between 115 and the early 120's, and only presumption asserts a date for the *Dissertationes Epicteti* before Arrian's

arouse public as well as imperial attention by its very novelty: *duces-scriptores* were not a common phenomenon in the second century. Thus the *Tactica* can easily have been composed in honor of Hadrian's *vicennalia* without a direct address to the emperor.

In view of the lost proemium of the *Tactica* and the reference to Hadrian by name in *Tact.* 44.3, we should examine *Tact.* 32.3, where Arrian concludes the section on the phalanx and announces the discussion of cavalry exercises to follow. In the sole manuscript (*Laurentianus* gr. 55.4) the sentence reads:

ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ ἵππικὰ γυμνάσια, ὅσα Ῥωμαῖοι ἵππῆς γυμνάζονται, ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἐπεξελεύσων, ὅτι τὰ πάγη. καὶ ἔφθην δηλώσαι ἐν τῇ συγγραφῇ ἥντινα ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως συνέγραψα, τόδε μοι ἔσται τέλος τοῦ λόγου τοῦ τακτικοῦ.

“Now after relating in detail the cavalry exercises which the Roman horsemen practice, seeing that I have already explained the [infantry drill?] in the treatise which I wrote in behalf of the emperor himself, this will be the conclusion of my *Tactica*.” The corruption πάγη. καὶ was emended by F. Haase to πεζικὰ, by C. Müller to παρ’ Ἑλληνικῶν. Either emendation yields essentially the same meaning of the sentence: πεζικὰ to contrast with the ἵππικὰ γυμνάσια, or παρ’ Ἑλληνικῶν to counterbalance the Roman material to follow. Adoption of Haase’s πεζικὰ in the Teubner edition has resulted in confusion. Kiechle takes the phrase τὰ πεζικὰ. . . συνέγραψα as a separate report by Arrian on *ludi castrenses* sent to Hadrian earlier, while several others conjecture a lost *Tactica* of Arrian on Roman infantry drill dedicated to Hadrian.²⁰ Since a lost *Tactica* is not otherwise attested, Hartmann offered a more plausible solution. Accepting Müller’s emendation, he took the phrase to refer to the first section of the *Tactica*, which concerns the Hellenistic phalanx.²¹

Acceptance of Hartmann’s view affords another explicit reference to Hadrian and the purpose of the *Tactica*. The treatise is written ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως. Since Arrian ended the work with a reference to Hadrian and now we find another precisely in the middle of the

governorship of Cappadocia. See Bosworth, “Arrian in Baetica,” *GRBS* 17 (1976) 62–64, with the same views repeated in his “Errors in Arrian,” *CQ* n.s. 26 (1976) 117–19. I discuss the dates of Arrian’s works in Wheeler 395–419.

²⁰ Kiechle 88; Roos, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) xxxiv; Stadter 119.

²¹ Hartmann II 17 and I 34 n.1.

piece, the probability of lost introductory remarks concerning Hadrian is substantially increased.²²

A *vicennalia* was a time for glorifying an emperor and his rule. In this context we can see how Arrian interlaces his work with references to Hadrianic policy and the themes of the reign. In *Tact.* 44.1–2 Arrian extols Hadrian's cavalry reforms, carefully noting their consistency with the *mos maiorum*. Hadrian introduced horse-archers on the Parthian-Armenian model, the wheelings and counter-wheelings associated with the charge of Sarmatian and Celtic *κοντοφόροι*, and the various complex forms of long-range fire in attack (*ἀκροβολισμοί*). He also urged that each national group of *auxilia* continue to use its native war cry and instituted exercises for leaping ditches and walls. Other minor improvements were prescribed to increase the cavalry's elegance in public performances and quickness in battle.²³

Furthermore, Arrian's cavalry exercises of *Tact.* 34–43 do not have a didactic purpose. Arrian writes as a spectator from the reviewing stand watching a show (*Tact.* 38.2); his aim is to describe a festive performance, not to instruct his reader on the mechanics of cavalry drills. In fact his descriptions sometimes lack lucidity (e.g., 38.1, 40.2) and are often mere summaries of the action, especially toward the end of the treatise (e.g., 43.1–4). The exercises, although inspired by practice for battle, are performed for display and for the amusement of the onlookers; Arrian repeatedly refers to the beauty, grace, elegance and the astounding qualities of the exercises (*Tact.* 34.2, 4, 5; 35; 36.4; 38.2–4; 40.7, 12; 44.2).

