

## ATHENS' FIRST INTERVENTION IN SICILY: THUCYDIDES AND THE SICILIAN TRADITION

The first Athenian intervention in Sicily is one of the most opaque episodes in Thucydides. The historian for once dispenses with a full record and confines himself explicitly to the major events of the campaign.<sup>1</sup> What then emerges is a disconnected narrative of geographically separate actions, most of them trivial. There is no attempt to give a synoptic picture or explain the problems of strategy, and the lack of coordination has (not surprisingly) impressed many critics.<sup>2</sup> The episode is remarkable for another reason. For once we have that rarest of rare birds, an independent control source for Thucydides. Since 1930 there has been available a brief fragment of papyrus, usually ascribed to Philistus, which provides an extraordinarily detailed, if fragmentary, report of a portion of the campaign.<sup>3</sup> The fragment has become a standard reference, and it is reported, not always accurately, in the more recent scholarship on the Peloponnesian War.<sup>4</sup> But there has been little attempt to come to terms with the historiographical problem it poses. Not only does the fragment give a large amount of detail which has no counterpart in Thucydides, but its narrative, as it is usually interpreted, is formally inconsistent with Thucydides' chronology. The new fragment is most probably the work of a Sicilian historian, well acquainted with the events of 427/6, and it is – to put it mildly – disturbing to find a contradiction in what should have been an easily verifiable sequence of events.

Thucydides' account of the opening of the campaign is jerky and incoherent, but he takes some trouble to preserve the chronological sequence. Indeed the narrative is deliberately fragmented, each episode coming in at the appropriate time of year with virtually no reference to what precedes. He begins in the summer of 427 with the dispatch of the first small squadron of twenty ships under Laches and Charoeades, noting the two prospective theatres of war: that between Syracuse and the Chalcidian alliance in Sicily and that between Rhegium and Locri in Southern Italy (3.86.1–3). This first episode ends with the generals putting into Rhegium and beginning the war along with their allies. Two chapters later we are in the winter of 427/6. Thucydides briefly records an attack on the island of Lipara, launched jointly by the Athenians

<sup>1</sup> Thuc. 3.90.1: ἃ δὲ λόγων μάλιστα ἄξια ἢ μετὰ Ἀθηναίων οἱ ξύμμαχοι ἔπραξαν ἢ πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους οἱ ἀντιπόλεμοι, τούτων μνησθήσομαι.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, H. D. Westlake, *Essays on the Greek Historians and Greek History* (Manchester, 1969), pp. 103–4, 116–18.

<sup>3</sup> First published by G. Coppola and A. Momigliano, 'Una pagina del *Περὶ Σικελίας* di Filisto in un papiro fiorentino', *RFC* 8 (1930), 449–70 (partially reprinted in A. Momigliano, *Quarto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* [Rome, 1969], 510–14). It was re-edited by V. Bartoletti, *PSI* 12.2 (1950) 1–9, no. 1283, which furnishes the text printed in Jacoby, *FGrHist* 577 F 2. The fullest (but not necessarily the best) treatment of the historiographical problems remains that of S. Mazzarino, 'Tucidide e Filisto sulla prima spedizione ateniese in Sicilia', *Bollettino Storico Catanese* 4 (1939), 5–72. The most recent study is that of L. Pearson, 'Some New Thoughts about the Supposed Fragment of Philistus (*PSI* 1283)', *BASP* 20 (1983), 151–8.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* (Oxford, 1956), ii.389–90 (misleadingly reported: see below, nn. 12, 19); D. Kagan, *The Archidamian War* (Ithaca, 1974), pp. 189–91.

and their allies from Rhegium, an impossibility in summer because of the shortage of water. The arable land was ravaged, but the islanders refused to abandon their alliance with Syracuse and the flotilla returned frustrated to Rhegium.<sup>5</sup> After another brief narrative interval Thucydides resumes with the events of summer 426. First Laches took on the entire command in Sicily after the death of his colleague, Charoeades, who had been killed by the Syracusans in an engagement otherwise ignored by Thucydides (3.90.2). Next came the major success of the year, the capture of Mylae on the north coast of Sicily, and its sequel, the submission of Messene (3.90.2–4). After this high note there is another break eight chapters long. Then Thucydides briefly records a minor skirmish and the capture of a guard post at the mouth of the river Alex (the present day Melito, on the borders of Locri).<sup>6</sup> That ends the summer's events. Winter 426/5 continues the disconnected notes: an abortive attack on Syracusan-held Inessa (3.103.1–2), a successful seaborne raid on Locrian territory by the river Caecinus,<sup>7</sup> another raid on the territory of Himera (3.115.1) and finally (at greater length) the assumption of command by the new Athenian general, Pythodorus (3.115.2–6).

