

## EPILYCUS' NEGOTIATIONS WITH PERSIA

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ANDOCIDES 3.29 refers to a treaty and a pact of everlasting friendship negotiated with an unnamed Persian king by an Athenian embassy headed by his uncle, Epilycus, at a date prior to the revolt of Amorges. These negotiations have frequently been discussed,<sup>1</sup> but almost exclusively in the context of the controversy about the Peace of Callias, and with comparatively little regard to the historical situation obtaining in the opening years of the reign of Darius II, the period to which the negotiations almost certainly belong.

It must be admitted that Andocides is never a reliable historical witness,<sup>2</sup> and that the agreements to which he refers made no impact upon the ancient tradition. Thucydides, despite his coverage of negotiations and proposed negotiations with Persia by both protagonists in the Archidamian War, notoriously does not mention any such treaty or pact.<sup>3</sup> Theopompus, as cited by Theon, does refer to an Athenian claim to have negotiated a treaty with Darius, but it remains extremely doubtful whether Theon actually found the proper name "Dareios" in the text of Theopompus,<sup>4</sup> and equally doubtful whether the name can be legitimately treated as an intruding gloss based on historical comment, whether well-informed or ill-informed.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless the fact of a treaty with Persia in the period to which Andocides refers now seems confirmed beyond

<sup>1</sup>The most important recent discussions are: H. T. Wade-Gery, *Essays in Greek History* (Oxford 1958) 201 ff.; R. Sealey, "The Peace of Callias once more," *Historia* 3 (1954-55) 325 ff.; D. Stockton, "The Peace of Callias," *Historia* 8 (1959) 61 ff.; A. Andrewes, "Thucydides and the Persians," *Historia* 10 (1961) 1 ff.; A. E. Raubitschek, "The treaties between Persia and Athens," *GRBS* 5 (1964) 151 ff.; H. Mattingly, "The Peace of Kallias," *Historia* 14 (1965) 273 ff.; W. E. Thompson, "The Athenian treaties with Haliai and Dareios the Bastard," *Klio* 53 (1971) 119 ff.; R. Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford 1972) 134 ff. My stricture does not apply to Andrewes, Raubitschek, or Thompson.

<sup>2</sup>See the indictment drawn up by Stockton (above, n. 1) 72-73.

<sup>3</sup>Thucydides refers, rather incidentally, to such negotiations at 1.82.1, 2.7.1, 2.67, and 4.50. The last is much the most important. Andrewes deals at length with the problem of Thucydides' subsequent silence on Persian affairs down to 412.

<sup>4</sup>Theopompus, *FGrHist* 115 F 153. For full commentary see W. R. Connor, *Theopompus and Fifth-Century Athens* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968) 78-89, who defends the textual authenticity of the proper name "Dareios."

<sup>5</sup>Connor (above, n. 4) 79 makes the important new point that the addition of historical, as opposed to philological, information in a gloss would be unparalleled in the manuscripts of Theon. It thus follows that, if the name is rejected, it is better treated, not as the gloss first assumed by Spengel and widely accepted since, but as a false citation for which Theon himself was responsible.

serious doubt by Wade-Gery's authoritative treatment of the Heraclides decree,<sup>6</sup> albeit this document tells us nothing of the content of the treaty, or of the context in which it was negotiated. Apart from the basic fact about the conclusion of *spondai* with the *Basileus*, the document yields only the incidental information that the embassy involved had recently returned to Athens, and that its mission had been materially assisted by Heraclides. This person's standing at the Persian court and his precise role in the negotiations are unknown, but the high honours now conferred upon him, particularly the personal grant of *enktesis*, of which this is the earliest recorded instance if the document dates to the 420's, testify to the positive importance of the agreements concluded. If these agreements are the same as those attributed by Andocides to his uncle's diplomacy, the orator's family pride would seem fully justified. The identification of the *spondai* of the decree with the *spondai* of Andocides cannot be claimed as a certainty, but Wade-Gery's presentation of the case in its favour seems virtually conclusive.

