TISSAPHERNES AND THE PHOENICIAN FLEET (THUCYDIDES 8.87)

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I. VARIANT EXPLANATION IN THUCYDIDES

In the summer of 411 B.C. the Persian satrap Tissaphernes went to Aspendus to bring westwards 147 Phoenician ships, but he never united these ships with the fleet of the anti-Athenian alliance. Thucydides 8.87 offers a narrative and four different explanations of the event. Thucydides rarely betrays doubt when he explains events and he almost never offers alternative accounts. His method consists of dismissing the irrelevant, sifting possibly biased accounts, ascertaining the trustworthy "facts" and offering the reader—most often implicitly—one interpretation of them.[1] I wish to examine why Thucydides here offers variant versions, and I hope to elucidate both the anomaly in the historian's technique and a critical moment in the history of the Ionian war.

Herodotus believed that the historian ought to record variant versions of an event just as he had heard them (7.152.3; 2.123.1). Generally he will choose the most reasonable explanation (3.9; 4.11, 77; 8.94), but more than once he rests his account with a *non liquet* (e.g., 5.44–45 Croton and Sybaris; 6.137 Hecataeus and Attic tradition). Sometimes he criticizes accounts for their patent bias (1.95, the existence of three other unbelievable versions of Cyrus' history; 3.2–3, 16),

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[1] "Thucydides very seldom gives us two different versions of a story, as in ii.5 [.6] . . . , and in viii.87 with unusual diffuseness the various possible motives . . . [The latter] may be one of the passages which would have been cut down on revision; so unlike is it to Thucydides' general way of writing." W. H. Forbes, *Thucydides, Book I* (Oxford 1895) cviii, with note 1. Thucydides was intentionally different from earlier historians; see A. W. Gomme, *HCT* I (Oxford 1956) 25–29. H. D. Westlake, "Irrelevant notes and minor excurses in Thucydides," *Essays in Greek History and the Greek Historians* (Manchester 1969) 1–38, gathers many notable exceptions to the historian's normal methods.

sometimes he produces his own explanation (4.155, 5.57–59).[2] He
is unusually forthcoming about the provenience, and hence the bias of
his sources, and their differences are presented openly to his readers.[3]

Thucydides explicitly eschews incorporation of every available
version of events, and even of his own perceptions, in favor of an
exacting investigation and evaluation of all available information
(1.22.2–3), a process which allows for the ill effects of favor, memory,
and ignorance (ibid.; 5.68.2; 7.87.4). Sometimes he sadly admits that
full confidence in his information is impossible (3.113.6, 5.74.3, 6.60.2,
7.86.5). Aside from the two "prefaces" (1.22; 5.26), Thucydides
seldom enriches his narrative with exposition of controversies or
problems. For example, at 1.23.5–6 he indicates and justifies the
coming account of the causes of the war; at 1.97.2 he does the same for
the account of the growth of Athens' empire; at 2.48.3 his narrative of
the plague is prefaced by a statement concerning what one could know
of it. In the preface to his skeleton account of early conflict in Sicily
(3.90.1), he limits himself to "those actions most worthy of description."

Thucydides thus only lets us into the historian's workshop when
controversy is alive and obvious. His manner is naturally more
emphatic when many Greeks hold views different from his.[4] At 1.1
and 1.23.1–2 and in the "archaeology" in between, Thucydides argues
for the unparalleled magnitude of the Peloponnesian war; at 1.20–21
he opposes common views on the Athenian tyrants (cf. 6.54–55), the
Spartan kings, etc.; at 6.2.1, he argues against any certain knowledge
of the early history of Sicily; at 7.44.1 he denies the possibility of
learning accurate information of night battles. In 5.20.2–3 and 5.26.1–
3 Thucydides defines, contrary to popular opinion, the length of the
war. He claims almost exactly ten years for the war that ended in 421
and asserts that the entire war lasted twenty-seven years. "Let anyone
carefully examine the matter by the seasons . . . and he will find as it has

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[2] F. J. Groten, "Herodotus' use of variant versions," Phoenix 17 (1963) 79–87.
[3] See, e.g., J. L. Myres, OCD (Oxford 1970²) 509; s.v. Herodotus: "Historical
Method;" also W. How and J. Wells, A Commentary on Herodotus I (Oxford 1928²)
33–34.
[4] H. D. Westlake, "The two second prefaces of Thucydides," Phoenix 26 (1972) 12–17.
M. I. Finley, "The Ancestral Constitution," in The Use and Abuse of History (New York
1975) 36: "Thucydides . . . ignored all arguments which, in his judgment, did not
express the 'real' issues."

here been recorded . . . that the first war lasted ten summers and an equal number of winters." The "two wars plus a peace in between" view then draws his scorn. In 5.20 and 26 we see Thucydides engaged in polemical refutation.[5] In 5.26 we read, "If anyone will not count the agreement in the middle as part of the war, he will not judge aright . . . Let anyone consider and he will find that it is not reasonable for that [hiatus] to be deemed a peace . . . and that the war lasted so many years . . . , a few days more or less [than twenty-seven years] . . . I at least remember always hearing [certain] oracles [concerning the war's duration] both from the beginning of the war and until the end . . . I lived through it all, mature enough to understand and giving it full attention so that I could perceive things accurately. For it befell me to go into exile . . . and I was present in both camps . . . so that I was better able to get at the truth." The combative tone reflects the author's self-justification. Thucydides is defending his seasonal reckoning, the unity of the war, and his special advantages as an historian in exile.

Aside from these few issues, however, Thucydides is reluctant to offer different views. One explanation of the variants in 8.87 is the mysterious character of all Tissaphernes' acts. It is never easy for the historian confidently to report men's intentions, but for Tissaphernes alone (8.46.5, cf. 56.3) we find the hesitant phrase, "Tissaphernes was reasoning in this way, for the most part, at least insofar as it was possible to conjecture (εἰκάσαι) from his actions."

Alcibiades in 412 had advised Tissaphernes to slow down his war effort, neither producing the Phoenician ships which he was gathering nor providing pay for the Peloponnesian combatants. By following this advice Tissaphernes would deprive the Peloponnesians of their best opportunities, seriously weaken a fleet in top fighting trim (46.5, 78, 85.2) and reveal most slowly his disinclination to engage at all.[6] With

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[5] Westlake (above, note 4) 16, 12. The substance of the following passage in Thucydides has been much discussed. For a recent judicious survey, see A. Andrewes in Gomme et al., HCT IV (Oxford 1970) 10–21; for a discussion of "The Seasons in Thucydides," see B. Meritt, Historia 11 (1962) 436–46, especially 437 note 3, now agreeing with F. Jacoby F.Gr.Hist. 3b (Suppl.) 1.17–19, and 2.15, note 142 (sic, really note 143).