Until the discovery of the papyrus fragment the only other source for these events was Diodorus. His account is, typically, much briefer and chronologically vague. He mentions the first squadron and names its commanders, agreeing that Rhegium was the first port of call (where the squadron was doubled by an influx of twenty ships from Rhegium and her allies). Next came the attack on Lipara, a sortie against Locri, which resulted in the capture of five Locrian triremes, and finally the capture of Mylae.<sup>8</sup> The history of the campaign from summer 427 to summer 426 is telescoped together, and apart from the capture of the Locrian triremes (which is ignored by Thucydides), the events are the same as those described more fully by the Athenian historian, and the chronological order is identical.

We may now adduce the papyrus. Four fragments survive, three of which are too minute to convey any intelligible meaning.<sup>9</sup> The principal fragment contains the remains of two columns of text, and the outline of a narrative survives. I shall provide a conservative reading based on the standard edition of Bartoletti<sup>10</sup> and supply a translation of what can be reasonably restored.

<sup>5</sup> Thuc. 3.88.1–4. The bulk of the chapter (§§2–3) is a geographical excursus on the Aeolian isles, which Pausanias (10.11.3–4) conflates with Antiochus' antiquarian notes on the foundation of Lipara. Cf. Jacoby, *FGrHist* iii B (Kommentar zu nr. 297–607) Text 490–1, *contra* K. J. Dover, *Maia* 6 (1953), 8–9, who adheres to the older view (cf. Mazzarino [above, n. 3], pp. 19–20) that both Thucydides and Pausanias drew exclusively upon Antiochus (see below).

<sup>6</sup> Thuc. 3.99; cf. Strabo 6.1.9 (260); Timaeus, *FGrHist* 566 F 43.

<sup>7</sup> Thuc. 3.103.3. The Caecinus (perhaps the modern Amendolea) also lay near the frontier, perhaps to the east of the Alex; the river god was the putative father of the great fifth-century Locrian athlete, Euthymus (cf. Paus. 6.6.4, claiming that the river marked the actual boundary; but the story of the cicadas is associated by Timaeus with the Alex; cf. Jacoby, *FGrHist* iii B [Kommentar zu nr. 297–607] Text 460–1).

<sup>8</sup> Diod. 12.54.4–5. The report of the attack on Mylae (which Diodorus terms a *phrouriorion*) is the fullest part of the narrative; it roughly coheres with Thucydides and supplies figures for the local losses (1,000 dead and 700 captured).

<sup>9</sup> Bartoletti's fragments B, C and D. For a possible context for fragment C, see below. The other two baffle conjecture.

<sup>10</sup> I leave the last eight lines of column I without supplementation. Two very different restorations have been proposed. Bartoletti (above, n. 3) assumed that Laches withdrew to Catana before embarking on his Liparaean campaign, while Pearson (above, n. 3) includes a

Col. I	Col. II
πρέσβεις κομίζων ἐς 'Ρῆγιον' καὶ τὰς ναῦς καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀνέ- λαβον οἱ Συρακόσιοι. Χα- ριάδης δὲ τραυματι- σθεὶς ἐκ τῶν τραυμά- των ἀποθνήσκει. Τῷ δ' ἐχρόνου τούτου καὶ τῶν μετὰ Λάχη- τος τριήρων ἦλω μία κατὰ Μεγαρέας. Λάχης δὲ συνθέμενος τοῖς ἐ- [πὶ] τῶν τριήρων τῶν [ἐν] Καμαρίνῃ [ρ]ὸς Λι- [π]άραν ἦκειν π[λ]έον- τας, αὐτὸς ἀνα[λαβὼν] τὰς οἰκείας [ν]αῦς καὶ παρὰ 'Ρηγίνων] δέ- κα, τὰ τ[ε] πάντα π[ρ]ο- ν[.] [.....] πην [ ] γεμ. [ ] κατα [ ] νηλα [ ] ασανυσ [ ] την [ ] ενη [ ] [ ]	σας ἐς 'Ρῆγιον ἐβούλετο πειρᾶσαι ταῖς ναυσὶ Λοκρῶν, καὶ κατὰ τὸν Καϊκῖνον π[ρ]οταμὸν τῆς νυκτὸς καταπλεύσας, ὡς δοκεῖ, 'Ακα[... τὴν πλη- σίον κώμην ἐπόρθη- σε καὶ τῶν ἐνοικούν- των ἀπέσ[φαξέ τι- vas. 'Αναχωρήσας δὲ περιτυγχάνει κατὰ τὸν 'Αληκα πέντε τρι- ήρεσι Λοκρίσι καταγο- μέναις ἐκ Συρακουσῶν τοσαύτ[α]ς γὰρ Λοκροὶ ἐ- πλήρωσα[ν] (?) — διαφυγείν (?) — νησον]. Κατιδόντες δὲ τὰς μετὰ Λάχη- τος οἱ Λοκροὶ φο- βηθέντες ἔ[φευγον ἐς τὴν γῆν, τ[ὰς τε τριή- ρεις Λάχης ἐλάμβαν- ον, ὧν ἐ.] ..ρμεν[ ] — — —
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... bearing ambassadors to Rhegium. The Syracusans took over (or "recovered") the ships and their crews. Chariades, who had been wounded, died from his wounds. During this time one of the triremes with Laches was also captured off Megara. Laches arranged with the forces on the triremes at Camarina to set sail and come to Lipara, while he himself, taking his own ships and ten from the people of Rhegium...