Epilycus was credited by Andocides with having negotiated *both* a treaty *and* a pact of everlasting friendship,<sup>7</sup> which proved short-lived in the event through the folly of the Athenians themselves. We know from Thucydides 4.50 that the Athenians, at the very end of the reign of Artaxerxes, had intended to send an embassy to Persia, but its members had turned back at Ephesus on hearing of the king's death. We must, if we accept Wade-Gery's view that Epilycus negotiated early in the reign of Darius, assume a close historical connection here: that his embassy had much the same sort of brief as the abortive embassy to Artaxerxes, and that Athens on both occasions was seeking to establish with Persia a treaty-relationship relevant to her military and political situation in the second half of the Archidamian War. We should, if this is so, dismiss from our minds the earlier Peace of Callias,<sup>8</sup> which was a military disengagement negotiated in the specific context of 449, and which is historically relevant to that context only. Its existence had not in the least prevented Sparta from approaching Persia during the Archidamian War, nor Persia from considering these Spartan approaches. Its renewal now would contribute nothing to the solution of Athens' current eastern problems, nor would it rule out the possibility that Persia might

<sup>6</sup>IG 2<sup>2</sup>.8 = Meiggs-Lewis 70, with Wade-Gery (above, n. 1) 208 ff.

<sup>7</sup>If the testimony of Andocides is accepted, as I think it should be, the implications of his language must be faced. The *spondai* and *philia* which he cites should be read, not as a hendiadys, but as two distinct compacts negotiated at the same time, or at least as two quite separate elements within one compact. This *philia*, if historical, would constitute an entirely new dimension in Atheno-Persian relations.

<sup>8</sup>This earlier peace I accept as historical in the limited sense of a mutual non-aggression pact.

yet collaborate with Sparta.<sup>9</sup> This possibility, viewed objectively and in retrospect, may have been remote,<sup>10</sup> but Athens at the time was in no position to take this for granted.

The Athenians had learned from documents captured from the Persian agent, Artaphrenes, in winter 425/4 that Sparta had been in continuous diplomatic contact with Susa, but that nothing concrete had so far emerged. They also learned that Artaxerxes had not proposed to terminate this contact. His complaint that the proposals carried by earlier Spartan ambassadors had been unintelligible was nevertheless accompanied by an invitation to Sparta to send out yet another embassy. The Athenians were sufficiently alarmed by these disclosures to return Artaphrenes to Ephesus accompanied by an embassy of their own, but news of Artaxerxes' death terminated the enterprise.<sup>11</sup> The purpose of this abortive embassy can scarcely have been to remind Artaxerxes of the existence of the Peace of Callias, for its terms, as given by the sources, contained nothing to preclude Persia from negotiating with, or even from subsidizing, Sparta or any other state. The embassy's true object was, I suggest, to supplement, perhaps even to replace, the Peace of Callias with a completely different kind of treaty, one that was specifically designed to exclude the possibility of Persia's entering the war on the Spartan side in any capacity. Such therefore is the object to be attributed to Epilycus' embassy also. The prime concern in Athens, after the return of the abortive embassy, was surely not anxiety as to whether a non-aggression pact negotiated with Artaxerxes many years earlier remained valid in Persian eyes with the change of ruler, but the immediate problem of how best to forestall renewed Spartan approaches to Susa.<sup>12</sup> Epilycus' brief was dictated solely by the needs of the current emergency. There is no means of recovering the detailed provisions of the two compacts now negotiated, but Andocides' language would imply that the *spondai* contained at least a mutual declaration of non-aggression, and the *philia* at least a formal guarantee that neither party would in any way assist the other's enemies. It would cost Darius nothing to assent to such covenants, since no concessions on Persia's part were called for.<sup>13</sup> Indeed the Atheni-

<sup>9</sup>For the theory that the "Peace of Epilycus" renewed the conditions of the Peace of Callias, see Wade-Gery (above, n. 1) 207-211. The only positive evidence in favour of this is the *possible* reference to the continued effectiveness of the Phaselis-line in Thuc. 8.56.4.

<sup>10</sup>See P. A. Brunt, "Spartan strategy in the Archidamian War," *Phoenix* 19 (1965) 262-263.