The maneuvers described by Arrian were not serious training in techniques and weapons or a general review, such as Hadrian conducted at Lambaesis in 128 (*ILS* 2487, 9233–35), but sportive and festive exercises called *ludi castrenses* or *armatura*.²⁴ All units of the Roman

²² Hartmann II 18. He also notes, I 34 n.1, that if Arrian wrote a lost *Tactica* on the Roman infantry, his discussion of the *testudo* in *Tact.* 11.4–5 would be a needless repetition from the earlier work. Stadter, 121 n.15, calculates that Arrian's preface was probably about twenty-six Teubner lines.

²³ Only the list of *Tact.* 44 constitutes Hadrianic reforms. The exercises described in *Tact.* 34–43 are pre-Hadrianic. See Friedrich Lammert, *Die römische Taktik zu Beginn der Kaiserzeit und die Geschichtschreibung*, *Philologus* Suppl. 23.2 (Leipzig 1931) 49. Kiechle, 126, claims the Hadrianic reforms of *Tact.* 44.1–2 are unique because for the first time the Romans adopted the practices of nations not in Roman service; but in fact 'stimulus diffusion', the dissemination of new techniques, weapons, etc. through contact with other peoples, was already common.

²⁴ Cf. Vegetius 2.23: *Armaturam, quae festis diebus exhibetur in circo . . .*

army practiced the *armatura* and all soldiers learned a form of *armatura*, although the festive performances were reserved for a special unit, also called *armatura*, under a *decurio* or *duplicarius* if cavalry, and probably under an *exercitator armaturarum*, often an *evocatus*, if infantry.²⁵ This special unit consisted of the most efficient performers and received special training as well as higher pay. An *armatura* was intended to create an image of Roman military capability which could never be achieved throughout the whole army. The differences between Arrian's *armatura* in Cappadocia and Hadrian's inspection at Lambaesis are first, magnitude, and second, competitive show as opposed to demonstration of training. Arrian's exercises involved units specially trained for shows, whereas Hadrian reviewed the maneuvers of a whole legion, whole auxiliary cohorts and *alae*.²⁶

Arrian's description of the participants' armament and attire (*Tact.* 34.2–35) confirms that the exercises are sport rather than training. The riders make a spectacular entry onto the parade-ground wearing gilded iron or bronze helmets with yellow plumes made from horses' manes and embroidered Cimmerian tunics of scarlet or dark blue. Their helmets cover the whole head and face with openings only for vision and breathing. More than thirty examples of these helmets with face-masks have been found, most notably the eight at Straubing in Bavaria. The Straubing helmets divide into four Hellenistic types and four oriental. Apparently the difference in style of helmets distinguished the two contesting parties in the *armatura* and would also account for the difference in the color of the tunics.²⁷ Trousers are also worn, bound tightly around the legs rather than loose in the Parthian or Armenian fashion. The riders carry a form of *scutum* but

²⁵ Evidence collected by Sander 153 n.89a, 158–61. Also see *CIL* X 3344; *Not.Dig.Or.* 11.9 and *Oc.* 9.6; and R. W. Davies, "The Training Grounds of the Roman Cavalry," *ArchJ* 125 (1968) 73–100.

²⁶ I discuss the similarities and differences between the Cappadocian *armatura* and the maneuvers at Lambaesis in more detail in Wheeler 360–62. If Arrian were discussing a general review of all cavalry in the Cappadocian army, the individual competition in ἀκοντισμός (*Tact.* 42), in which each participant is called forward by name to perform, would surely produce among the spectators the tedium loathed by Hadrian in military displays. Cf. Hadrian's remarks at Lambaesis (*ILS* 3194): *Difficile est cohortales equites etiam per se placere, difficilius post alarem exercitationem non displicere; alia spatia campi, alius iaculantium numerus . . . Verum vos fastidium calore vitastis . . .* Also see Sander 159 and Klumbach 71.

²⁷ For the helmets see Klumbach 73–74; Kiechle 117; Sander 160–61; Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army* (London 1964) pl. xxiii; Paul Couissin, *Les armes romaines* (Paris 1926) 410–22; and H. Russell Robinson, *The Armor of Imperial Rome* (New York 1975) 107–35.

lighter in weight and painted.²⁸ Their weapons are small javelins without iron heads (*ἀκόντια*),²⁹ which in later exercises are replaced by *ξυστὰ δόρατα* (*Tact.* 40.4), heavier javelins, and by *lanceae* (*Tact.* 41.2).³⁰ For protection from errant missiles the horses also wear armor, frontlets for the eyes (*προμετωπίδια*) and flank covers (*παραπλευρίδια*) in addition to saddle cloths.³¹ Such colorful and expensive equipment would hardly serve as ‘fatigues’ in training.