... to Rhegium, he decided (?) to make a raid on Locri with his ships; and sailing along the river Caecinus by night... he sacked the village near by and killed some of its inhabitants.<sup>11</sup> After

brief digest of the Liparaean campaign. For convenience I place the two reconstructions side by side:

Bartoletti	Pearson
παρὰ 'Ρηγίνων] δέ- κα, τὰ τ[ε] πάντα π[ρ]ο- ν[ο]ή[σας ἐς τὴν λοιπὴν [στρατιάν, ἀνήγαγε με- τὰ τῶν νεῶν ἐς] Κατά- [νην. οἱ δ' ἐν Καμαρίνῃ λα- βόντες πάσας τ]ὰς ναῦς	παρὰ 'Ρηγίνων] δέ- κα, ταῦθ' ἱκανὰ π[ρ]ο- ν[ο]ή[θῆναι ἔδοξεν· ἀπὴν- [τα γὰρ οὐδεὶς, ὥστ' ἐ] με- [τὰ λείας πολλῆς] κατα- [πλεῖν καὶ γῇ 'Ρηγίνῃ λα- [χανισμὸν τ]ὰς ναῦς

I fear that they prove only that with sufficient ingenuity one can read whatever one wishes from the scanty traces. Pearson at least proposes his restoration simply *exempli gratia*; Bartoletti too concedes, 'la mia integrazione ἐς] Κατά[νην può apparire audace' – to which my copy of the article, from the library of Sir Eric Turner, has an emphatic 'Yes' pencilled in the margin.

<sup>11</sup> Pearson has a somewhat different reconstruction which gives much the same sense as Bartoletti's. The reading in lines 5–7 is a distinct improvement: *πρὸ νυκτὸς κατασχών, ἣ οὐκ ἐδόκει ἀκαίρον*... ('putting in before night at a spot which appeared salient'). That avoids Bartoletti's grammatically impossible *ὡς δοκεῖ*, but the meaning that emerges is somewhat vacuous. It may still be the case, as Bartoletti assumed, that the defective word *ακα* is the name of the unfortunate village sacked by Laches (see also Bartoletti, 'Rileggendo Filisto', *SIFC* 24 (1950), 159–60).

withdrawing he met five Locrian triremes off the Alex which were homebound from Syracuse. For that number the Locrians had manned... seeing the ships with Laches, the Locrians fled in panic to land, and Laches took their triremes...

The prose is dry and pedestrian, but it is packed with information. The second column clearly deals with the capture of the five triremes, which Diodorus (12.54.4) places immediately before the attack on Mylae, in summer 426. This account gives us much more information, and a locality for the engagement: off the river Alex, the boundary between Rhegium and Locri. The fact that Thucydides mentions the Alex in the context of the winter fighting of 426/5 means nothing.<sup>12</sup> The frontier territory between the contending cities of Rhegium and Locri was a natural cockpit, where any number of minor skirmishes undoubtedly took place. Thucydides mentions three separate incidents in that region over the late summer and winter of 426/5, two of them directed at the Alex and the other at the Caecinus. It was the portion of Locrian territory which was most vulnerable to attack from Rhegium, and it is not surprising that there were repeated raids upon it.<sup>13</sup> The more remarkable thing is that Thucydides should have recorded the inconclusive petty warfare of the late summer and winter while passing over the more impressive capture of the five Locrian triremes in the earlier part of the year.

The first column, however, poses more serious difficulties. It presents a very compressed narrative sequence, only one item of which is attested elsewhere. That is the death of Charoeades, the Athenian general.<sup>14</sup> Thucydides mentions his demise, but he does so in an explanatory note: Laches had the sole command of the Athenian forces because of the death of his colleague.<sup>15</sup> Charoeades' death, then, is not part of the narrative proper: it came at some indeterminate time before the successful attack upon Mylae. The events recorded in the papyrus provide the context. Charoeades was apparently fighting the Syracusans on a different front from Laches, whose contingent is distinctly separated in the narrative. Laches' triremes *too* suffered a loss (lines 9–10), and the comparable losses of Charoeades are the subject of the preceding lines. We only have the finale to that action: a reference to some individual conveying ambassadors to Rhegium,<sup>16</sup> a note that the Syracusans took up the ships and crews,<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Momigliano (above, n. 3) assumed that the operations on the Alex and Caecinus were in fact those recorded by Thucydides in the late summer and winter of 426/5 and that the papyrus account is chronologically distorted. The assumption was rapidly corrected by G. Perrotta, 'Il papiro fiorentino di Filisto', *SIFC* 3 (1930), 311–15, and the correction was accepted by Mazzarino (above, n. 3), pp. 22–30 and by G. De Sanctis, *Ricerche sulla storiografia siceliota* (*ΣΙΚΕΛΙΚΑ* 1: Palermo, 1958), p. 34. Now most accounts have the right interpretation (e.g. Kagan, above n. 4, p. 191; Pearson, p. 157). Gomme (above, n. 4), however, still maintained that 'the skirmishes at the Kaikinos and the Alex rivers... are told in the reverse order'.

