

Greek Language Concerning Spies

There are several words for ‘spy’ in Greek. However, in English we tend to translate these terms interchangeably as ‘spy’ or ‘scout’ regardless of what the Greek word was. This is a practice that must change, as there must be a reason the author chose to use one word over another. For example, in English there are differences between the connotations of a ‘mole’, a ‘secret agent’ and a ‘private investigator’, these are all words for people who are spying, but there are differences in how and why these people are spying. An English author would have their particular reasons for choosing to call a character one word or the other, likewise, I would argue that a Greek author would have their own reasons for choosing to call their spies a *κατασκοπος* or an *ωτακουστης* in a particular text. While much of the subtle differences between the words is likely lost to time, there is still somewhat of a remnant of these differences in Historical writings about spies. I will demonstrate what these differences could be starting in the writings of Herodotus and Xenophon, and see that for these two writers, there seems to be a clear divide between what kinds of spies are called *κατασκοπος* and *ωτακουστης*. Afterwards, I will track this difference as it slowly disappears through the Hellenistic Era by looking at how Plutarch and Flavius Josephus seem to use the two differently from earlier historians, as well as a potential explanation as to why this may be happening. Afterwards I will look at how *ωτακουστης* seems to almost disappear in Late Antiquity while *κατασκοπος* becomes more prevalent than ever in Early Church Father writings. I hope to give a better understanding of how espionage was done in the writings of the authors I am focusing on, and to inspire further research between these words and any of the several other words the Greeks used to talk about spies.

Bibliography

Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by R. Rackham. Harvard University Press, 1944.

Chrysostome, Sainte Jean, and M. Jeanin. "Galates II." www.bibliotheque-monastique.ch, 2003.

<https://www.bibliotheque->

[monastique.ch/bibliotheque/bibliotheque/saints/chrysostome/galates/gal002.htm](https://www.bibliotheque-monastique.ch/bibliotheque/bibliotheque/saints/chrysostome/galates/gal002.htm).

Epictetus. *Epictetus*. Translated by W.A Oldfather. Harvard University Press, 1989.

Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick Mckenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press ; New York, 1996.

Herodotus. *Herodotus*. Translated by Alfred Godley. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975.

Josephus. *Josephus: The Jewish War*. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. Harvard University Press, 1976.

J.-P. Migne, Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca) (MPG) 61, Paris: Migne, 1857-1866: 611-682.

Retrieved from: <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/Cite?2062:158:79811>

J.-P. Migne, Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca) (MPG) 49, Paris: Migne, 1857-1866: 277-350.

Retrieved from: <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/Cite?2062:027:185937>

Plutarch. *Plutarch's Lives*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. Harvard University Press, 1986.

Xenophon. *Xenophon: Cyropaedia*. Translated by Walter Miller. Harvard University Press, 1979.