[6] In 432 the Athenians hoped also to avoid involvement and paralyze two potential enemies, Corcyra and Corinth (1.44.2).

this advice, he could rid himself first of the Athenian, then of the Peloponnesian presence in Ionia (46.1, 4–5).

Tissaphernes some months later prepared to sail from Caunus to Aspendus for the fleet, and he bade the Spartan Lichas join him. This is fact, as is the anger which the Peloponnesians now felt towards the satrap for his "atticism" in favoring Alcibiades, and for his dilatory attitude towards prosecuting the war and providing pay. The Phoenician fleet's very existence was in doubt (78, ἄλλως ὄνομα καὶ οὐκ ἔργον), Alcibiades had returned to the Athenians in Samos (83.1), and the inactivity of the Peloponnesians was crippling their effectiveness (83.2). Hostility reached the point of Tissaphernes' needing to send an emissary to Sparta to defend his actions against the accusations of a Milesian embassy accompanied by Hermocrates the Syracusan. They planned to describe his harm to the Peloponnesian cause as well as his overall policy of double-dealing (85.1–2, ἐπαμφοτερίζοντα).

Here fact ends and supposition begins. Tissaphernes wished to put a stop to the Peloponnesian fleet's hostility, but Thucydides hedges this assertion of motive with an ironic—or desperate—"so, at least, it seemed" (87.1). The irony perhaps foreshadows the negative result for the satrap's intention rather than qualifies Thucydides' confidence in the assertion. Before leaving for Aspendus, Tissaphernes appointed his lieutenant Tamos to pay the Peloponnesians.

Tissaphernes went to Aspendus but did not lead back the ships. "Why" is variously reported and not easy to know (87.2): λέγεται δὲ οὐ κατὰ ταὐτό, οὐδὲ ῥᾴδιον εἰδέναι. Thucydides tries to stick to the known; note, e.g., the obsessive παρῆλθεν . . . παρελθών and how 87.6 reaffirms 87.2: the ships never came into the Aegean. One thing is clear (σαφές): 147 ships did come to Aspendus. Thucydides clings to the arrival of the fleet and Tissaphernes, first because some men in 411 at least denied that a fleet existed (78), and also because this marks the end of certainty. The ships' known if limited activity is contrasted (by μέν . . . δέ, 87.3) with universal ignorance concerning Tissaphernes' failure to return west with them. Men were reduced to conjecture (πολλαχῇ εἰκάζεται) about his motives, particularly because all agreed that his explanations were disingenuous, false in fact.

Thucydides reports three current explanations (87.3, οἱ μέν . . . οἱ δέ . . . ἄλλοι δέ). (1) Tissaphernes went away so that the Peloponnesian

fleet would deteriorate further (διατριβῆναι in 78, 87.3); basis: Tamos in fact proved to be an even worse paymaster, so that the fleet was demoralized (78; cf. 99) as planned (46.5). (2) He left in order to sell releases to the Phoenician sailors at Aspendus to make money; basis: the hypothesis that he never in any case planned to use them is grounded in the fact that he did not use them. (3) He left for Aspendus to counteract the hostile reports about to reach Sparta. Thus he gained more time by clearly going to the ships which were in fact manned (σαφῶς, ἀληθῶς); the basis for this view is the seriousness of the Peloponnesians' complaints, emphasized by the repetition at 87.3 of καταβοή (cf. 85.2, and 87.1, διαβολαί) and by Tissaphernes' actions: he did go and the ships were manned. This last explanation would be quickly demolished in Ionia, but would have a longer life back in the Peloponnese. None of these reasons is patently worthless (see below, p. 288) and therefore all deserve inclusion.

Thucydides prefers a fourth explanation: "To me however it seems most undeniable that he did not bring up the fleet for the sake of wearing down and paralyzing [all] the Greeks ..." (87.4, ἐμοὶ μέντοι δοκεῖ σαφέστατον εἶναι διατριβῆς ἕνεκα καὶ ἀνοκωχῆς τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν...). Thucydides' analysis repeats διατρίβη from the first explanation but extends the wasteful delay to the harm of both sides, not just the Peloponnesians'. We have been prepared for this analysis by Alcibiades' advice in 8.46 which also foreshadows this passage in its emphasis of the policy's economy.[7] At least the last explanation is indebted to Alcibiades' acquaintance with Tissaphernes.

"Wearing down and paralysis" are explained. The first furthered the debilitation (φθορά) of the Peloponnesians as long as Tissaphernes tarried; the second furthered the equalization (ἀνίσωσις, only here in Thucydides) of Athenians and Peloponnesians,[8] Tissaphernes' constant purpose (57.2): ἐβούλετο ἐπανισοῦν τοὺς Ἕλληνας πρὸς ἀλλήλους.

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[7] 46.2, μὴ ... μεγάλῃ δαπάνῃ ... εὐτελέστερα ... βραχεῖ μορίῳ τῆς δαπάνης ..., and 87.4, οὔτ' ἀναλώσας πολλὰ τῶν βασιλέως τά τε αὐτὰ ἀπ' ἐλασσόνων πράξας.

[8] Ed. Schwartz, Das Geschichtswerk des Thukydides (Bonn 1919, repr. 1960) 363–64, wished to alter this sentence radically, but as Steup notes (ad loc. in Classen-Steup's commentary), his change brings no improvement to what is admittedly a difficult sentence.

Thucydides implies that Alcibiades originated or shared this interpretation of Tissaphernes' actions, for it is soon reported that Alcibiades knew that Tissaphernes' intent was never to bring forward the Phoenician ships (88). Thucydides affords additional argument for his theory by three contrary-to-fact conditions (87.4–5). (1) If Tissaphernes had wished, he could have ended the war forthwith.[9] (2) If he had brought the Phoenicians, he would have in all probability (κατὰ τὸ εἰκός) given victory to the Spartans who already were rather equal than inferior. (3) It is, however, his pretext which most clearly reveals the satrap's motive for delay, "catches him in his crime" (καταφωρᾷ). The Persian said there were not so many ships as the King had commanded to be gathered together. But, Thucydides asserts, he would have certainly (δήπου) found yet greater favor from the King, if he had spent but little and succeeded with more limited resources. Thucydides' polemical refutation of Tissaphernes' excuse has not convinced all readers.[10] Tissaphernes may have carefully calculated Athenian strength, or he may have had explicit orders not to engage before all his ships were assembled (cf. Cyrus and Lysander, Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.14). We shall return to this point (below, p. 278). Thucydides ends the paragraph by telling us that "at any rate"[11] Tissaphernes came to Aspendus whatever his motive[12] and associated with the Phoenicians. Whether or not Alcibiades knew that Tissaphernes would not lead forward his 147

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[9] ⟨ἄν⟩ is Dobree's necessary correction. δήπου occurs twice in this paragraph, rarely elsewhere in Thucydides (e.g., 4.92.1, 1.121.4). J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford 1966²) 267, describes its force as one of certainty precluding doubt.