<sup>13</sup> Timaeus (*FGH Hist* 566 F 12 = Polyb. 12.6b.3–4) apparently lingered on the Athenian ravaging of Locrian territory and adduced it as evidence against Aristotle's view that the original colonists of Locri were slaves.

<sup>14</sup> The papyrus originally gave his name as *Χειριάδης*. It is corrected to *Χαριάδης*, the form we find in the manuscripts of Diodorus (12.54.4) and Justin (4.3.6). Thucydides' spelling (3.86.1, 90.2) is consistent and epigraphically attested (*IG* i<sup>3</sup>.156, line 11).

<sup>15</sup> Thuc. 3.90.2: *Χαροιάδου γὰρ ἤδη τοῦ Ἀθηναίου στρατηγοῦ τεθνηκότος ὑπὸ Συρακοσίων πολέμῳ Λάχης ἀπασαν ἔχων τῶν νεῶν τὴν ἀρχὴν κτλ.*

<sup>16</sup> There is no way of determining their nationality. Pearson, p. 154 suggests that they came from Camarina, but the arrangement of Laches with the trireme crews at Camarina (see below) suggests that the city was already in the Athenian ambit (as implied by Thuc. 3.86.2). It is possible that the ambassadors were *Syracusan*. The operations of Charoeades may have led to a temporary armistice during which both sides withdrew and the Syracusans sent a negotiating team to Rhegium to secure a more general truce. That would explain the Athenian withdrawal to north Sicily (see below).

<sup>17</sup> Again the circumstances are obscure. Pearson 154 may be right that the ships and crews

and finally the death of Charoeades himself from wounds in action. All this is very obscure. It does not amount to a Syracusan victory.<sup>18</sup> Charoeades suffered losses and was fatally wounded, and the Syracusans were in a position to take over a number of ships and men. Both sides may have been mauled and neither able to prevent the other from withdrawing. Meanwhile Laches was operating in the vicinity of Megara Hyblaea, probably using Leontini as his headquarters, immediately to the north. While he assisted the principal allies of Athens, the cities of the Laestrygonian plain, Charoeades was promoting the cause in another sector.

It is a reasonable enough assumption that this second front was based at Camarina, the main enemy of Syracuse on the south coast of Sicily.<sup>19</sup> At all events we know that Camarina concluded an alliance with Athens 'in the time of Laches' (Thuc. 6.75.3) and that the city was firmly in the Athenian ambit by 425, when it was in danger of betrayal (Thuc. 4.25.7). Charoeades may well have taken a few Athenian triremes to help stiffen its resistance in the early summer of 426. The fighting which ensued is totally obscure. One of the tiny detached fragments of the papyrus reads *ἰυρμινον* (seven letters at the end of a line).<sup>20</sup> This can hardly refer to anything other than the river Hyrminus, which formed the eastern boundary of Camarina's territory and was a natural war zone for hostilities with Syracuse.<sup>21</sup> The fragment may come from the column immediately preceding the principal fragment and relate to the skirmish in which Charoeades lost his life. What might be at issue is a defensive action to counter a Syracusan raid against the extremities of Camarina,<sup>22</sup> not unlike the Athenian/Rhegine forays against Locrian border territory.

This hypothesis gains some substance when we examine the papyrus' report of Laches' next actions. The text is relatively complete, and, as it stands, it can only have one meaning: Laches arranged with the naval forces at Camarina to sail to Lipara (lines 11–16). In other words Laches had some influence with the commanders of the triremes at Camarina and could expect them to transfer their operations from the south to the north of Sicily. This conclusion has been recently challenged by Lionel Pearson, on historical and linguistic grounds.<sup>23</sup> A division of the Athenian squadron between its two commanders, he argues, was dangerous and impractical. What is

had been damaged in battle and were recovered after the Athenian withdrawal. Many other scenarios are possible. A squadron of Syracusan allies might have been trapped by Charoeades and his fleet and freed after a more general Syracusan involvement. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.4: *καθελκύσας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ τριήρεις ἀπέπλει, ὅπως ἀναλάβοι τὰς μετὰ Δωριέως* (cf. Diod. 13.45.6).

<sup>18</sup> As assumed by Pearson (above, n. 3) 155 ("two up" to the Syracusans'). The papyrus gives us the Athenian set-backs (Charoeades' death and the loss of one of Laches' ships). The Syracusan losses were described elsewhere, and we cannot infer that they were insignificant.