We should note also that one of the most colorful and surprising aspects of Arrian’s *armatura* is the use of *dracones*, the hissing cloth snakes used as standards, which Arrian calls *Κυθικὰ σημεῖα* and describes fully in *Tact.* 35.3–4. The origin of *dracones* is debated but was without doubt barbarian.³² Arrian states that the horsemen of the *armatura* are distinguished by Roman standards and the *dracones* (*Tact.* 35.2), which could correspond to the different colors of tunics and possibly different styles of helmets. The *dracones* are not simply

I have not seen the recent republication of the Straubing finds: J. Keim/H. Klumbach, *Der römische Schatzfund von Straubing* (Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 3 [1951], 2nd ed. 1976).

²⁸ The famous painted shield from Dura-Europus may be an example of the type Arrian mentions. See Franz Cumont, “Fragment de bouclier portant une liste d’étapes,” *Syria* 6 (1925) 1.

²⁹ Headless practice javelins called *pila praepilata* or *hastilia* are attested and were also used in gladiatorial schools: Polyb. 10.20.3–4; Liv. 26.51.4; *BAfr.* 72; Pliny, *HN* 8.17; Veg. 1.14; Quint. *Inst.* 5.12.17. Arrian mentions cavalry greaves in *Tact.* 4.8 but does not include them in the equipment of the *armatura*. Greaves with movable knee protectors made from bronze sheet metal with gold and silver plating were found with other equipment of an *armatura* at Straubing. See Klumbach 74.

³⁰ For the final phases of the performance in which *lanceae* are used, the participants change into regular battle dress with iron helmets, breastplates and heavy *scutum* (*Tact.* 41.1), but the exercises remain competitive.

³¹ Eight gold and silver plated *προμετωπίδια* were discovered at Straubing. Sander 160; Klumbach 73–74. Photographs of a *προμετωπίδιον* from Straubing and horse armor from Dura-Europus in Webster, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) pls. xxv, xx.

³² Scythian origin: Webster, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) 136; Sarmatian origin: Ortwin Gamber, “Dakische und sarmatische Waffen auf den Reliefs der Traianssäule,” *JKS* 60 (1964) 62; Thracian origin: Kiechle 120–22; Parthian origin: Emilio Gabba, “Sulle influenze reciproche degli ordinamenti militari dei Parti e dei Romani,” in *La Persia e il mondo greco-romano* (*AcLincei, Problemi* 76, Rome 1966) 62. We can dismiss Gabba’s view since his only evidence is Lucian, *Hist.conscr.* 29, which cannot be trusted for accurate military details. Kiechle argues that a Scythian origin is not archaeologically attested, while a Thracian dragon can be shown to antedate the arrival of the Scythians. Kiechle’s case is strong but not conclusive. We know the Scythians strongly influenced the Thracians, who borrowed their shield, the *pelta*, from the Scythians. See J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley 1970) 113, 300–01 nn.9–10.

a showpiece. The *draconarius* is the tactical leader of his unit, and the men are trained to follow his maneuvers (*Tact.* 35.6). Possibly by the late second and certainly in the third and fourth centuries the *dracones* became regular standards in the Roman army.³³ They appear on Trajan's Column in the Dacian army of Decebalus, and Arrian is the first source to attest Roman use of *dracones*. Quite possibly Hadrian introduced *dracones* in the Roman army along with the other barbarian practices mentioned in *Tact.* 44.1–2. Thus we may have still another allusion to Hadrianic reforms in the *Tactica*.