[10] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Thukydides VIII," *Hermes* 43 (1908) 606, agrees that Tissaphernes' excuse was "eine leere Ausrede" but considers Thucydides' explanation "ebensowenig wahrscheinlich," because if the fleet had come, Tissaphernes could have finished the war forthwith. Since his goal was to recover the entire mainland howsoever, his failure to bring up the one requisite weapon demands an explanation of outside interference.

[11] Resumptive οὖν brings back certainty after a digression on a debatable detail, according to Denniston (above, note 9) 464.

[12] ἥτινιδὴ γνώμῃ, a frustrated admission of uncertainty—the modifier appearing here only in Thucydides—also returns us to the beginning of the digression on intention (87.2, τίνι γνώμῃ). Such ring composition is found frequently in Thucydides. Cf. 1.1.3 and 1.23.1; 1.23.6 and 1.146; 1.89.1 and 1.118.2; in general, N. G. L. Hammond, "The arrangement of thought in the proem and other parts of Thucydides I," *CQ* n.s. 2 (1952) 127 ff.

ships, he claimed and received credit for the result (108.1, Plut. *Alc.*
26.7–8), and in late summer 411 the Peloponnesian fleet remained
without necessary supplies (99). Thucydides wishes to understand
machinations, group morale, and individual motives, but his desire to
penetrate the causes of events and portray peculiar atmospheres here
falls short of entirely confident analysis.[13]

Why does Thucydides not come to a decision between the alterna-
tives when speaking of the Phoenician ships' non-appearance in ch.
87?[14] I do not believe that this paragraph is unfinished. Although
examples of the Thucydidean *non liquet* and "rational construction[s] of
what would have happened if" are rare, in that respect the present case
is not unparalleled.[15] Furthermore, in terms of composition, not only
does 87.1 return us to the Ionian war-front exactly where 83.1 left us,
but the two reports are parallel and complementary: they offer views
from two camps of Tissaphernes' behavior. The paragraph's events
are integral to the larger narrative of the war, and one needs some
explanation to comprehend the Peloponnesian navy's switching its
efforts to Pharnabazus' satrapy in the Hellespont (99). The answer to
the historiographical question can be found in the solution of the
historical problem, which involves a consideration of personal motives,
diplomatic maneuvers, and demonstrations of force.

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[13] It is *not* true, as J. Hatzfeld, *Alcibiade* (Paris 1951²) 251, asserts, that Thucydides
avows ignorance, only uncertainty. Cf. E. Delebecque, "Une fable d'Alcibiade sur le
mythe d'une flotte (Thucydide 8.108)," *Annales de la faculté des lettres d'Aix-Marseille* 43
(1967) 25. Although this article contains a number of acute observations, I reject the
author's suggestion that this was "une flotte fantome" (39; repeated from *id.*, *Thucydide
et Alcibiade* [Gap 1965] 177). Delebecque argues that Alcibiades knew that Tissaphernes
would never bring the fleet, and that his claim for the credit for this policy before (8.88)
and after (108.1) was pure self-serving fabrication. This lie became a serviceable legend
for contemporaries and posterity (Isocrates, Ephorus-Diodorus, Plutarch), although
Thucydides understood the chain of events perfectly (see *art. cit.*, p. 40, for conclusions).

[14] Classen-Steup *ad* 87.3 assert that we have "aus verschiedenen Zeiten stammende
Erörterungen" but offer no sufficient reason to justify this desperate expedient. See 57.1
(below, note 17) for another example of alternative explanation.

[15] The narration of Nicias' death (7.86.4–5) "claims no more than approximate
correctness;" Fr. Solmsen, *Intellectual Experiments of the Greek Enlightenment* (Princeton
1975) 225. 7.44.1 denies the possibility of satisfactory knowledge of a night battle; cf.
1.21.1 on the difficulty of knowledge about the ancient past. 2.94.2 and 8.96.2–5
report "might have been's" comparable to Thucydides' judgment that Tissaphernes
could have put a full stop to the war *if*. . . (87.4).

II. WAITING FOR THE PHOENICIANS

One wants to know why the Phoenician fleet never entered the war. This much announced and eagerly anticipated force is first mentioned rather casually when Alcibiades was planning policy for Tissaphernes.[16] The satrap was stalling for time, in Thucydides' opinion, to forestall a victory of either Greek side (46.4–5, 57.2, 87.4). After he concluded the third version of the Persian-Peloponnesian treaty (Febr. ? 411), four of whose eight clauses concerned the Phoenicians, he was preparing to bring them on—or so at least he wished it to appear.[17] He feared that the Peloponnesians might be forced by lack of funds to fight and lose, *or* that the fleet might become quite useless because of desertions leaving the Athenians supreme, *or*—worst of all—that the Peloponnesians might plunder his satrapy to obtain the money which he owed them (57.1, cf. 48.4, 109.1). So the appearance of activity was necessary. The Peloponnesian navy continued to wait for the Phoenician ships (78). In 412/11, delay had in fact aided the crippled Athenians because it gave them time to regain naval numerical parity.

Alcibiades exploited among the men of Athens the spectre of the Phoenician fleet. He promised to bring the ships over to the Athenian side or at least to deny them to the Peloponnesians (81.3, 88 *init.*). While the never seen ships eventually prompted Mindarus to write off Tissaphernes as an ally (109.1) and to seek help from Pharnabazus (99), Alcibiades boasted at Samos that only his friendship with Tissaphernes kept the Phoenician ships from the Peloponnesians (108.1). As Thucydides' narrative ends, Tissaphernes is considering how most convincingly to mollify and mislead yet longer his Peloponnesian "allies."[18]

The nineteen references to a military threat which never materialized

[16] At 46.1 the imperfect of duration παρεσκευάζετο, at 46.5 the implication of pretence in φάσκων and the imperfect ἔφθειρε, all relevant to the fleet, indicate a long, delaying process, a lack of sincerity on the satrap's part.

[17] ἐβούλετο παρασκευαζόμενος γοῦν δῆλος εἶναι (59). The particle emphasizes the limits of Tissaphernes' actions (contrasted to his pretensions). It is uncertain whether the King himself approved the earlier, or even this version of the Persian-Peloponnesian alliance. On Tissaphernes' various fears (57.1) reported below in the text, cf. G. Busolt, *Gr. G.* III, 2 (1904) 1451. This example of alternative explanations reveals Thucydides' trying once more to read Tissaphernes' mind.