<sup>11</sup>Thuc. 4.50.

<sup>12</sup>I cannot agree with Raubitschek, (above, n. 1) 157-159, that Athens was seeking Persian subsidy for *herself*.

<sup>13</sup>The question of concessions seems to me fatal to the reconstruction offered by Mattingly, who rejected the Peace of Callias, but went on to transfer all the restrictions

ans themselves might well have offered concessions, perhaps in south-west Asia Minor, in return for Darius' guarantee that he would not entertain the Spartans. This however is a matter of conjecture.

Wade-Gery offered a characteristically brilliant reconstruction of the chronology of the "Peace of Epilycus." He relied in the main on two identifications: (a) that the Epilycus who negotiated with Persia is the Epilycus who was secretary to the first prytany of 424/3;<sup>14</sup> (b) that the [N]eoclides who presided at the Assembly which passed the Heraclides decree is the Neoclides who was secretary to the prytany of Aegeis in a year generally agreed to be 424/3.<sup>15</sup> Wade-Gery's "economical hypothesis" is that Epilycus was appointed as a member of the Council for 424/3 to serve on an embassy to Persia, that he successfully negotiated with Darius, and that he returned in time to report to this same Council of 424/3.

This reconstruction might be feasible in a normal year, but 424/3 is *not* a normal year. It was the first year of Darius II, whose accession had not been a smooth one.<sup>16</sup> His accession-date is uncertain, but unlikely to be earlier than December 424.<sup>17</sup> This means that the first half of the year 424/3 had already elapsed before either party was in a position to negotiate: hence, on Wade-Gery's timetable, the following events must all fall in the second half of the year 424/3:

- 1 Receipt in Athens of the news of Darius' accession.
- 2 Decision to approach Darius, and appointment of Epilycus.

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on Persia traditionally associated with it, including even the Halys line, to the Peace of Epilycus, where they have no obvious historical relevance. Mattingly claimed that the combined effect of the recent Athenian tribute-reassessment and Persia's internal troubles after the death of Artaxerxes enabled Athens to negotiate from a position of strength. But, however weak he may have felt or seemed, Darius cannot possibly have accepted, or have been asked to accept, restrictions on the movement of his forces which, on Mattingly's theory, would be entirely without precedent. The crucial point is that Athens was still committed to a major war in Greece, and Darius' advisers well knew it.

<sup>14</sup>*IG* 1<sup>2</sup>.324 = Meiggs-Lewis 72.

<sup>15</sup>*IG* 1<sup>2</sup>.25 = Meiggs-Lewis 71; *IG* 1<sup>2</sup>.87; *IG* 1<sup>2</sup>.145. The chronology depends on the strong circumstantial case for dating *IG* 1<sup>2</sup>.87 (Athenian treaty with Halieis) to 424/3. Thompson now challenges this case.

<sup>16</sup>Details in Ctes. *Pers.* 44–49. Wade-Gery's reconstruction would be acceptable on the presupposition that the embassy of Epilycus left Athens early in 424/3, *before* the accession of Darius, with instructions to negotiate with Artaxerxes' successor, if it found the situation sufficiently stabilized on arrival in Persia. This possibility cannot be discounted, but it seems to me much more likely that the Athenians would have preferred to wait until they knew for certain at least the identity of the King with whom they were to deal before committing themselves to a formal embassy. Considerations both of protocol and of security of passage were surely relevant here.

<sup>17</sup>Evidence in R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75* (Providence 1956) 18. See also Andrewes (above, n. 1) 1–2.

- 3 Epilycus' journey to Susa, if this is where negotiations were held.
- 4 Negotiations ending in agreed terms.
- 5 Return of Epilycus to Athens.
- 6 His report to Council.
- 7 Meeting of Assembly.
- 8 Ratification of treaty.
- 9 Proposal to honour Heraclides for his assistance to the embassy.

