

ARISTAGORAS AND HISTIAIOS: THE LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE IN THE IONIAN REVOLT¹

In the early years of the fifth century, the Greek cities of Asia Minor attempted to free themselves from Persian rule. Our primary evidence for the unsuccessful 'Ionian Revolt' is literary, a patchwork from the narrative of Herodotus iv–vi.²

The main events of the Revolt need not be doubted:³ the Ionian cities were ruled by Greek puppet tyrants until the outbreak of the rebellion (Hdt. 4.136–7); Aristagoras was the early leader of the movement which began after the failure of the Persian-Milesian expedition against Naxos (5.30–5); Athens, petitioned by Aristagoras, and Eretria supplied limited support for the Revolt (5.38; 55; 65; 97; 99); the allied forces captured and burned most of Sardis, although the satrap Artaphrenes was able to defend the citadel (5.100–1); in the wake of this victory, Byzantium, Caria, Caunus, and most of Cyprus joined the cause (5.103); despite a naval defeat off Cyprus, the Persians began a steady reduction of the Ionians by land (5.116 f.); Aristagoras left Miletus for Myrkinos (5.124); Histiaios, released from service to the King in Susa, travelled to Sardis (6.1); next he attempted and was refused entry to Miletus (6.5); the Ionians were defeated in a major sea battle at Lade (6.7–17); Miletus fell and the Persians completed their final operations against the last pockets of resistance (6.18; 25; 31–4); Histiaios was eventually captured and executed by Artaphrenes (6.29–30).

The 'causes' of the Revolt were as varied as the individuals and cities involved; modern scholarship has analysed the motives for rebellion on many levels. Herodotus may imply that the strength of anti-tyrant feeling was an important factor in bringing on the Revolt.⁴ One scholar has also pointed to grievances about tribute which Ionian Greeks owed to the King.⁵ Others argue for the inevitable collision of independent Greeks and the expanding Persian Empire, or the King's failure to recognize the evolving Greek notion of *ἐλευθερία*.⁶ Finally, some have attempted to see the Revolt as a response to economic crisis in Asia Minor at the end of the sixth century.⁷

Herodotus' account of the Revolt, which centres on Aristagoras and Histiaios, may seem to overemphasize personal motivation as a cause. The historian reports

¹ I would like to thank Professor A. Andrewes for his help and advice on an earlier draft of this article. I would also like especially to thank Mr. W.G. Forrest for advice, inspiration, and the use of portions of his forthcoming commentary on Herodotus (hereafter designated Forrest). Though I have adopted many of their suggestions, I must accept the responsibility for the views (and errors) which remain.

² There is also, e.g. some numismatic evidence. Cf. P. Gardner, *Proc. Brit. Acad.* iii. 108; *JHS* 31 (1911), 151, pl. vii; 33 (1913), 105; R. Jameson, *Rev. Num.* (1907–8; 1911), 60; *B.M. Cat. Coins, Ionia*, xxiv–xxv.

³ See the discussion of G.A.H. Chapman, 'Herodotus and Histiaeus' Role in the Ionian Revolt', *Historia* 21 (1972), 549.

⁴ Forrest; e.g. the arguments of Histiaios at the Danube bridge (4.137) or those of Aristagoras at Sparta (5.49).

⁵ A.R. Burn, *The Persians and the Greeks* (London, 1962), p. 193.

⁶ C. Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece* (Oxford, 1963), p. 85; J.L. Myres, 'Persia, Greece and Israel', *Pal. E.Q.* 85 (1953), 8–22.

⁷ M. Cary, *CAH* iv.218. It is worth noting, however, that Herodotus tells us that Miletus, the first city to rebel, was at the height of prosperity at this time (5.28).

that Aristagoras contemplated rebellion, hoping to dodge his own difficulties with Artaphrenes, and that Histiaios supported the plan, hoping to be released from dutiful captivity in Susa (5.35). Few scholars are willing to trust such self-seeking motives for revolt, and thus object to Herodotus' narrative.⁸

The same scholars, however, too rarely distinguish the general causes of the rebellion from the specific causes of the leaders' actions.⁹ What moved Aristagoras to plot against Persia is not necessarily what moved a Chian sailor to join the battle at Lade. Most critics will allow that Aristagoras and Histiaios acted for some personal reasons, but argue that those suggested by Herodotus seem too selfish for modern belief.¹⁰ We must first notice that Herodotus' analysis limits itself to the causes of the leaders' actions; only then can we evaluate the credibility of those causes, or motives.

The motives assigned to Aristagoras and Histiaios by the historian are not too self-seeking for belief; we shall argue that they are not self-seeking enough. The actions of the two leaders which helped to promote the Revolt should be seen as a struggle for power in Miletus. Several problems in the narrative are best explained if the following is postulated: Aristagoras and Histiaios were fighting not only against the Persians, but also against each other. Each ruler of Miletus sought power and influence, even at the other's expense. Recently, the actions of Histiaios and Aristagoras have been explained by jealousy, between Greek and Persian rulers, for Darius' favour.¹¹ But there also seems to have been jealousy between the two Greeks. Aristagoras did not trust Histiaios, nor did Histiaios trust Aristagoras. Scholars have often assumed that both co-operated, implicitly faithful to each other.¹² This assumption is misleading as will be shown. Aristagoras and Histiaios are better seen as rivals, or even enemies.