[18] 8.109.1: καὶ τὰς διαβολὰς καὶ περὶ τῶν Φοινισσῶν νεῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὡς εὐπρεπέστατα ἀπολογήσηται.

indicate the importance which Thucydides at least attached to the Phoenician fleet.[19]   Before explaining Tissaphernes' policy, we must analyze his relationship to Alcibiades, a principal in the events of 412/11 and probably Thucydides' chief informant.[20]   Alcibiades advised Tissaphernes as he did, both for the good of his benefactor and, more to the point, for his own recall to Athens (47.1).   His hope was to be welcomed back on the strength of his friendship with Tissaphernes (*ibid.*).   Phrynichus the Athenian realized and told others two unpalatable truths.[21]   Alcibiades cared nothing for oligarchy or democracy but only for his safe return; in addition, the Persians would not seek an Athenian alliance, for Athens had a continuing as well as historical conflict with the King's financial interests.   Tissaphernes had been in direct conflict with the Athenians at least from the moment when Amorges revolted with Athenian support (8.5.5, 28.3–4, 54.3), and the Athenians kept him from producing the rest of the tribute which he owed to the King.

In the fall of 412 Alcibiades appears to have been Tissaphernes' trusted advisor.[22]   The intelligent Persian, however, had little need of advice, and a rift developed, probably when Alcibiades changed his advice (52 *init.*, ἀνέπειθεν) from "aid neither side" to "aid the Athenians."   Alcibiades' immense zeal and energy (52) were not effective against his earlier decisive (47.1, ἄριστα) arguments, and by the time Peisander and his fellow Athenian conspirators reached the satrap, Alcibiades was in a very precarious position (56.2).[23]   Tissaphernes

[19] Solmsen (above, note 15) 206–07, 221, notes the connection between length of treatment and Thucydidean emphasis, whether political importance or human and emotional significance is in question.   Delebecque, *Annales* (above, note 13) 37–39, counts 19 reff. to the Phoenicians in the mouths of Tissaphernes, Pharnabazus, Alcibiades, the Athenians, the Peloponnesians, the latter's commanders, and Thucydides himself.   I argue below that not all observers thought the fleet equally dangerous.

[20] P. Brunt, "Thucydides and Alcibiades," *REG* 65 (1952) 59 ff.; Delebecque, *Thucydide et Alcibiade* (above, note 13) *passim*; H. D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge 1968) 231 ff.   Brunt notes (78, 80) that when Alcibiades had to guess, Thucydides guesses, and when the former knows something with certainty, so does the latter.

[21] At 48.4 as in 47.1, Thucydides validates his subject's thought: ὅπερ καὶ ἦν.

[22] 45.2, Alcibiades became Tissaphernes' preceptor in all matters; 46.5, Tissaphernes attached himself to Alcibiades and gave him his confidence.   But Tissaphernes ignored Alcibiades' suggestions when it suited him, as S. van der Maele realizes, "Le livre viii de Thucydide et la politique de Sparte en Asie Mineure," *Phoenix* 25 (1971) 46 note 39.

[23] The Phrynichus correspondence (49–51) increased no one's confidence in Alcibiades. See H. D. Westlake, "Phrynichus and Astyochus," *JHS* 76 (1956) 99–104.

most feared the Peloponnesians and their needy troops (56.2, 57.1) because the Athenians were presently divided amongst themselves. Tissaphernes, moreover, did not want to ally himself to the Athenians, because he feared immediate Peloponnesian reprisals. Alcibiades' escalation of Tissaphernes' demands enraged the Athenian oligarchs, but they do not seem to have discovered Alcibiades' weakness.[24]   A Persian fleet in the Aegean, however, would have damaged Athens' vital interests more than a revolution in the home government.

Tissaphernes therefore produced a treaty for the Peloponnesians during winter, 412/11, hoping to prevent their ravaging his satrapy or attacking the Athenians in desperation—part of his plan of rendering the sides equal. Their numerical balance is indicated in spring 411 by a near battle: 112 Peloponnesian vs. 108 Athenian vessels (79.1, 6).

The Athenian fleet believed that Tissaphernes' joining their cause was their only salvation (65.2, 81.1), and Alcibiades played on the vain hope. He extravagantly magnified to the men at Samos his power with Tissaphernes and promised them endless supplies and the Phoenician fleet (81.3). He then visited the satrap, we are told neither where nor what happened, and returned to Samos (82.2, 85.4).

In summer 411 power was distributed among three factions. The Peloponnesians were disgusted with the satrap's refusal to perform as stipulated, and the satrap had no intention of altering his "balance of power" policy for the benefit of Alcibiades and Athens.[25]   The Phoenician fleet had arrived at Aspendus on the Eurymedon (summer 411, 81.3), and its novel proximity renewed its potency as a strategic threat; all parties looked in that direction.[26]   Alcibiades was now both

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[24] Alcibiades feared μὴ πάνυ φωραθῇ ἀδύνατος ὤν [πεῖσαι]. The " caught in the act " word appears only here in Thucydides; the compounded form used of Tissaphernes in 8.87.5 appears but once elsewhere (1.82.1). Wilamowitz (above, note 10) 604 rightly believed that Alcibiades was not misrepresenting the satrap's wishes. The decisive request, to let the King build ships and sail his navy anywhere along the Persian Empire's coast (56.4), would have diplomatically nullified the Athenian's decisive military superiority. This demand is implied in the final treaty with the Peloponnesians (58). Tissaphernes was present and Thucydides says that his wishes were identical (56.3). Perhaps Tissaphernes wished to discredit Alcibiades in the eyes of the Athenians.

[25] This point is forcefully expressed by E. F. Bloedow, *Alcibiades Reexamined*, Historia Einzelschriften 21 (1973) 39.

[26] See R. Weil, *Thucydide viii* (ed. Budé, Paris 1972) 81.3n.; W. S. Ferguson, *CAH* V (Cambridge 1927) 334. The fleet's certain arrival in Tissaphernes' satrapy assures the King's approval of their departure from Phoenicia and of their proximity to the war theater.

general of the Athenians and, most supposed, the friend of Tissaphernes (86).   Circumstances, however, suggest that, although he sailed after Tissaphernes who was visiting Aspendus, he never did reach, or never dared approach, the satrap.[27]   In fact the satrap now was hiding from Alcibiades his intention once more to favor, at least in appearance, the Peloponnesians.   The Spartans Lichas, Philip, and Hippocrates better understood his plans.[28]

Tissaphernes joined the fleet in Aspendus but did nothing.   His departure with Lichas and Philip (87.1, 6) was an empty gesture to new commanders whom he hoped to bribe or deceive.   Alcibiades knew that Athenian cooperation with Tissaphernes' fleet could lead to Athenian victory, and an Athenian decree honoring Evagoras of Cyprus indicates that some Athenian agreement with the King and the satrap was reached about this time.[29]   Tissaphernes' policy remained, however, τρίβειν ἀμφοτέρους, and the penultimate words of Thucydides' text promise not an explanation of his behavior,[30] but new, plausible excuses for the anti-Athenian alliance concerning the Phoenicians' absence.