<sup>19</sup> So already Momigliano (above, n. 3) and Bartoletti (above, n. 3), p. 3. Gomme (above, n. 4) agrees on the division of command but inexplicably places 'Laches off Kamarina (by arrangement, with a naval command), Charoiades off Megara'. That is sadly garbled, and it has infected Kagan (above, n. 4, 189), who develops the fantasy ('The task of Charoeades was the more dangerous, for he sailed in Syracusan waters').

<sup>20</sup> Bartoletti's Fragment C. There is no doubt about the reading of any of the letters.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Philistus, *FGrHist* 556 F 5, with the remarks of T. J. Dunbabin, *The Western Greeks* (Oxford, 1943), pp. 105–6; A. J. Graham, in *CAH* iii<sup>2</sup>.3 (Cambridge, 1982), p. 177.

<sup>22</sup> One possible reconstruction is that the Syracusans sent a small raiding party to the Hyrminus, which was cut off by a larger Camarinan force with Athenian support (see above, n. 17). The Syracusans sent reinforcements, fought an inconclusive battle in which Charoeades lost his life and made an armistice, recovering their first squadron and sending an embassy to Rhegium. I do not think that this presents any inconsistency with the extant papyrus, but it is only one of many possibilities.

<sup>23</sup> Pearson, pp. 155–7.

more, the language used of Laches (*συνθέμενος* = 'arranging' or 'agreeing')<sup>24</sup> is inappropriate for a commander giving an order; and the verb *συντίθεσθαι* is not used with the accusative and infinitive, implying an agreement that someone else is to do something. These considerations lead him to emend the papyrus, reading *π[λ]έοντας* for *π[λ]έοντας*. Laches therefore agrees with the people on the triremes at Camarina to go himself to Lipara, 'bringing himself his own ships in greater number ...' I find this interpretation singularly awkward. Agreed that the preceding narrative may have shed light on Laches' agreement, we still have 'the people on the triremes in Camarina' hanging in limbo. It is peculiar that Laches would have made an agreement with men serving on triremes if they were not in some sense connected with his command. Secondly the comparative adjective *πλέονας* is very clumsily thrust forward in a position where it has enormous emphasis, whereas the received reading gives us a simple pendant participle.

But is the syntax of the preserved text unorthodox, as Pearson claims? It is surely not. For a parallel we need go no further than Xenophon, where we have the commanders of the Ten Thousand making strategic arrangements with an advance force of volunteers to coordinate their movements the following dawn: *καὶ συντίθενται τὴν μὲν νύκτα, ἣν λάβωσι τὸ ἄκρον, τὸ χωρίον φυλάττειν, ἅμα δὲ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ σάλπιγγι σημαίνειν· καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄνω ὄντας ἰέναι ἐπὶ τοὺς κατέχοντας τὴν φανεράν ἔκβασιν, αὐτοὶ δὲ συμβοηθήσειν ἐκβαίνοντες ὡς ἂν δύνωνται τάχιστα* (Xen. *Anab.* 4.2.1). Here we have an agreement made by generals with their subordinates, and patently the generals arrange that the volunteers signal when they reach the vantage point, after which the volunteers on the heights (explicitly in the accusative) are to attack the pass while the generals down below (*αὐτοὶ δέ*) give assistance. The parallel with the papyrus could not be more exact.<sup>25</sup> There Laches makes arrangements with a squadron some distance away to move on Lipara, while he himself takes his own ships and ten from Rhegium. He seems to be envisaging a combined operation in the style of Xenophon, and the vocabulary used in the papyrus is perfectly appropriate to the context. As for the historical verisimilitude of a division of forces between the two generals, it seems to me more likely than not that Laches and Charoeades did operate in different sectors. Syracuse was at war on two fronts, with the Chalcidian cities (primarily Leontini, Catana and Naxos) and with Camarina, which was allied to the Chalcidians. Both needed assistance, and even a portion of the Athenian squadron might make a very material difference. It was only seven years since the battle of Sybota, where a minute Athenian squadron, ten triremes strong, had virtually saved the huge Corcyrean fleet from destruction, and the arrival of twenty more ships was sufficient to force the withdrawal of the victorious Corinthian alliance.<sup>26</sup> The presence at Camarina of even a handful of Athenian ships might well have made the difference between victory and defeat or between defeat and annihilation.

We may assume, then, that Laches and Charoeades fought on separate fronts to the north and south of Syracuse. The fighting was to some degree chequered, resulting in

<sup>24</sup> Bartoletti (above, n. 3), p. 3 wrongly rendered the passage as 'Lachete dette ordine alle triremi ateniesi che si trovavano a Camarina.'