Shortly after Darius returned from the Skythian expedition, he granted Myrkinos to Histiaios, as a reward for loyalty at the Danube bridge (5.11). Histiaios then left Miletus to take up his new acquisition and built fortifications there (5.23). At the urging of Megabazus, Darius later called Histiaios to Susa, to act as his royal advisor. Darius asks Histiaios to *Μίλητον μὲν ἔα καὶ τὴν νεόκτιστον ἐν Θρηάκῃ πόλιν* before coming to Susa (5.24). Histiaios must have been in firm control of Miletus, as well as Myrkinos, at the time.

⁸ Cf. S. Heinlein, 'Histiaios von Milet', *Klio* 9 (1909), 341–51; G. De Sanctis, 'Aristagora di Mileto', *RIFC* 59 (1931), 48–72; M. Cary, op. cit., pp. 214–28; G. Grundy, *The Great Persian War* (London, 1901), pp. 66–144; A. Blamire, 'Herodotus and Histiaeus', *CQ N.S.* 9 (1959), 142–54; Burn, op. cit., pp. 193–223; J. Evans, 'Histiaeus and Aristagoras: Notes on the Ionian Revolt', *AJPh* 84 (1963), 113–28; M. Lang, 'Herodotus and the Ionian Revolt', *Historia* 17 (1968), 24–36. In opposition to these views, especially *contra* Lang, see K. Waters, 'Herodotus and the Ionian Revolt', *Historia* 19 (1970), 504–8; and Chapman, op. cit., pp. 546–68.

⁹ e.g. Cary, p. 216: 'In Herodotus' eyes the Ionian Revolt was indeed a mere impulsive fling, and its cause lay no deeper than the sudden inspiration of two Greek adventurers bent on fishing in troubled

waters.' But see Waters, p. 504, who does distinguish between the leaders' actions, and the causes of the Revolt.

¹⁰ Cf. Chapman, Evans, Grundy, Heinlein, and H. Swoboda, *RE* viii.2 (1913), 2047–50. However, A. Andrewes, *The Greek Tyrants* (London, 1956), p. 126, defends their motives as quite credible.

¹¹ Mr. Forrest first presented this argument to me. Cf. Blamire, p. 152; adopted by Chapman, pp. 561–3. See also Hdt. 5.23; 33; 6.1–4; 30.

¹² Evans, pp. 120–1; and Chapman, pp. 559–60, deny Histiaios' complicity in the rebellion, suggesting that he was, at least initially, a loyal subject to Darius. Yet neither posits the struggle between Histiaios and Aristagoras which I believe best explains the account of the source. See below.

The chronology of the years at the end of the sixth century is much disputed. How long and how often Histiaios was away from Miletus is not known. He was certainly with Darius on the Skythian expedition, as may be seen from the Danube episode. After this, he was at Myrkinos long enough to build fortifications (5.23; 124). Next, after his recall, he went directly to Sardis, and from Sardis directly to Susa (5.24–5). It would seem that Histiaios was away from Miletus for a considerable time during the period 514/13 (the Skythian expedition) until 499 (the outbreak of the Revolt).¹³

While he was away, Histiaios must have had a dependable and responsible deputy to preserve his interests in Miletus. We cannot be certain who the deputy was during the early years, as it is not stated by Herodotus. Herodotus does state that Aristagoras was the *ἐπίτροπος* at the time of the Naxian exiles' arrival (499); yet he also reports that Histiaios was still the actual *τύραννος Μιλήτου*, even though detained at Susa. Because Aristagoras was *γαμβρός καὶ ἀνεψιός* of Histiaios, it comes as no surprise that he should be the tyrant's deputy at this time (5.30). The same man was probably deputy during some of the years prior to 499, perhaps as early as the period of Histiaios' travels to Myrkinos, or even Skythia. Then we might postulate a long rule for Aristagoras in Miletus, from as early as c. 514/13 until c. 499.

Furthermore, when Histiasios was first called to Sardis by Darius, he was not given the specific reason for his summons (5.24). As mentioned, the King then took him directly to Susa (5.25). Thus, without warning, the tyrant of Miletus was taken away, and given no opportunity to secure his home state for the unknown absence ahead.¹⁴ This is the background for a coup in Miletus which Herodotus does not explain. Aristagoras was to be the new *τύραννος Μιλήτου*.

¹³ The Skythian expedition is dated by the Capitoline Stone (*JG* xiv.1297) which makes it synchronous with the murder of Hipparchus. The Stone also provides the date 526/5 for the invasion of Egypt by Cambyses. These dates fit the narrative of Herodotus (cf. Hammond, *Historia* 3 (1955), 394). Wade-Gery (*JHS* 71 (1951), 212–21) arrives at a similar date for the expedition, although by a slightly different argument. His note (p. 215 n.14) adequately rejects the earlier dating of Cary (p. 212) who placed Darius' attack 'in or about 516'. If the expedition were earlier than 514/13, it would only imply an even longer absence for Histiaios; it is all but impossible that it could have been much later.

For the date of Histiaios' call to Susa, see Swoboda, p. 2048, and R.W. Macan, *Herodotus, The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books* (London, 1895), ii.60: Histiaios seems to have been summoned shortly after the Skythian expedition, but prior to the expulsion of Hippias from Athens.