Even if we allow that items 6–9 need have occupied no more than the space of a few days, this timetable is hardly possible.<sup>18</sup> We should assume instead, if we retain the Neoclides identification, that this person was *twice* a member of Council,<sup>19</sup> in 424/3 and in an unknown year, and that it was in this unknown year that the treaty was ratified in Athens. Neoclides could constitutionally have held office again in 422/1,<sup>20</sup> and this date would be perfectly consistent with Wade-Gery's hypothesis that Epilycus was appointed ambassador to Persia during his own term of office in the Council,<sup>21</sup> if we assume that his appointment was made late in the year 424/3. On this assumption Epilycus could have left Athens in summer 423, negotiated in Persia during the winter months of 423/2, and reappeared in Athens in the following summer. By this time the new Council for 422/1, with Neoclides again a member, will have assumed office, or have been about to do so, and it will have been *this* Council which initiated the proceedings leading to the ratification by the Athenian people of the *spondai* negotiated by Epilycus, and to the passage of the Heraclides decree. This chronology thus retains for the treaty a ratification-date relatively early in the reign of Darius,<sup>22</sup> without sacrificing Wade-Gery's major identifications.

<sup>18</sup>It is rightly rejected by Raubitschek (above, n. 1) 156, and Thompson (above, n. 1) 124. Andrewes (above, n. 1) 3–4, thought it possible, given negotiations of exceptional rapidity, but the difficulty is the travelling time of up to six months for the return journey from Ephesus to Susa (*cf.* Hdt. 5.52–54), plus the time required for the return passage from Athens to Ephesus.

<sup>19</sup>All the known instances of second terms of office belong to the fourth century (see P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* [Oxford 1972] 3–4), but the date at which a second term first became permissible is unknown.

<sup>20</sup>Assuming a ban on consecutive years of office: see Busolt-Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde* 2 (Munich 1926) 1022; and C. Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution* (Oxford 1952) 152 and 228.

<sup>21</sup>Provided of course it was constitutionally permissible for a member of the Council currently in office to serve abroad on a diplomatic mission: see on this question Rhodes (above, n. 19) 13.

<sup>22</sup>Raubitschek (above, n. 1) 156–157 dates Epilycus' embassy as late as 415, but this date makes it impossible to reconcile its successful outcome with the Athenian aggression implicit in what would be her virtually immediate decisions to support the revolt of Amorges (Andoc. 3.29) and (on *one* interpretation of Thuc. 8.5.5) to interfere with the

The treaty proved ephemeral. Once the Peace of Nicias had been ratified, the Athenians apparently saw no continuing benefit in a policy which insured principally against Persian collaboration with Sparta, and recklessly scrapped it. This, as Andocides reminded them, was to prove a disastrous miscalculation.

There remains the problem of Thucydides' silence. Had the Peace of Epilycus amounted to no more than a renewal of the conditions of the Peace of Callias, it would have been easy to invoke the theory of Andrewes that Thucydides, from 4.50 to 8.5, deliberately omitted all matters involving Persia,<sup>23</sup> and to equate his omission of the Peace of Epilycus with such other notable omissions as the revolt of Pissuthnes, the arrival of Tissaphernes in the west, and the Athenian decision to support Amorges. But a new and substantive treaty between Athens and Persia, such as this paper postulates, is a very different matter. It was directly relevant to the mainland history of the Peloponnesian War in a way that the other, purely Asiatic, events were not, and Thucydides *ought* to have recorded it. Why did he not do so? I cannot help wondering whether his omission of the Peace of Epilycus may not somehow be linked with his even more notorious omission of the Peace of Callias. Thucydides perhaps recognized, when he reached the year 422/1, that he could not deal satisfactorily with the Peace of Epilycus without having previously dealt with the Peace of Callias, and therefore decided to exclude for the present any reference to treaty-relations between Athens and Persia until he had the opportunity to collate for himself the provisions of the two treaties, collect other relevant data, and revise his narrative accordingly. This he never did.

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collection or payment of Persian taxes in Asia Minor. Thompson (above, n. 1) 124 much more plausibly suggests a date soon after the Peace of Nicias.

<sup>23</sup>On this theory the reference to Pharnaces and the Adramyttium settlement at Thuc. 5.1 will require special explanation.