<sup>25</sup> Note also Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.3 (*συνθέμενος τοίνυν ἀποβιβάσαι ὅποι αὐτὸς κелеύει*); here Lycomedes arranges with his Athenian crew that they put him ashore wherever he indicated. For another example, taken at random see Diod. 4.61.4 (*ὁ Αἰγεὺς συνέθετο ... καταπλεῖν αὐτοὺς λευκοῖς ἰστίοις*).

<sup>26</sup> Thuc. 1.49.7, 50.5–51.2, 54.2. If that were not sufficient demonstration, the effortless superiority of Phormio's squadron in the Corinthian Gulf would have emphasised the fighting potential of even the smallest Athenian contingent.

the death of Charoeades, but it clearly fulfilled its main purpose of strengthening the resistance to Syracuse. Laches could contemplate withdrawing the force at Camarina and cannot have expected a surprise attack by the Syracusans during its absence. Accordingly, he made arrangements that the triremes at Camarina should sail on Lipara. There lies the crux. As far as I can see, all commentators have associated this datum with the attack on Lipara which Thucydides (3.88) places in the winter of 427/6. That presents a number of severe problems. In the first place the papyrus places the action after the death of Charoeades, which Thucydides strongly suggests took place in the summer of 426. One way of avoiding the problem would be to take the report of Charoeades' death as a timeless note by Thucydides:<sup>27</sup> he had in fact died several months before the events of summer 426. But there is still a difficulty. The natural place to record the death was in the immediate prelude to the attack on Lipara: Thucydides' note would still be chronologically misplaced. Pearson has addressed this difficulty by an alternative supplement to the papyrus. Continuing the sentence from ἀποθνήσκει line 7) he reads τοῦ [ἐξάμη]ρον τούτου ('he died from his wounds during this six month period'), assuming that Charoeades lingered on throughout the winter and died in the early summer of 426. Once again I find the supplement clumsy and unnatural,<sup>28</sup> much inferior to the simple temporal connective that is usually assumed. There are other difficulties, notably the lack of space available at the foot of column I, which seems somewhat inadequate to contain the Liparaean expedition and the amount of action that we must assume between the arrival of the Athenian squadron at Rhegium and the winter campaign against Lipara.<sup>29</sup>

It is simpler to question the postulate that Laches' arrangement with the triremes at Camarina marks the first stage of the winter campaign of 427/6. That campaign was certainly not the only allied intervention on Lipara. The island group with its small population and vulnerable subsistence agriculture<sup>30</sup> was an easy target for combined operations from Rhegium. It was also a natural base for a fleet operating between northern Sicily and the toe of Italy. Thucydides himself notes that in 426/5 the Athenians sailed back from a winter raid on Himera via the Liparaean islands (3.115.1). His language strongly implies that it was a renewed attack, not a friendly visit.<sup>31</sup> But that is immaterial. The islands were a convenient stopping point and a

<sup>27</sup> So already Coppola (above, n. 3), p. 456; Bartoletti (above, n. 3), p. 3: 'Tucidide... ha soltanto trascurato di precisare il momento della morte di Charoiades.'

<sup>28</sup> Pearson, p. 155 is correct to insist that ἐξάμηρος can be used as substantive, but he can give no instance of a campaign narrative arranged by semesters, as is required by his supplement. The more natural way of expressing survival would be by some participial phrase such as ἐπιβίων μῆνός τινος (cf. Thuc. 2.65.6).

<sup>29</sup> Bartoletti (above, n. 3), p. 9 came near the truth when he observed that there was no apparent room for an extended account of the Liparaean campaign and suggested, rightly, that the incursion against Locri was an *intermezzo*, an action to kill time until the arrival of the squadron from Camarina. But he abandoned the idea because Diodorus placed the Liparaean adventure *before* the Locrian raid.

<sup>30</sup> Besides the references at n. 5 above, see Strabo 6.2.10–11 (275–7); Diod. 5.10. The water shortage, noted by Thucydides and Pausanias, is caused by the porous nature of the soil and is most evident from June onwards. On the other hand Diodorus, who had local knowledge, stresses the fertility of Lipara (5.10.3: καρποφόρος δὲ ἱκανῶς καὶ τὰ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων τρυφὴν ἔχουσα διαφερόντως).

<sup>31</sup> καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς Αἰόλου νήσους ἐπλευσαν. The prepositional phrase (ἐπὶ + accusative) always seems to denote hostile intention in Thucydides (Thuc. 1.29.1; 3.30.1; 6.47.1; 8.101.1; cf. 1.15.1). When he refers to sailing towards a friendly base he tends to use ἐπὶ with the genitive (e.g. 6.62.1; 8.33.1).