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[27] See E. Delebecque, *Thucydide Livre viii* (Gap 1967) 106–07, 125; *id., Thucydide et Alcibiade* (above, note 13) 177–78; Hatzfeld (above, note 13) 251.   Thucydides does not state (88 *init.*, 108.1; cf. Wilamowitz [above, note 10] 605) that Alcibiades actually met with Tissaphernes.   Alcibiades' fear led him to seek out the satrap, and his need for some solid accomplishment induced him falsely to claim credit for the fact that the Phoenicians never did join the Peloponnesians (Hatzfeld 254–55), but no confidence remained between the two men (Delebecque, *Annales* [above, note 13] *passim*).   In fact, it is likely that Tissaphernes purposely misled Alcibiades on the subject of his intentions and destination (Delebecque, *Livre viii*, 106).   The later relations between the two men are established by the crisis of Tissaphernes' trip to Aspendus.   Tissaphernes persisted in his "balance of power" policy, undersupplying the Peloponnesians while trying to placate them.   Alcibiades attempted to portray this "neutrality" as a pro-Athenian policy (*philia*) resulting from his efforts (108.1).   Both sides believed that Alcibiades was responsible for the satrap's strategy (Plut. *Alc.* 26.8).   Alcibiades brought gifts to their next meeting in 410, but Tissaphernes imprisoned him in order to curry favor with the Peloponnesians (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.9)   Thus ended the intimacy between "un Perse qui ment et un Athenien qui invente" (Delebecque, *Annales* [above, note 13] 41).

[28] See Delebecque, *ibid.* 27.

[29] *IG* I² 113 (411?) mentions Tis]saphernes, the King, and other *allies* (?) in a rider of Cleophon's (vv. 35–39).   The crucial lines are fragmentary.   Might there be a connection between this decree and the unique tetradrachm picturing Tissaphernes and the Athenian owl dated "not later than 410" by E. S. Robinson, "Greek Coins Acquired by the British Museum, 1938–1948," *NC* 8 (1948) 48–55?

[30] Hatzfeld (above, note 13) 252 note 4, expresses this false expectation.   Tissaphernes' policy remained the same at least until 407; cf. Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.9; also 4.1.32.

III. THE PHOENICIAN FLEET

We now return to the principal historical issue: why did Tissaphernes never use the Phoenician fleet, one larger than any other on the seas in 412/11? Either he could not or would not.

Wilamowitz argued that Tissaphernes wanted to bring the Phoenicians westwards but was forbidden for unspecified reasons by the Persian High Command.[31] He has failed, however, to provide evidence that Tissaphernes ever planned to act differently from the way he did. Thucydides suggests no conflict, and the Oxyrhynchus *Hellenica*, we shall see, suggests that the King was not eager to engage the Athenians by sea. Pharnabazus may have had other plans, but at this time the fleet was not entrusted to him. The policies of Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus were often contradictory or in direct competition.[32] This conflict extended to the principal strategic question of how to win the war, and the Phoenician navy was critical for this problem. There is no reason to believe that the King was dissatisfied with Tissaphernes' policy at this time, and some evidence

[31] Wilamowitz (above, note 10) 606. It is surprising that Wilamowitz did not discuss the relevant passage in the Oxyrhynchus *Hellenica* which I quote below. He had seen it in the winter of 1906/07 (E. Meyer, *Theopomps Hellenika* [Halle 1909] v). Weil suggests (*ad loc.* 87.5) that Thucydides' rejection of Tissaphernes' excuse suits Greek rationalism better than the fear of the King's subjects who understood well the importance of guarding their master's dignity and obeying orders exactly ("get every last ship he ordered"). Since Tissaphernes, according to the following argument, did only what he had intended to do, his excuse will appear only cynically disingenuous, not fearful. Thucydides well understood this amidst his puzzlement over the real motive. Satraps, to be sure, did follow orders from above (Diod. 15.41.5).

[32] For control of the fleet, see 8.99 *med.* where *the* ships in the third line of the OCT page could be the same (Phoenician) ships as in the first line, but probably are not (Krüger, Poppo-Stahl, Classen-Steup). For the heterodox view that they are, see Delebecque (*Annales,* above, note 13) 33 note 33. The Peloponnesian fleet was able to penetrate the Athenian (as they do, 99, 101); perhaps the Phoenicians could also. Pharnabazus had need of more ships to blockade the Hellespont; see van der Maele (above, note 22) 32–36. For other conflicts between the satraps, see, e.g., 8.6, 80.1; Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.9, 4.1.32 (speech of Pharnabazus). Consider also Tissaphernes' fear of, and hostility to, Pharnabazus' potential, cheaply won success (Thuc. 8.109.1); cf. Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford 1972) 353. Tissaphernes, furthermore, had no reason to trust the Peloponnesians with his fleet, especially after the blunt Lichas had infuriated him (8.43.4, 52, 84.5). War against the King was offered by Lichas, once the Athenians were defeated. Cyrus' policy brought to pass this Peloponnesian attack on Persian interests in Asia Minor. It is already present in 411 (109.1 and often hinted at): Tissaphernes fears the Spartans, lest they "do him yet further harm."

that Tissaphernes' plan was that of the Persian High Command (see
below, p. 285), aside from the fact that the satrap was continued in
office. Here is an argument for believing that everything went
according to Tissaphernes' plan. Thucydides, we will argue, under-
stood the long-term strategy but not the immediate reasons for not
fighting a sea-battle.

Strategic considerations beyond the Aegean may have interfered
with the fleet's westward course. Diodorus claims (13.46.6) that
Tissaphernes later excused himself to the Peloponnesians by saying that
rebels in Egypt and Arabia were threatening attack against Phoenicia.[33]
A rebellion in Egypt at this time is substantiated by the considerable
supplies which the Athenians received from there (Thuc. 8.35.2) and by
three Aramaic papyri which refer to the disloyalty of certain troops.[34]
Grote both noticed the passage in Diodorus and was suspicious of the
reason Thucydides prefers, arguing that 147 ships were rather too
expensive as "a fraudulent pretence" for not yet fighting.[35] Grote,
writing to be sure before the papyri and the *Hell. Oxy.* were found,
nevertheless accepted Thucydides' version, but Mallet, Hatzfeld, and
recently Lewis with argument dismissed all four of Thucydides'
explanations to replace them with an extraneous one which rests
entirely on combination and hypothesis. Lewis argues that the revolt
of Egypt better explains the removal of the Phoenicians.[36] The King

[33] Diodorus confuses Tissaphernes with Pharnabazus as well as the date, but he may
offer us here Tissaphernes' fair-seeming explanation mentioned at the end of Thucydides
(109.1), but not given by him or by Xenophon; cf. Hatzfeld (above, note 13) 252 note 4.
The gap of a few weeks between the two historians' narratives was the place for the
meeting between the Peloponnesians and Tissaphernes.