The outbreak of the Revolt can be placed in 499 by working backwards in Herodotus vi from the Battle of Marathon which the ancients uniformly dated to 490. We are

told that the end of major operations was 'in the sixth year' (6.18). This, then, falls in 494, and the beginning of the Revolt will then be placed in 499, in early autumn or late summer, when the fleet had returned from its four-month siege of Naxos (5.34). This argument is followed by Burn, p. 198; W.W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* (Oxford, 1912), ii.12–13; Macan, pp. 62–70; Grundy, p. 142; and Forrest.

The chronology of this period is particularly vexed; numerous minor permutations of these dates are possible. For the sake of my hypothesis, however, we need only grant that Histiaios was away from Miletus for several years, between the time of the Danube bridge episode and the outbreak of the Revolt. The exact *termini* do not affect the case.

¹⁴ Evans, pp. 117–18, suggests that Histiaios still ruled Miletus and Myrkinos from Susa. There is no evidence for this. The only indication of communication between Histiaios and Aristagoras is the tattooed-slave story (*Hdt.* 5.35). Even if true, this story seems insufficient to posit Histiaios a ruler by proxy.

There is no obligation to assume that Aristagoras was a treacherous and ungrateful deputy; at the same time, there is no obligation to assume that he could not be. The traditional premiss of Aristagoras and Histiaios, as co-authors of the Ionian Revolt, implicitly working together, need not be right.¹⁵ A pattern of service and kinship through marriage does not guarantee eternal loyalty among tyrants, as any reader of Herodotus knows.

The first hint of Aristagoras forsaking Histiaios is the Naxos expedition. The exiles, seeking help from their friend Histiaios, come to Miletus (5.30). Aristagoras takes advantage of their *ξενίη* to his father-in-law. He agrees to help, hoping to gain control of Naxos for himself.¹⁶ Aristagoras uses his position in Miletus to further his own aims. Apparently, he does not ask Histiaios for permission or assistance. For an enterprise which would risk Miletus' resources, and could benefit from Persian forces, what better sponsor to consult than Histiaios? Histiaios was the trusted advisor close to the king at Susa, the lawful ruler of Miletus, and the actual friend of the exiles. But instead, Aristagoras turns to Artaphrenes, the Persian satrap, and no friend of Histiasios (5.31).

Artaphrenes was jealous of Histiaios. At Sardis he had seen Darius escort the Greek ruler to Susa as a personal advisor (5.25). Later he would kill Histiaios, fearful and envious of his position with the King (6.30). Jealousy of Histiaios readily explains the coalition of Artaphrenes and Aristagoras. Artaphrenes sought favour with Darius, hoping to achieve a successful conquest of Naxos for the King. Aristagoras sought personal power at Miletus, exceeding his powers as deputy. If the conquest came at the expense of Histiaios' rule in Miletus, both Artaphrenes and Aristagoras would benefit. Artaphrenes would weaken a rival's power, and Aristagoras would be tyrant, independent of his father-in-law once and for all. However, the Naxos expedition fails (5.34). Aristagoras is unable to keep his promise to Artaphrenes, and fears reprisal. Whether or not the blame lay with Aristagoras, his fears were legitimate.¹⁷ Artaphrenes had risked his prestige and resources to mount the expedition, and now had to answer to the King. Aristagoras

¹⁵ Grundy, pp. 87–8, first suggested that the Revolt was plotted in advance of the tattooed slave, perhaps implying a continued co-operation between Histiaios and Aristagoras. Blamire, p. 144, has argued that the council *τῶν στρασιωπέων* (Hdt. 5.36) need not imply a gathering of 'conspirators', but rather only 'followers'. Earlier conspiracy seems particularly unlikely because of the nature of this council; Hecataios, one of the followers present, argues against revolt. Why debate a pre-planned conspiracy?

Professor Andrewes has mentioned to me that this council would not necessarily rule out previous planning. But the burden of proof would seem to rest on this view. Herodotus' narrative implies debate, not the working out of details.

¹⁶ With Andrewes, p. 126, I see no need to question the personal motives of Aristagoras in this case. Grundy, p. 86; De Sanctis, p. 51; Lang, p. 28, all reject the motives, and suggest that Persia would not have allowed Aristagoras to attempt a 'Milesian

Empire' nor gain too much power for himself. But Histiaios' recall from Myrkinos is no precedent for such a policy. Neither he nor Aristagoras was told the reason for his appointment as royal counsellor (Hdt. 5.23; 24). Moreover, the involvement of Artaphrenes, and his insistence that Megabates lead the expedition, seem intentional curbs on any excess gain for which Aristagoras might have hoped. Aristagoras' ambitions were clear enough for the Persians to take precautions.

¹⁷ Many have doubted the story of Megabates' treachery (Hdt. 5.33), cf. Cary, p. 217; Grundy, p. 86; Burn, p. 196; Forrest (on Hdt. 5.33). Lang, p. 28, argues that if the Persian captain had sabotaged the expedition, Aristagoras would not have been held responsible for the failure. This assumes that Artaphrenes, humiliated and empty-handed, would be just and rational in assigning the blame. Why assume such an unnatural reaction?

was the logical and necessary scapegoat for the satrap. Histiaios would also be angry. He must have known of Aristagoras' Naxos plans, which Artaphrenes presented to Darius for approval (5.32).