source of revictualling whether or not the inhabitants were friendly. In later days they provided a base for warships from Rhegium when Dionysius I began his campaign in Italy (summer 389), and in the reverse direction a Carthaginian fleet established itself on Lipara and Volcano in preparation for an attack on the coast of Italy (summer 218).<sup>32</sup> That allows us to suggest a hypothetical context for the operations recorded in the papyrus. The main event of the summer campaign of 426 was the successful attack on Mylae which both Thucydides and Diodorus agree was a large-scale enterprise, and Thucydides emphasises that Athens' allies participated in it.<sup>33</sup> Now Mylae lies immediately south-east of Lipara, about forty km as the crow flies. The islands would have been a useful liaison point. Laches accordingly arranged with the commanders of the fleet at Camarina to make their way to Lipara. Presumably they were to sail around the western part of the island, avoiding Syracusan territory, and establish themselves on Lipara to await Laches with the rest of the expedition. They could provision themselves at the islanders' expense, and (if they had not already capitulated) the Liparaeans would have further inducement to join the Athenian fold. When Laches arrived with his allies from Rhegium, the combined fleet would launch an attack directly at Mylae.

If this suggestion is accepted, the narrative of the papyrus fits both Thucydides' and Diodorus' skeletal outline of the military events of summer 426. We must assume that Laches and Charoeades began the season by taking their squadron south from Rhegium. Laches established himself to the north of Syracuse, while Charoeades operated from Camarina. Both were involved in skirmishes. Laches lost at least one trireme (off Megara) and Charoeades his life, but they had enough success to warrant withdrawing from the vicinity of Syracuse. Laches arranged for a squadron to transfer itself from Camarina to Lipara. Meanwhile he took the ships under his command together with ten from Rhegium. What exactly he did immediately is uncertain, thanks to the desperately lacunose state of the papyrus at the foot of Column I, but he ultimately withdrew to Rhegium. While the contingent from Camarina was making its long detour to Lipara, Laches led a foray into the Locrian borderlands, which resulted in the capture of the five Locrian triremes returning from Syracuse (another indication of the reduction of tension in that area). Here the papyrus breaks off, but the next event was clearly the assault on Mylae. Laches led his forces through the straits of Messina and then westwards to Lipara, where he joined the contingent from Camarina. The combined forces now made their successful descent on Mylae.

The events of the papyrus, then, belong to a very short period, the few months of the summer campaign of 426 that preceded the attack upon Mylae. There is no contradiction of Thucydides or, for that matter, Diodorus. What we have is a large, demonstrable gap in Thucydides' narrative. He apparently ignores most of the action that occurred after the abortive winter campaign against Lipara. He mentions the death of Charoeades only to explain Laches' emergence as sole commander and confines his narrative to brief notes about the capture of Mylae and the surrender of Messene. These were memorable events indeed, but they comprised only a small fraction of the season's campaigning. It is not surprising that the Sicilian author of

<sup>32</sup> Diod. 14.103.2–3; Livy 21.49.2. The importance of the island group is well illustrated by the campaigns of 36 B.C. Evacuated by Octavian in 38 (Dio 48.48.6), Lipara was occupied by Sextus Pompeius to preempt its use as a naval base against Sicily (App. BC 5.97.405). Shortly afterwards Octavian captured Strongyle, the northernmost island, and left Agrippa in command. (App. BC 5.105.433; cf. Dio 49.1.6). Agrippa promptly expelled Sextus' garrison from Hieria and was in a position to attack Mylae the following day (App. BC 5.105.435; cf. Dio 49.2.4).

<sup>33</sup> Thuc. 3.90.2 (ἐστράτευσεν μετὰ τῶν ξυμμάχων ἐπὶ Μυλαίς).



our papyrus fragment chose to give a fuller, more detailed record. Why, then, is Thucydides' account so selective? One possible explanation is that the historian was working from an extant source, Antiochus of Syracuse, and chose not to report fully a campaign that was already adequately treated.<sup>34</sup> But that ignores the unique character of the events of summer 426. The incidents of the following winter and summer seem fully reported in Thucydides, with emphasis placed on minor skirmishes which were in no sense memorable. It is far more likely that the information available to him had become more complete. The events of summer 426 had taken place over a number of fronts and involved both Sicilians fighting Sicilians and the Athenian forces. Thucydides may have found the campaign extremely difficult to piece together, given the small number of Athenian participants and the fact that only one of the generals, Laches, survived the fighting. Even Laches may never have met Thucydides after his Sicilian adventure. He was in Athens while the historian served in the north, and he subsequently died at the battle of Mantinea, long before Thucydides returned from exile.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand the increase in narrative detail roughly coincides with the arrival of Pythodorus, who took over Laches' command in winter 426/5 and directed operations for the remainder of the campaign. Like Thucydides he was exiled, and it is more than likely that the pair exchanged experiences and reminiscences when their paths crossed abroad.<sup>36</sup> If Pythodorus was Thucydides' prime informant, then the more detailed report begins immediately before his arrival and deals with the events about which he should have been well briefed, notably the forays to the Alex and Caecinus which preceded and necessitated the first (unsuccessful) action of his command. But the events of the previous summer were more remote and less likely to be accurately remembered (even if Pythodorus was disposed to give credit to the successes of his predecessor), and for once Thucydides renounced a complete coverage. The problems of memory and partiality<sup>37</sup> were too acute, and the events themselves were peripheral.