[34] D. M. Lewis, " The Phoenician Fleet in 411," *Historia* 7 (1958) 392–97, ingeniously
interprets the papyri of G. R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C.*
(Oxford 1957), nos. 5, 7, 8.

[35] George Grote, *A History of Greece* (New York 1872) viii.100. Grote (99 note 3)
notes that Thucydides never gives the total of ships that Tissaphernes pretended to need
before he would give battle, and suggests that Diodorus' 300 ships (13.38.4, 42.4, 46.6)
may preserve that number, or be the proper complement for the Great King's fleet, as in
Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.1, where Tissaphernes is again gathering that number: a Greek heard that
τριακοσίας αὐτὰς δέοι γενέσθαι. Ed. Meyer, *G. d. Alt.* IV, 2 (Stuttgart 1956⁴) 306
note 1, rejects the Ephorus(?)-Diodorus story of Near Eastern threats without expla-
nation.

[36] D. Mallet, " Rapports des Grecs avec l'Egypte . . . ," *Mem. de l'inst. français d'arch.
orient.* 48 (1922) 82; Hatzfeld (above, note 13) 253; Lewis (above, note 34) 396–97. None
of them mentions Grote's anticipation of this hypothesis. Meiggs (above, note 32) 355,

of Persia certainly had problems beyond the Aegean; his indecisive intervention in Greek affairs from 412 to 407 may reflect these concerns.[37] The magnitude, however, of the Egyptian revolt is still unclear. Furthermore, the fleet returns to Phoenicia, not to Egypt, and no further movement is heard of. More important yet in refutation, Diodorus, even if he is referring to the same rebellion at the same time (both controversial deductions), presents the explanation only as Tissaphernes' *excuse* devised to win back good-will, not as necessarily true or compelling. It is part of his *apologia* in the face of serious and damning Peloponnesian allegations. The weightiest argument against the rejection of Thucydides' testimony and against the hypothesis of Near Eastern considerations was made by Brunt: it is most improbable that Thucydides for at least the remaining decade of his life remained totally ignorant of the need for a major military force used against Egyptian rebels.[38] A serious revolt would have been common knowledge in the Hellenic world, and Thucydides would have thought it important, if its containment had led to Athens' extended survival. In a passage which strains to explain causes, would he not have seized upon such a convincing and reasonable explanation?

Tissaphernes, then, kept his ships idle for some other reason. A shortage of money is a possible motive and gains support from one of Tissaphernes' reported utterances, from his suggested motive of squeezing money out of the sailors (87.3), and from his general financial

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cautiously accepts Lewis' argument. It is curious, although not significant, that Diodorus (1.37.4) criticizes Thucydides for his lack of information on Egypt.

[37] See Lewis (above, note 34) 393. It is unclear how long the Phoenicians remained in Greek waters. Thucydides never reports their departure (cf. 99, 108.1), although Alcibiades' claim of turning them back, ἀποστρέψειε (the same word for the action in Isocr. 16.20, Plut. *Alc.* 26.8), may be thought to imply such. Diodorus reports the fleet's return to Phoenicia, not Egypt (13.37.5, 38.5, 42.4), oddly before Thucydides' narrative ends (a literary event noted by Diod. 13.42.5). This fleet's maneuvers were sometimes a well kept secret; cf. Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.1.

[38] Brunt (above note 20) 81. The argument, although from silence, seems decisive. Furthermore, if Diodorus is here correct in his chronology, in having the fleet return before Thucydides' narrative ends, it is all the more curious that Thucydides does not offer this explanation in his extant work. Alcibiades oddly receives credit for the fleet's retreat in Diodorus and Plutarch, who both depend on Thucydides who was however of a different view. Perhaps Delebecque, *Annales* (above, note 13) 16–19, argues correctly that the later writers' view stems from too hasty a reading of Thucydides.

difficulties (8.5.5).[39]   This argument, however, would lead one to expect him to bring his ships to battle as soon as possible.   In any case, it is more likely that he was paying the Phoenicians from the King's funds than from his own.

Tissaphernes said that he had assembled fewer ships than the King had commanded.   Thucydides scouts this excuse because he believed that the 147 already present would have been sufficient for victory and also would have saved the King's purse considerable expense (87.4–5). I suggest that Tissaphernes was sticking to orders because he reasonably feared defeat or serious military loss with a consequent reduction of satrapal territory and revenue.

IV.   THE RECORD OF THE PHOENICIAN FLEET

The power of the Phoenician navy at this moment is unclear, but for a moment consider its record.   One must distinguish the record of the Phoenician navy from that of the merchant fleet; good sailors are not *ipso facto* effective fighters.   The design of fighting ships from the Bronze Age on passed from Greek lands to Phoenicia.   Lloyd has recently stated, there is "virtually no literary evidence of any substantial Phoenician navel invention," and "solely in the design of merchant shipping, as we should expect, ... [do] we hear of Phoenician pre-eminence."[40]   The Greeks probably invented the trireme and trained the trireme crews of Pharaoh Necho (*c.* 610 B.C.), if not of Apries (*c.* 589–73) who met with considerable success against the Phoenician navy (Hdt. 2.161).[41]   Although the Phoenicians naturally supplied important contingents to the fleets of the land powers which subjugated them, neither they nor their brethren, the Carthaginians, who also

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[39] Tissaphernes is reported to have said he would use all his resources, "coining his couch" if necessary (81.3).   The extraordinariness of this image guaranteed its authenticity for Wilamowitz (above, note 10) 605, but Delebecque is equally sure of its spuriousness; see *Annales* (above, note 13) 22 note 18, where he compares Cyrus' promise to chop up his gold and silver throne, if necessary (Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.3).   The question is trivial, although I expect Wilamowitz is right.   The later quotation does not support Delebecque's contention.

[40] A. B. Lloyd, "Were Necho's triremes Phoenician?," *JHS* 95 (1975) 52, 54–55. L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1971) 81, 94–96, is less satisfactory.   Both speak of naval design, not combat effectiveness.