As the friend of the exiles, overlord of Aristagoras, and royal adviser sharing all Darius' counsels, Histiaios must have been consulted about τὰ ἐκ τοῦ Ἀρισταγόρεω λεγόμενα by Darius (5.106; 32). He probably did not know, but might well have guessed, Aristagoras' personal ambition. Histiaios could not have been pleased to see the Miletus tyranny jeopardized by Aristagoras' failure. Nor could he have been pleased by the unsuccessful support offered his Naxian friends. Aristagoras rightly feared that his power would be taken away (5.35). He feared the reprisals of not only Darius and Artaphrenes, but also Histiaios.

Faced with deposition, Aristagoras contemplated revolt. He might have hoped to re-establish his endangered authority at the head of a nationalistic movement. While Aristagoras ponders, the tattooed slave of Histiaios arrives (5.35). The authenticity of this episode has been questioned for many reasons. Firstly, a signal tattooed on the scalp of a trusted slave appears too romantic to be true.¹⁸ But there is no reason to doubt that a more orthodox sort of message might have been sent.¹⁹ Secondly, Histiaios' message arrives at just the time Aristagoras is considering revolt. The coincidence may seem contrived.²⁰ However, if the failure of the Naxos expedition produced the tensions of the power struggle suggested, it is not impossible that both Histiaios and Aristagoras would be thinking about rebellion in Miletus at the same time.

Soon Histiaios realized the threat to his rule which Aristagoras posed. The Naxos expedition had been a disastrous and presumptuous undertaking by the ἐπίτροπος. The failed expedition had been a blow to Histiaios' prestige at Susa,²¹ but also to his prestige in Miletus, and to his prestige with his Naxian friends. Histiaios' communication to Aristagoras—tattooed head notwithstanding—was a threat. It did not urge him to revolt; it dared him to revolt. As far as Histiaios was concerned, the deputy had already overstepped his bounds. Now he ordered Aristagoras to lay down his rule, or suffer the consequences. In Susa, Histiaios answers the accusations of Darius: ἀλλ' εἴπερ τι τοιούτου οἶον σὺ εἰρηκας πρήσσει ὁ ἐμὸς ἐπίτροπος, ἴσθι αὐτὸν ἐπ' ἐωτοῦ βαλόμενον πεπρηχέναι (5.106). The speech is an invention of Herodotus, but the sentiment expressed may be real. Histiaios' later promise to deliver up the unfaithful deputy could have been made with honest intent. If so, we can believe that Darius would have been willing to release him from Susa (5.106–7).

Aristagoras' decision to revolt after communication with Histiaios may explain the tradition that tyrant and deputy were co-operating. But the message received was not the workings of a plot. It was the delivery of an ultimatum.

The deputy had put the tyrant in a precarious position. Histiaios was still responsible to Darius for policy in Miletus. Yet Aristagoras was now acting boldly, as a free agent. Histiaios, the puppet tyrant, could have been easily replaced, and both men came to realize the fact. If Aristagoras' Naxos mission had succeeded, it might have earned him the new post as the tyrant of Miletus. But Aristagoras had blundered; it was now up to the tyrant to ensure that the deputy's blunder did not come at his own expense.

¹⁸ Cf. Grundy, p. 88.

¹⁹ Cf. Blamire, p. 147; Evans, p. 120.

²⁰ Cf. Grundy, p. 88; Cary, p. 217;

Lang, p. 28; Chapman, p. 559.

²¹ Cf. Evans, p. 125.

If Histiaios could quietly put his house in order, and suppress Aristagoras, he might eventually be allowed to return to his throne.²²

Aristagoras realized that his only chance to secure power was now, while Histiaios was still in Susa. The challenge from his ruler was only an empty threat, for the moment at least. However, in order to win over Histiaios' partisans, it would be advisable to suggest that the absent tyrant supported the Revolt. At the council in Miletus Aristagoras mentions τὰ ἀπυγμένα of Histiaios (5.36).

Aristagoras was more a revolutionary leader than Histiaios might have hoped. His rapid organization of the Ionian cities, and success in recruiting Athenian aid, ensured a longer and more bitter struggle than expected. Aristagoras' immediate strategies indicate a rebellion against Histiaios' power as well as Persia's.

The rebels decide to depose the puppet tyrannies across Ionia. Aristagoras, pretending to give up his power (λόγῳ μετεῖς τὴν τυραννίδα), sets up ἰσονομία in Miletus and other states. This amounted to an outright deposition of Histiaios, who was the tyrant *de iure* of Miletus (5.37).²³ Most of the tyrants of Ionia escaped, except Koes, the ruler of Mytilene. He was stoned to death (5.38). Is it only coincidence that Koes had been granted his rule by Darius at the same time, and for the same reason, that Histiaios was granted Myrkinos (5.11)? If Histiaios could expect a better fate than Koes, there is no indication that Aristagoras took steps to ensure it. Aristagoras gained support at the expense of the power of the Persian puppet tyrants. Histiaios would be an obvious target in the proscriptions.²⁴

Aristagoras' strategies after the outbreak of the Revolt also confirm his enmity to Histiaios. When Aristagoras launches the attack on Sardis, he himself chooses to remain in Miletus (5.99). Lang suggests that his staying behind was a rare factual episode in the hostile tradition Herodotus presents: 'in the context of Aristagoras' apparent general fecklessness'.²⁵ But should we expect a general commander to lead every expedition? Darius doesn't appear feckless by remaining in Susa during the Revolt. Another explanation may lurk in Plutarch (*de Mal. Hdt.* 24), i.e. the attack on Sardis was instituted to raise a siege of Miletus. But to accept this tradition means not only rejecting the silence of Herodotus, but also his description of the preparations for the Sardis expedition. The Athenian and Eretrian fleets would hardly have arrived in Miletus without incident if the Persians were blockading the harbour (5.98–9).²⁶ It is more likely that Aristagoras remained in Miletus because his position there was threatened. He may have feared the return of Histiaios and an ensuing civil war over the tyrant's restoration.