Moreover, Arrian's description of individual competition in ἀκοντισμός (*Tact.* 42) merits our consideration. He writes that good army commanders (ὄσοι ἀγαθοὶ στρατιᾶς ἡγεμόνες) call out the names of the participants according to rank, beginning with the *decurio* of the unit. As each man is summoned, he rides out with three *lanceae* to perform a series of throws at two targets, hurling two at one target while charging straight ahead and the third at a second target while simultaneously wheeling his horse to the right. He says that the addition of the second target and the requirement of hurling during a right wheel were specified by Hadrian's order (κατὰ πρόσταξιν βασιλέως), probably a reference to an official drill manual. The passage is notable because Arrian refers to Hadrian (βασιλεύς) three times in this section, more than in any other part of the treatise, and because he concludes *Tact.* 42 with a direct statement about his own activity. He writes that he commended the unit with the greatest number of outstanding hurlers because this unit was well trained for real warfare. Arrian's purpose here is quite subtle. By injecting at the end of this section his own action, about which he is usually silent throughout the work, and by the repeated mention of Hadrian's drill instructions, Arrian seeks to demonstrate that he conscientiously follows the emperor's orders to the letter in the public performance of the *armatura*, and to identify himself as ἀγαθὸς στρατιᾶς ἡγεμών.

If Hadrian's *vicennalia* furnished the occasion for composition of Arrian's *Tactica* and the cavalry exercises of *Tact.* 34–43 constitute the festive military show of an *armatura*, it is reasonable to conclude that the two are related. The Cappadocian army celebrated the emperor's *vicennalia* with an *armatura*, which Arrian quite appropriately incorporated in his treatise. *Ludi militares* were often held for occasions such as an imperial birthday (*Hist. Aug.*, *Maxim.* 2.3–3.5). A direct

³³ Evidence in Kiechle 121.

reference to the purpose of the games is not given because this would be obvious to the reader from the nature of the exercises and presumably from the treatise's lost introduction.

In addition to the *armatura* still other Hadrianic passages await our attention. Arrian discusses in *Tact.* 11.1–2 thinning and increasing the depth of the phalanx. Offensively a deep formation is needed to drive back the enemy with a compact mass, just as Epaminondas used at Leuctra and Mantinea, while defensively a thick formation should be used for repelling an enemy charge, such as against the Sarmatians and Scythians. No doubt Arrian's mention of Sarmatians is a direct reference to his own Alan campaign of the previous year; the discussion of this defensive formation resembles Arrian's plans given in *Acies* 15–16, 26. The example of Epaminondas, however, provokes curiosity. One might expect Arrian to mention Alexander. Pausanias 8.11.8 provides an explanation: Hadrian composed an epitaph for the grave of the famous Theban general, which implies Hadrian's admiration. Thus Arrian cited Epaminondas because he was a known favorite of Hadrian. Moreover, Arrian sought through the indirect reference to his Alan campaign to associate himself with the tactics of the Theban commander and to promote his own accomplishments.³⁴

Another peculiar passage is *Tact.* 33, the transition between the sections on the phalanx and the cavalry exercises. Arrian states that his task in the following section will be difficult because the Romans have adopted Celtic terminology as well as Celtic practices. Arrian exaggerates, for in the body of the second section he employs only three Celtic terms: *petrinos* (37.4), *xynema* (42.4), *toloutegon* (43.2), and on Spanish practice, the Cantabrian charge (40.1). His claim is an attempt to continue the procedure announced in *Tact.* 1.2, and borrowed from Aelian (*Tact.* 1.3–4), to define technical terms for novice readers.³⁵

Celtic cavalry techniques become a pretext for a panegyric on Roman borrowings from other peoples, a topos found in many authors.³⁶ Arrian writes in glowing terms of the Roman genius (*Tact.*

³⁴ Hartmann, II 15, claims that Arrian's reference to Epaminondas shows use of Xenophon. The connection is allegedly illustrated through the word *ἐμβολον* in Arr. *Tact.* 11.2 and Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.22, 24. The argument is hardly convincing.

³⁵ Lammert, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.23) 48; Kiechle 115.

³⁶ Polyb. 1.20.5–16, 6.25.11; Posidonius, *FGrHist* 87 F 59 = Ath. 6.273E–F; Diod. 5.40.1–2, 23.2; *Ined.Vat.* 3 (*Hermes* 27 [1892] 118); Sall. *Cat.* 51.37–39; Cic. *Resp.* 2.16.30; Aur. *Vic. Caes.* 11.13.