[41] Lloyd 52, 55–56, referring to *idem*, "Triremes and the Saite Navy," *JEA* 58 (1972) 271–72, 276 ff.

depended in wartime on their fleet, appear to have been notably successful in naval warfare.[42] Even fine merchant sailors need extensive additional training for the complicated maneuvers of swift and light triremes, such as the *diekplous, periplous* and *anastrophê*. In Herodotus and Thucydides, Greeks and even Egyptians defeat the Phoenician navy; in Polybius and Livy, Greeks and even Romans defeat the Carthaginian navy. For the Persians, the Phoenician fleet's chief advantage was its dependability; it was more loyal than the suspect Ionian contingent.[43] Accounts of fifth-century naval tactics, largely ramming duels, stress the decisive effect of disciplined skill and sometimes speed as well. Salamis in 480, Phormio's victories against larger Peloponnesian numbers in 429 (20 vs. 47, 20 vs. 77), the later success of 12 Athenian against 33 Peloponnesian triremes, all indicate that Athenian rowers' *technê* when supplemented by spirit and their commanders' strategic skill could minimize the effect of numbers alone. The few major Athenian naval defeats recorded in our period (e.g., Syracuse, Notion, Aegospotami) were the result of incompetent commanders, not inadequate numbers or unqualified sailors.[44] The Athenian fleet had a very real edge in speed and skill during most of the fifth century. They were justly feared.

One might object that military reputations, good or bad, spread quickly and are hard to lose; the Spartans, the Romans, certain World War II armies come to mind. How could all Greece as well as the historian not know of the Phoenicians' weakness? This argument, however, can support the present hypothesis. Thucydides' polemical tone (8.87.4) is perhaps directed against those who thought that the Phoenician fleet would not have been decisive. Thucydides argues

[42] D. Harden, *The Phoenicians* (Harmondsworth 1971²) 115, 119–20. K. DeVries, " Greek, Etruscan and Phoenician ships and shipping," in *A History of Seafaring*, ed. G. Bass (London 1972) 40, calls the Greeks " decidedly the superior" force in naval skill.

[43] A. T. Olmstead, *A History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago 1948) 56; H. Hauben, " The King of the Sidonians and the Persian imperial fleet," *Ancient Society* 1 (1970) 1 note 4, quotes relevant passages which demonstrate Persian dependence on Phoenician nautical experience. The Phoenician squadrons were the " backbone of the Persian fleet" (*ibid.*); Harden (above, note 42) 50.

[44] Thuc. 2.83.5–84.4, 90–92; 3.77–78. At Arginusae the Athenian ships were, for once, slower and their fleet was *ipso facto* on the defensive (Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.31). Their skill was, however, sufficient for victory; J. S. Morrison and R. T. Williams, *Greek Oared Ships* (Cambridge 1968) 313–20. Phoenician ships were probably beamier, therefore slower; Casson (above, note 40) 66, 95.

"if Tissaphernes had wished, he could have ended the war in no unclear way. For in all probability, bringing on the ships he would have given victory to the Lacedaemonians ... " This is an argument within the larger argument concerning Tissaphernes' unknown motives. Thucydides believed that the huge Phoenician supplement, whatever the Athenians' technical advantages, would have won the war for the Peloponnesians. He may have been right, but our concern here is merely to show that his opinion was not universally shared. Who was afraid of the Phoenician fleet?

I can offer some detail here only for the period 500–330 B.C. In 499 Artaphernes wisely thought that the conquest of Naxos alone demanded two hundred, not Aristagoras' one hundred, triremes (Hdt. 5.31–32). The expedition and siege, nevertheless, was an expensive and total failure (5.34.3). Off Cypriot Salamis soon after, the Ionian fleet won a great victory over the Phoenicians (5. 109, 112). The Ionians alone were a match for the Phoenicians. In 494 at Lade, 353 Greek ships took on 600 Persian, despite suspected and actual defections. The Persians were quite nervous with less than a two-to-one superiority (6.8.2, 9.1). In 490, the mainland Greeks for once chose not to face the large navy of the invaders (6.95.1–2). The Phoenicians had good commercial reasons to fight energetically on behalf of their Persian lord against their most serious trade rivals (cf. 6.6). In 480 at Salamis, however, 180 Athenian ships smashed a much larger number (300?, cf. 7.89.1) of quickly dismayed Phoenicians opposite them (8.44.1, 85.1, 86, Aesch. *Pers.* 342–45). This defeat and Xerxes' maltreatment of them demoralized the Phoenician navy. At Mycale, the Persians did not wish to fight at sea with a fleet composed of the uncertainly loyal Ionians and the shaken Phoenicians. They dismissed the latter fleet (9.96.1) and radically reduced their Aegean presence. A generation later at the Eurymedon, the Athenians and their allies destroyed with ease the entire Phoenician contingent (200 ships) of the Persian fleet with only 200 vessels of their own (Thuc. 1.100.1; Plut. *Cim.* 12.5). The entire Persian navy in this engagement was considerably larger; a total of 600 according to Phanodemus (*F.Gr.Hist.* 325, F22), 350 according to Ephorus (*F.Gr.Hist.* 70, F192; cf. F191, fgt. 9). They had nevertheless tried to escape battle. Cimon caught another 80 Phoenician triremes at Syedra and destroyed them all (*Cim.* 13.3). In Egypt

(460/59?), it is true, 300 Phoenician ships trapped and destroyed perhaps 50, perhaps more, Athenian ships (Thuc. 1.110.4; Isocr. 8.86; Diod. 11.75.2, 77.1; cf. Ctesias, F.Gr.Hist. 688, F32).[45] One hundred, though, were taken off Cyprus in 450/49 by a numerically much inferior Athenian squadron (Thuc. 1.112.4; Diod. 12.3.3, and Simonides [Diod. 11.62.3] in Hill, Sources², 262), and in 440/39 Pericles with sixty vessels responded to a rumor that a Phoenician squadron was coming to the aid of the rebelling Samians.[46] No one ever saw them. The Athenian fleet sailed the Aegean for forty years without challenge. Persian navel vessels stayed east of Pamphylia, in fear or by covenant, probably both.

In the Peloponnesian war the Phoenician fleet *never* faced the Athenian in battle. Alcibiades long knew that Tissaphernes had no intention of bringing them up: εἰδὼς ... ἐκ πλέονος τὴν Τισσαφέρνους γνώμην ... (8.88). The Persians may well have hesitated to risk their trump after frequent defeats and with numbers only recently restored to full strength. Even Cyrus, *partisan de la guerre à outrance*, never used it, although he promised to produce the fleet for Lysander.[47] Military men so feared the Athenian navy that Cyrus would not allow the Spartans to fight without an indubitable superiority (Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.14), and this appears to have been standard Persian policy. The Persian High Command knew best what the Phoenician fleet was worth; Hellenic rhetoric, we may note, concurred (Lysias 2.59; Isocr. 4.118). After the Peloponnesian war, three hundred Phoenician ships seemed a negligible threat to Lysander (Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.2).