After the defeats at Ephesus and Caria, Aristagoras' position was certainly threatened. The Persian forces were closing in on Miletus; Histiaios had left Sardis (5.108).²⁷ Popular support for the Revolt was probably waning.²⁸ Aristagoras consults his followers for an escape plan. He rejects a proposal to stay near Miletus, but considers flight to Sardinia or Myrkinos (5.124–5). Both these

²² Or as Hdt. 5.35 implies, did Histiaios seek to be dispatched to deal with the Revolt in Miletus? Perhaps Histiaios hoped Aristagoras would revolt, and be easily crushed by the Persian forces.

²³ Hdt. 5.37. First suggested by Evans, p. 120.

²⁴ This point is made by Chapman, p. 555. Also, note that only Histiaios' persuasive arguments saved him at Chios;

Hdt. 6.2.

²⁵ pp. 30–1.

²⁶ In addition, Professor Andrewes has suggested to me that the topography of the area makes the Plutarch tradition unlikely.

²⁷ Cf. Grundy, pp. 112 ff. for the analysis of the Persian counter-attack.

²⁸ Cf. De Sanctis, pp. 70–1; Blamire, p. 149.

places are linked to Histiaios. Myrkinos was originally the tyrant's stronghold before his call to Susa (5.11; 124); and Sardinia was the rich island which Histiaios promised to Darius before his release (5.106).²⁹ To control either of these would give Aristagoras a bargaining position with Histiaios. He could thus hope to avoid the revenge of the usurped tyrant. If Aristagoras could pre-empt the conquest of Sardinia, or control Histiaios' former holdings in the Strymon valley, he could confront Histiaios from a position of strength.

Aristagoras was seeking more than a place of refuge. If refuge was his only interest, Sardinia would have been the farthest and safest alternative. Ultimately, he opted for Myrkinos instead (5.126).

When Aristagoras was killed, he was trying to conquer some of the surrounding area in Thrace; he was not merely hiding behind the walls of Histiaios' former fortress (5.126). He was seeking power, not sanctuary.

Aristagoras might have been looking for indigenous support in the Strymon valley. His earlier return of the Paeonians to their homes must have made him popular with those peoples (5.98). No doubt the relocation angered Darius, as Herodotus states, but it must also be seen as an early and separate alliance for Aristagoras.³⁰ Despite his plans, his efforts failed when he died in Thrace.

Aristagoras' behaviour during the Revolt was that of a tyrant.³¹ He gave up his rule in Miletus only in name, and displayed the authority of a despot (5.37; 49; 98). When he finally fled, the Milesians were only too glad to be rid of him (6.5).

Histiaios' position had been usurped, and he plotted against Aristagoras the usurper. Soon after the destruction of Sardis, Histiaios left Susa, allegedly headed for Miletus (5.105–7). Instead, his journey brings him to Sardis (6.1), apparently after some delay.³² His nostalgia for Miletus, which Herodotus presents, seems unlikely (5.106–7).³³ Histiaios makes no apparent attempt to return to Miletus after his long captivity in the King's court.³⁴ The delay in his arrival may be explained by Evans's conjecture: Histiaios actually arrived in Sardis earlier than Herodotus suggests, i.e. prior to the death of Aristagoras.³⁵ In turn, the decision to visit Sardis might be explained by Histiaios' plots with certain Persians there

²⁹ Aristagoras may have known of Histiaios' boast or prior interest in Sardinia.

³⁰ Both Paeonia and Myrkinos are on the Strymon river (5.13; 23).

³¹ Cf. How and Wells, p. 58.

³² Once again, the exact chronology of events is vexed. The attack on Sardis can be placed in the first campaigning season after the Naxos expedition of summer/autumn 499, i.e. summer 498 (so Macan, p. 69; Grundy, p. 119; How and Wells, p. 12; Forrest). We must then account for his whereabouts until the death of Aristagoras, which can be dated to late 497 at the earliest (Dio. Sic. 12.32.3; Thuc. 4.102.2). In other words, if Histiaios arrived in Sardis soon after the death of Aristagoras (6.1), we might conclude that he was travelling for upwards of a year or more. Presumably, in going from Susa to Sardis, Histiaios followed the Royal Road. According to Hdt. 5.52–4, this journey would last only three months,

although here too there are problems with Herodotus' calculations (cf. How and Wells, pp. 21–4). Chapman, p. 560, rejects this chronology, and suggests the alternative date of spring 497 for Histiaios' arrival. His calculations also involve many assumptions; it might be better to accept his more general point that we should not press Herodotus' implied chronology in 6.1 too closely. For Evans's conjecture on the problem, see below. The exact delay of Histiaios in coming to Sardis is not crucial. Notice, whatever the timing, that Histiaios did not proceed directly to Miletus, as promised.