33.3–5): “So in fact you would find that the Romans took military equipment from others—and now it is called Roman, because they made the best use of it. They also took military exercises (*γυμνάσια στρατιωτικά*) from others, the chairs of their magistrates [*sella curulis*], and the *toga praetexta*.”³⁷ Arrian does not stop here. He continues with Roman adoption of Greek religious practices and the Phrygian rites of Attis and Rhea, and the Athenian origin of the earliest Roman law—the Twelve Tables. Kiechle has already noticed that Arrian’s panegyric reveals his complete support for Hadrian’s introduction of barbarian tactics, for which *exempla maiorum* are cited as proof that Hadrian’s policy is not revolutionary.³⁸ We should also note, however, that the borrowed *γυμνάσια στρατιωτικά* of *Tact.* 33.3 could be a direct reference to Hadrian’s reforms listed in *Tact.* 44.1–2 already mentioned.³⁹ Most significantly, *Tact.* 33 taken as a whole is a direct reflection of the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Hadrian’s reign—the diversity of every corner of the ancient world made Roman.

Finally, Arrian made a conscious effort to Romanize the first section of the *Tactica*, on the Hellenistic phalanx. In *Tact.* 18.3 he equates the Hellenistic cavalry unit of 512 men, *ἵππαρχία*, with the Roman *ala*,⁴⁰ and in *Tact.* 10.3 he notes that the commander of a unit of 100 men is called an *ἐκατοντάρχης*, the Greek term for a Roman centurion.⁴¹ Brief notes on Roman equipment and contemporary references also occur. In contrast to the Greeks of old who wore two greaves, the Romans use only one, attached to the leg extended in battle (*Tact.* 3.5).⁴² References to the charge of the Alan and Sarmatian *κοντοφόροι*

³⁷ Cf. Onasander 30, and Ovid, *Met.* 4.428: *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*.

³⁸ Kiechle 126.

³⁹ Hartmann I 36. Kiechle, 88, prefers to interpret the exercises as the games called *Troia*. See Verg. *Aen.* 5.548f and Suetonius in Serv. *ad Aen.* 5.602.

⁴⁰ Whether 512 should be taken as the exact number in a Roman *ala* or only an approximation is debated. See G. L. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army* (Oxford 1914, repr. Chicago 1975) 26–27, 29; Davies, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 753.

⁴¹ The equation of the centurion and the Hellenistic *ταξιάρχης* or *ἐκατοντάρχης* is found already in Asclepiodotus, *Tact.* 2.8, and repeated in Aelian, *Tact.* 9.3. Thus insertion of *ἐκατοντάρχης* in the treatise is not original with Arrian, but its equation with centurion is clear even in Asclepiodotus.

⁴² Sources differ on which leg the greave was worn. Left leg: Liv. 9.40.3 (Samnites); Juv. 6.256–58 (gladiators); Sil.Ital. 8.419 (Sabines). Right leg: Veg. 1.20; Verg. *Aen.* 7.689–90. Polyb. 6.23.8 says only that greaves were worn. Couissin, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) 350–67, argues that Arrian’s statement is an anachronism from Republican times. In the Imperial period greaves are attested only on stelae for centurions, officers, urban cohorts and praetorians. Sander, 155–57, accepts Arrian.

as well as to Armenian and Parthian horse-archers appear in *Tact.* 4.3—certainly another allusion to Arrian's personal experience on the Euphrates frontier. British chariots used against the Romans are mentioned (*Tact.* 19.2–3);⁴³ and we find the phalangic formation *συνασπισμὸς* equated with the Roman *testudo* (*Tact.* 11.4–6, cf. *Acies* 26).⁴⁴ At the conclusion of his discussion of different types of cavalry, Arrian digresses on the Roman cavalry of his own time (*Tact.* 4.7–9). He denotes two basic kinds: *κοντοφόροι* and *lancearii*. The former charge in the manner of the Alani and the Sarmatians, which is probably a reference to the Hadrianic reform mentioned in *Tact.* 44.1. Arrian goes on to list the standard equipment of the Roman cavalrymen: the *spatha*, *scutum*, iron helmet and small greaves. The *lancearii* use their weapon for hurling at long range or for hand-to-hand combat, for which the *spatha* is also used. Some carry a mace besides.⁴⁵ In the text of an otherwise dry account of the Hellenistic phalanx these Roman references enliven the treatise and add contemporary relevance.

Thus Arrian's *Tactica* is best interpreted as an encomium on the occasion of Hadrian's *vicennalia*. He has interlaced the work with repeated references to the emperor's reforms, personal preferences and the atmosphere of the reign. Sometimes the references are direct and clear, but often his veiled allusions appear quite subtle. In a manner equally clever Arrian frequently mentions the Sarmatians and the Alani, certainly an attempt to spread the fame of his own campaign in Transcaucasia; and in *Tact.* 42 he portrays himself as the 'good commander', conscientiously following Hadrian's drill instructions. Arrian's desire for recognition should not surprise anyone, since he boasts openly about his fame and his literary talent in *Anab.* 1.12.4–5.