On the other hand a Sicilian historian had every interest in a full narrative of the summer campaign. Antiochus of Syracuse ended his history of Sicily with the events of 424/3, and it is a traditional and reasonable assumption that his terminus was the great peace congress at Gela.<sup>38</sup> As a contemporary he will have had the history of the

<sup>34</sup> So Dover (above, n. 5), 8–9; Jacoby, *FGrHist* iiiB (Kommentar zu nr. 297–607) Text 609, accepts this as a possible but unlikely explanation. Mazzarino (above, n. 3), 34ff. argues that Thucydides later reworked his narrative in the light of his experience of the great events of 415–413. As regards the general interpretation this may be correct, but it does not explain the patchy reportage, the omission of significant events in 426 and disproportionate emphasis on minor skirmishes later.

<sup>35</sup> Laches may have been under a cloud after his return from Sicily. He served at Delium in a private capacity (Plato, *Laches* 181b), and Aristophanes in the *Wasps* (240–4, 894–902) suggests that he was threatened with prosecution by Cleon (see Jacoby's commentary on Philochorus, *FGrHist* 328 F 127; Westlake, above n. 2, p. 122 n. 67). But he was prominent in the diplomacy that ended the Archidamian War (Thuc. 4.118.11; 5.19.2, 24.1, 43.2) and obviously active in public life. For his death at Mantinea see Thuc. 5.74.3 with 61.1; Androtion, *FGrHist* 324 F 41.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Westlake (above, n. 2), pp. 104–5, who argues that Thucydides' account is largely framed to show that Pythodorus, Sophocles and Eurymedon were unjustly condemned. He suggests (n. 16) that there was no personal bias in favour of the generals. The actions of Eurymedon and Sophocles at Corcyra were certainly viewed unfavourably by Thucydides, but there is no criticism, implicit or explicit, of Pythodorus, who would have been the principal informant for the events of 426/5.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Thuc. 1.22.3: ὡς ἐκατέρων τις εὐνοίας ἢ μνήμης ἔχει.

<sup>38</sup> Diod. 12.71.2 = *FGrHist* 555 T 3. See, most recently, R. van Campennolle, 'Le PSI XII, 1283 (= Pack<sup>2</sup>, 1343): et pourquoi pas Antiochos de Syracuse?', *CE* 60 (1985), 347–57, arguing

Athenian intervention fresh in his mind, at least as it affected Syracuse, and after the truce he was presumably in a position to glean further information from Rhegium, Locri and Messene. His account of the campaigns of 427 and 426 will almost certainly have been more extensive and more informative than Thucydides', and it will have provided a narrative nucleus for Philistus later to build on. The gist of that account has come down to us in Diodorus, and the papyrus belongs to the same tradition. There is no possibility of assigning authorship. Too small a sample survives and it is too fragmentary for reliable analysis. It is certainly not inconsistent with Philistus. The terse factual narrative is Thucydidean in quality,<sup>39</sup> and the style is appropriately flat, with the complete absence of rhetorical figures that so depressed Dionysius of Halicarnassus.<sup>40</sup> But other Sicilian histories may have been similar in quality (Jacoby does not even rule out Timaeus),<sup>41</sup> and it is safer to avoid a firm identification. What matters is that the papyrus represents a full and authoritative local tradition. It supplements Thucydides, fleshing out the campaign details that he is unable or unwilling to give. It also highlights how much the poorer we are, even in the well documented period of the Peloponnesian War, for the loss of the local histories of Sicily.

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that the papyrus could well be a direct transcript of Antiochus. The traditional assumption that Antiochus wrote in Ionic (cf. De Sanctis, above n. 12, 30–1) is shown to be unfounded, but by contrast van Campenolle 352–5 is able to find some Doric forms, not implausible in a Syracusan author. There is no trace of any idiom other than standard Attic in the papyrus fragments. Westlake (above n. 2), p. 118 has also suggested Antiochus as the ultimate source.

<sup>39</sup> For the Thucydidean qualities of Philistus see most fully Dion. Hal. *ad Pomp.* 5.2 (*FGrH* 556 T 16[b]), π.μμ.3.2 (T 16[a]).

<sup>40</sup> *ad Pomp.* 5.4–5. The characteristic piece of Philistus that he quotes (*FGrHist* 556 F 5) with its repetitive participial construction is not unlike the style of the papyrus. Philistus' limited vocabulary was commented upon (not unfavourably) by the author of the *De sublimitate* (40.2).

<sup>41</sup> *FGrHist* iiiB (Kommentar zu nr. 267–607) Text 609, arguing that such a short pragmatic passage gave no scope for the stylistic tricks one would normally expect from Timaeus (cf. De Sanctis, above n. 12, p. 31).