³³ *Contra*: Blamire, p. 147.

³⁴ Professor Andrewes has suggested to me that Histiaios, if escorted to Sardis, may have had no choice in his destination. But if Histiaios were brought to Sardis under orders by Darius, how could the satrap Artaphrenes so casually dismiss him?

³⁵ Hdt. 6.1. Cf. Evans, p. 123 n.23.

(6.4). The time needed to develop such contacts would support an earlier arrival than Herodotus implies. The narrative suggests a visit of only a few hours.³⁶

Whenever Histiaios arrived, it is unlikely that he could have hoped to stay, unknown to Artaphrenes. He must have had some purpose in coming other than furtive meetings with the satrap's enemies.

Some suggest that Histiaios was seeking to negotiate a settlement, in his capacity as a loyal servant of Darius.³⁷ But why should a King's envoy have to negotiate with the King's satrap? Darius was not fighting Artaphrenes' insubordination, but rather the Ionians' rebellion. Histiaios would do greatest service by negotiation with the native Milesian insurgents. If negotiation was his purpose, would it not have been more logical to proceed to Miletus after leaving Susa?³⁸

If, as argued, Histiaios had neither rights nor powers left in Miletus while Aristagoras ruled, negotiation would have been impossible. Unless Histiaios wielded authority on both sides, any attempt at a settlement would be useless. His failure to visit Miletus after his release from Susa questions his intent and power as a negotiator. Miletus should have been the primary destination for Histiaios—unless he was prevented by the presence of Aristagoras' regime.

Histiaios' trip to Sardis was an attempt at a new coalition with Artaphrenes. The satrap was now openly at war with Aristagoras, the Milesian who had failed at Naxos and then burned Sardis. Artaphrenes was eager for revenge; he was the perfect sponsor for Histiaios' return to Miletus. If Histiaios could depose the usurper, he could both please the King and recover his former power at home. However, only success would ensure his restoration.³⁹

But Artaphrenes would have no further dealings with cunning Greeks. While Histiaios was on his way to Sardis—or actually there—Aristagoras left Miletus for Thrace, where he was killed.⁴⁰ Thus, Artaphrenes had no use for Histiaios; Persian forces already threatened Miletus, and the Revolt seemed doomed (5.122–4). Artaphrenes rejects Histiaios, suspecting his complicity in the Revolt. Histiaios flees Sardis in terror.⁴¹

Histiaios' intent to re-establish himself as tyrant is confirmed by his next actions. He crosses to Chios, seeking aid to return home (6.5).⁴² After talking his

³⁶ Hdt. 6.1: ἀπικμένον δὲ αὐτὸν ἐκ τῶν Σούσων εἴρετο Ἀρταφρένης κ.τ.λ.

³⁷ Cf. Blamire, pp. 147–8.

³⁸ That the Royal Road led directly to Sardis might suggest that Histiaios, as negotiator, was on his way to Miletus via Sardis. But after the rejection by Artaphrenes, he flees to Chios (Hdt. 6.1–2). See below and note 39.

³⁹ Chapman, pp. 561–2, has suggested that Histiaios' visit to Sardis confirmed his role as a negotiator: his attempted alliance with Artaphrenes is to be explained by his need for Persian arms and direct contact with Susa; he would then restore Miletus to subject status. However, this hardly seems to be 'negotiation'. It is tantamount to an armed assault on Miletus in the service of the King. My own view, then, agrees in part with Chapman's. But Histiaios' need to overthrow the new government in Miletus must not be overlooked.

⁴⁰ Hdt. 6.1. 'Aristagoras had gone to Myrkinos, if not Hades' (Grundy). See arguments above for Histiaios' arrival prior to Aristagoras' flight.

⁴¹ Hdt. 6.1–2. Artaphrenes' accusation that 'Histiaios stitched the shoe and Aristagoras put it on' is not necessarily τὴν ἀτρεκίην τῆς ἀποστάσεως as Herodotus assumes. As Forrest writes, 'It is another sign of the satrap's determination to eliminate Histiaios. It is pointless to waste a good charge on a dead man' (Aristagoras).

⁴² Histiaios' foiled attempts to stir up revolt in Sardis can be seen as malicious revenge for his rejection by Artaphrenes. It need not be assumed that his chief interest in going to Chios was to send the Hermippus letters (6.4), cf. Heinlein, p. 345. His choice of Chios may have been based on a traditional friendship between Chios and Miletus (cf. How and Wells i.63; Hdt. 1.18.3). Perhaps he hoped that Stratistis, tyrant of Chios, was

way out of the Chians' accusations, he persuades them to bring him to Miletus. With Aristagoras now dead, Histiaios hoped to re-enter Miletus easily. He arrives with an insufficient force behind him, and is rebuffed trying to enter the city. The Milesians have no taste for another tyrant, having rid themselves of Aristagoras.⁴³

The last campaigns of Histiaios have baffled many scholars.⁴⁴ However, the apparent mystery of his actions results mostly from modern explanations. Swoboda argues that Histiaios was trying to establish an *Inselreich*, an independent Aegean empire.⁴⁵ It seems difficult to believe that one man, equipped with a small force of mostly merchant ships,⁴⁶ could hope to conquer and maintain a realm independent of Persia.⁴⁷ Heinlein's view is a modified version of the *Inselreich* theory; he argues that Histiaios, once established in his empire, would subjugate his holdings to Persia.⁴⁸ The same impossibility of the *Inselreich* argues against this. Moreover, the general notion of Histiaios as a loyal subject of Darius seems invalid. Why did he fail even to try to conquer Sardinia, as he had promised the King (5.106)? Also, when Histiaios took possession of Chios, he made no apparent effort to turn it over to Darius (6.26). One might expect such a gesture from a selfless, loyal subject.