⁴³ See Stadter 125 nn.31–32.

⁴⁴ I treat the significance of this equation in detail in "The Legion as Phalanx," forthcoming in *Chiron* 9 (1979).

⁴⁵ The reference to the *spatha* and mace as weapons for close combat echoes Arrian's instructions in *Acies* 31. For the mace see Couissin, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) 387–88; *DarSag* I (1909) s.v. "clava," 1237–38 and figs. 1581–83; Franz Cumont, "Le sacrifice du tribun romain Terentius et les Palmyreniens à Doura," *MonPiot* 26 (1923) 34 fig.5, 35. Stadter, 123 n.24, corrects Webster, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) 151, who claims Arrian's mace is an ax. The Romans did, however, add axes to their armament for use against Sarmatian lassoes. See Jacques Aymard, *Essai sur les chasses romaines* (BEFAR 171, Paris 1951) 495, and Wheeler 281–82.

Nevertheless, Arrian's motive is puzzling. If one accepts the conventional view that Arrian and Hadrian were close personal friends,⁴⁶ there seems to be no problem: Arrian has written an anniversary piece for his friend Hadrian. A close personal relationship between this Greek and the *Graeculus*, however, cannot be proved; the pertinent evidence is weak and circumstantial.⁴⁷ Throughout the treatise, Arrian writes to please Hadrian (to attract his attention?) and continually shows his support for the emperor's military reforms. Could not Arrian's motive be private and personal?

Arrian's Cappadocian command probably ended in 137. He disappears from the sources until the 140's, when he reappears as a private citizen in Athens and archon in 145/6.⁴⁸ The shadowy end of Arrian's Roman career has prompted the conjecture that he fell into disfavor with Hadrian, a view which cannot be directly supported by evidence.⁴⁹ But when we consider that Arrian probably left Roman service within a year or two after the *Tactica's* composition, the treatise can be seen in a different light. Arrian employs the occasion of the *vicennalia* as a pretext to laud the emperor's military reforms, to appeal to Hadrian's military interests, as well as to demonstrate his approval of the regime's military policies and to remind both Hadrian and the general public of his recent defense of Cappadocia. As a consular legate, Arrian had reached the upper limit of an imperial career, and few options for further public service remained open to him. If the emperor chose to retain his military services, he might govern Moesia Inferior or perhaps even Syria, the most prestigious eastern post. Relieved of command and reduced to the lot of a

⁴⁶ E.g., Schwartz, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 1231; Hartmann II 31 and "Zu den Schriften und Fragmenten des Flavius Arrianus," *BPW* 30 (1910) 606; Henry Doucet, *Quid Xenophanti debuerit Flavius Arrianus* (Paris 1882) 7, 88; Franz Ferdinand Schwarz, "Arrian's *Indike* on India: Intention and Reality," *East and West* n.s. 25 (1975) 198.

⁴⁷ See Wheeler 47-49.

⁴⁸ *ILS* 8801 (*IGRR* III 133); Werner Eck, *Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian* (Munich 1970) 215 n.418; Arr. *Cyn.* 1.4; *IG* II^a 2055.

⁴⁹ Schwartz, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 1230, 1231. In a similar manner G. W. Bowersock connects the end of Arrian's career with Hadrian's displeasure with the four sophists C. Avitius Heliodorus, Valerius Eudaemon, Favorinus and Dionysius of Miletus: see *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1969) 52. Arrian, however, was not a sophist; and it is probably a mistake to compare a consular legate in a major military command with sophists. Cf. Gerhard Wirth, "Arrian und Trajan—Versuch einer Gegengewichtsdeutung," *StudClas* 16 (1974) 190 n.83. The conjecture that Arrian was governor of Syria in the late 130's or early 140's is unproven and awaits epigraphical confirmation. See G. A. Harrer, "Was Arrian Governor of Syria?" *CP* 11 (1916) 338-39.

private citizen, he could participate in the Senate and possibly crown his career with the proconsulship of Asia or Africa. The staid life of a senator would be pleasing to many but surely not to a man whose passion was generalship (*Cyn.* 1.4). In short, after probably at least twenty years in Roman service Arrian had to face a third possibility, the most dreaded prospect of an active man—retirement. I suggest that the *Tactica* was a subtle plea to prolong his military career.⁵⁰

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