Blamire suggests Histiaios turned to self-interested adventuring after he had failed at diplomatic settlement.⁴⁹ But the fallacy of the strategy which Blamire notes seems sufficient to refute it: Histiaios would only be secure while 'neither side had the leisure to devote itself to his extermination.' Histiaios was desperate, but not stupid.

Others argue for Histiaios as a patriotic Greek in the struggle against Persia. Herodotus suggests that, upon leaving Susa, Histiaios' real motive was to acquire the leadership of the Ionians in the war against Darius (6.2). If so, he failed in this hope. The Chians, who were willing to believe his role in starting the Revolt, none the less refused to supply him with any ships. The Lesbians would grant him only eight (6.5).

But if not a leader in the Revolt, could he still have been fighting in the Greek interest? Lang suggests Histiaios was seconding the efforts of Aristagoras, in the north of Ionia.⁵⁰ If so, it is hard to reconcile his armed conquest of Chios, which destroyed many Ionian soldiers. Other explanations of Histiaios' behaviour, such as Cary's—'the distracted dodging and doubling of the quarry before the hounds'—throw no light on the matter at all.⁵¹

Histiaios' actions after his rejection at Miletus are desperate, but nonetheless explicable. Histiaios tried to force his way into Miletus and failed. He then returned to Chios, where he asked for ships (6.5). It seems likely that he wanted to make another attempt on Miletus, and needed more of a force. Chios had

still in power; in 514/13 Strattis had been at the Danube bridge with Histiaios (4.138). There is some evidence that Strattis remained in power, or at least influential, in Chios through the Revolt. Cf. Hdt. 8.132 and How and Wells, ii.279.

⁴³ Blamire, p. 150 (*contra* Heinlein, pp. 346–7) argues that Histiaios was not trying to re-establish himself as tyrant, since he would have been aware of anti-tyrannical sentiment in Ionia. This sentiment clearly explains Histiaios' failure at Miletus—but

not his intent.

⁴⁴ 'Even Herodotus now seems baffled' (Forrest).

⁴⁵ p. 2049.

⁴⁶ Hdt. 6.26: συλλαμβάνοντι τὰς Ἰώνων ὀλκάδας.

⁴⁷ Cf. Blamire, p. 151.

⁴⁸ pp. 349–51.

⁴⁹ Cf. Blamire, pp. 149–50; adopted by Chapman, pp. 564–7.

⁵⁰ pp. 35–6.

⁵¹ p. 227.

agreed to bring him to Miletus; having failed, he would logically turn to Chios again. The Chians, however, refuse Histiaios' second request. Perhaps they suspected his more personal motives in the enterprise. Histiaios then solicits the help of the Mytilenians at Lesbos, who provide him with eight triremes (6.5). This would have been insufficient to attack Miletus. Moreover, by this time the threat of the impending battle at nearby Lade made a direct expedition on Miletus a risk (6.6–7).

But Histiaios might still hope to force Miletus to take him back as tyrant. If so, his favour with Darius could save him and his city from destruction, assuming he could pre-empt the Persian force which was fast descending. His promise to deliver Aristagoras was now impossible; the deputy was already dead. But to turn Miletus and Aristagoras' rebellious party over to Darius was the next best thing. If the *status quo* could be re-established, Histiaios would once again be the tyrant of Miletus, holding power with Persian backing. This was the strategy he emphasized at the Danube bridge, long before.⁵² Once more, Persian backing could provide him with his tyranny—if Darius was still willing to accept it.

This was the risk which Histiaios was forced to take. Unable to attack Miletus directly, Histiaios sought another means of persuasion. He sailed to Byzantium, to capture merchant ships coming out of the Black Sea (6.5). By diverting grain supplied for Miletus, he would blackmail the city to reinstall its old tyrant.⁵³

With the defeat at Lade and the capture of Miletus, Histiaios lost his battle against time. His hopes of returning as tyrant vanished. He had no city to try to blackmail any more. Nor could he hope to pre-empt the Persians there. When the announcement of the disasters reaches him at Byzantium, he abandons his hijacking, and sails for Chios. There, he and his followers overcome a garrison, and subdue the island weakened by war (6.26–7). Miletus had been captured; Chios was the next best alternative for Histiaios' plans. As a staunch supporter of the Revolt, Chios was an obvious prize to present to Darius. Chios had lost many men at Lade (6.15–16) and Histiaios could count on an easy conquest. As tyrant there, he could hope to reassume a comfortable position in the Persian Empire, after the Revolt was settled.⁵⁴

⁵² Hdt. 4.137. Evans, p. 117, suggests that Histiaios maintained this belief throughout the Revolt.

⁵³ Forrest notes that Histiaios captured only those ships *ἐκ τοῦ Ποντοῦ ἐκπλεούσας* (6.5; 26), and thus argues that his aims were more specific than piracy and personal gain (*contra* Blamire, p. 150; Cary, p. 225; Chapman, p. 566). The control of the Ionian food supply (cf. Grundy, pp. 121–2) is consistent with the strategy of blackmail; Miletus would be an obvious target for Histiaios' extortion. It may be significant that during the late sixth and fifth centuries B.C. the corn trade from the Black Sea was becoming influential for the first time. The new trade would have been a particularly vulnerable market. See T. Noonan, 'Grain Trade of the Northern Black Sea', *AJPh* 94 (1973), 231–42; also, H. Ormerod, *Piracy in the Ancient World* (Liverpool, 1924), p. 106. Compare the identical strategy of

Lysander, blackmailing cities who had revolted from the Lacedaemonians in 405 B.C. (Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.17). Other explanations are less likely. Chios' refusal to accept Histiaios when he returns from the Black Sea discredits the case for his patriotic interest (6.26), e.g. Grundy, pp. 121–2, who suggests Histiaios was putting pressure on 'wavering allies', or Burn, p. 208, arguing that he was ensuring the safe delivery of grain to the cities in revolt. Perhaps Chios' resistance to Histiaios indicates nothing more than a desire to ally with the winning side after Lade. But the next year the Persians had to capture Chios, apparently offering last-moment resistance (6.31).

⁵⁴ Lesbos was not as attractive an alternative. The men of Lesbos had fled at Lade (6.14), and Histiaios may have considered their returning armada more of a threat to his own humble force.

But once Chios is secured, Histiaios becomes greedy. Assured by his success, he turns towards Myrkinos. To control his former Strymon territory would restore his previous status. As tyrant of Chios and Myrkinos, Histiaios could hope to renegotiate a position with Darius.

Unfortunately, the treacherous escapades of his deputy continued to haunt him. Myrkinos was not the same stronghold as he had left it; after Aristagoras' hostile attempts, the Thracians were less receptive to rulers from Miletus.⁵⁵ As a result, Histiaios attacks Thasos instead, just off the coast (6.28). Thasos had several advantages, most notably the gold mines it controlled on the mainland.⁵⁶ It was also an excellent base for Histiaios to launch an invasion of Myrkinos and the surrounding area.⁵⁷

While Histiaios was besieging Thasos, news arrived that the Persian fleet had left Miletus, intending to attack other Ionian states (6.28). Histiaios leaves Thasos, and sails south. Although he first lands at Lesbos, he was probably headed for Chios. Chios, his only secure base, was threatened. His strategy depended on his control of the island prior to confrontation with the Persians. If he could reach Chios before the Persian fleet, he could bargain as a pro-Persian tyrant who had helped put down the rebellion for Darius.

But Histiaios' luck ran out. His troops were starving and he was forced to put in at Lesbos.⁵⁸ The people of Lesbos could not (or would not) supply food, and he then turned to the mainland, hoping to harvest crops around Atarneus (6.28). There he was captured by Harpagus, who brought him to Sardis. Artaphrenes was pleased to see his old rival suddenly helpless. The satrap and Harpagus kill Histiaios *ὥνα μὴ διαφυγῶν αὐτὶς μέγας παρὰ βασιλείῃ γενῆται* (6.30).

No doubt their fear was justified. Darius was angry that Histiaios had not been taken alive. The King decreed that Histiaios' body be given burial fitting to an honourable servant of Persia (6.30). But this should not cause surprise. Histiaios' strategies had never actually betrayed the King, at least on the surface. All of his military campaigns had been directed against insurgents, although his motives were hardly loyal to Darius. That he failed to deliver Sardinia was his only broken promise to the King. That he failed to deliver Aristagoras was a promise fate prevented.

Histiaios was a shrewd ruler who had been deprived of possessions in Thrace and Miletus by the jealousy of Megabazus. Aristagoras, his deputy, had taken advantage of the situation and allied with the equally jealous Artaphrenes, in a move to take over Histiaios' power. When this coalition failed, Aristagoras led the Revolt which he hoped would guarantee his new rule. Thus, Histiaios spent the rest of his life trying to recover the power and position he once held as a Greek tyrant in the Persian Empire. His actions often point to his loyalty to

⁵⁵ Grundy, p. 120, makes a similar suggestion of Thracian alienation because of Aristagoras.

⁵⁶ Hdt. 6.46; Thuc. 1.100. Cf. How and Wells, p. 74; Grundy, p. 139; Blamire, p. 151.

⁵⁷ Cf. Grundy, p. 139; Burn, p. 215.

⁵⁸ Scholars' difficulties in explaining his trip to Lesbos lead one to consider that it was not Histiaios' goal. Grundy, p. 140, argues that the Lesbian contingent of the navy demanded defence of their homeland.

If so, why didn't the Chians in Histiaios' crew demand the same? (The force was composed of both Aeolians and Ionians: 6.28) Chios would have been more immediately threatened from the south.

Evans, p. 126, suggests that Histiaios sailed to Lesbos to negotiate with the Persian fleet. Once again, one must ask, why not to Chios, which he controlled, and was further south than Lesbos?

Darius; other times they point to his loyalty to Ionia. Hence the diverse interpretations of modern scholars. But Histiaios was a man loyal to no one, other than himself. The seemingly contradictory events of his life confirm this.

Wadham College, Oxford

P. B. MANVILLE