In a passage which has yet to be considered in relation to our problem,

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[45] There were victories over Phoenicians in this campaign also; see the memorial of a Samian victory in Hill, *Sources²* B 113.4 and Ctesias 63 (= F.Gr.Hist. 688, F14); also index vii, pp. 395–96, s.v. Φοίνικες for other reff.

[46] Thucydides (1.116.1, 3) refers to a rumor only, although the fleet is "actualized" by Diodorus (12.27.5) and Plutarch (*Per.* 26.2). Gomme, *ad loc.* in Thuc., is probably right in doubting the fleet's reality, but both versions sufficiently serve my argument that the fleet was most effective at a distance. Why the fleet continued to frighten the Greeks despite its lack of success is something of a puzzle. The concern of the Athenians, the Peloponnesians, Alcibiades, and Thucydides himself probably stems from the weight of numbers, not effective naval fighting ability. It is worth noting that our sources (except Hdt.) never praise any demonstrated fighting ability of the Phoenician fleet.

[47] Thuc. 2.65.12 reports that Cyrus brought money, not ships, to the Peloponnesians. Olmstead (above, note 43) 362; Hatzfeld (above, note 13) 252; Morrison and Williams (above, note 44) 223.

the Oxyrhynchus *Hellenica* (ed. Bartoletti, 1959) relates Conon's problems in securing sufficient funds in 396/5 for his navy from the satraps Pharnabazus and Tithraustes (19 [14].1–20 [15].1; cf. Isocr. 4.142; Justin 6.2.11–15). It was the regular policy, ἔθος ἐστὶν ἀεί, of the King so poorly to provide for his naval allies as to allow his troops to languish and his triremes to rot. The writer specifically mentions the Deceleian war, in which only the zeal of Cyrus prevented the collapse of the naval war effort (19.[14].2). Whether or not our historian means to correct or to supplement Thucydides 8.87, he provides nearly contemporary evidence which indicates that the failure of Tissaphernes and the Phoenician fleet to support the Peloponnesians was of set purpose, and that Tissaphernes was carrying out royal policy (τούτων δὲ βασιλεὺς αἴτιος). No smart satrap would act decisively without the approval of the King, the source of all authority (cf. Hdt. 5.31.4, Diod. 15.41.5). This explanation also enables one to understand why the situation in 411 was allowed to persist. The passage establishes the purposiveness and acceptability to the King of Tissaphernes' actions, and renders Grote's objection and Lewis' hypothesis superfluous. This continued policy was grounded on a strategic appreciation of the Phoenician fleet's poor fighting ability.

Conon with Pharnabazus in 394 did win the battle of Cnidus, but his fleet was as much Greek as Phoenician, and the Greeks bore the brunt of the battle. In his victory won for the King, Conon's forces were overwhelmingly larger (Diod. 14.79.5–8 with 83.5 suggest a better than two-to-one superiority; cf. *Hell. Oxy.* 9 [4].2), his enemy was not the Athenian fleet, and the Spartan commander, Peisander, was incompetent (Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.29).

Between 394 and 335, the record of the Phoenician navy is not glorious. Conon, the King's Athenian commander who led a largely Greek fleet, is the partial exception which reinforces the rule. A lack of effective commanders partly explains the fact that the Phoenicians failed when they were called on to fight. Evagoras was able to maintain Cyprus' semi-autonomy for many years and complete independence for ten years, despite serious efforts by Artaxerxes to subdue the strategically important island, and its frequent revolts before and after indicate the inadequacy of Phoenician naval power even in the eastern Mediterranean (Diod. 14.98.3, 15.9.2). Evagoras at one time captured

Tyre and held much of the Phoenician coast (Isocr. 9.62; Diod. 15.2.4).
During his Egyptian campaign of 373, Pharnabazus failed to use
decisively his 300 triremes and 200 triconters, as Iphicrates his lieutenant
advised (15.41.3). Pharnabazus' policy led Iphicrates to flee in fear of
arrest for his loyal advice of employing the Persian fleet (43.5).
Artaxerxes continued his Hellenic policy of dual attrition at minimum
expense enunciated clearly enough for Isocrates' understanding in the
King's Peace of 386 and continued by that of 371 (Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.12).
In 356/5, the renewed spectre of a Persian fleet of three hundred ships
led the impoverished Athenians to end their attempt to subjugate their
rebellious allies, but their own lack of naval equipment as well as the
known difficulties of a war on two fronts were no less decisive than
the Persian threat (Diod. 16.22.2; Demosth. 47 *passim*). When the
Phoenicians revolted against Ochus *c.* 344/3, they launched over one
hundred triremes but accomplished nothing against his three hundred
(a number frequently attributed to the combined Phoenician fleet; Hdt.
7.89; Diod. 16.40.6, 44.6, etc.).

In the years 335–333, the Phoenician navy's 400 ships far out-
numbered Alexander's 160 (Arr. *Anab.* 1.18.4–5), but they neither
stopped Alexander's crossing into Asia Minor nor, despite initial
success, carried out Memnon's sound plan of bringing the war back to
Greece (Arr. 2.1.1; Diod. 17.18.2), although Alexander in 334 had
conveniently disbanded his fleet (Arr. 1.20.1; Diod. 17.22.5). He
worried more about the loyalty of his own sailors than the Persian
King's fleet (Arr. 1.18.8).[48] Memnon's plan of using the fleet against
Alexander's territory was only acceptable first as a part of the great land
strategy, and finally as a last resort. Afterwards the squadrons of
Aradus and Byblus (80 ships) surrendered at Sidon when their cities
went over, and they were followed by the 120 ship Cypriot contingent
(Arr. 2.20.1 ff). Alexander expected this defection, if we can credit
his speech in Arrian (2.17.3). There he argued that the Phoenician
fleet was the best and most numerous part of the Persian navy, but that

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[48] Alexander dismissed his fleet because of mistrust. After Memnon's death, the
King's fleet was divided; the commanders foolishly dallied off the coast of Asia Minor.
Whether blame attaches to the admirals or the King, the fact remains that the fleet was
again not utilized as one would have expected. See E. Badian, "Agis III," *Hermes* 95
(1967) 174–76, and A. R. Burn, "Notes on Alexander's campaigns, 332–330," *JHS* 72
(1952) 82–83; also Morrison and Williams (above, note 44) 230–36.

once the Phoenician cities were captured, their sailors would surrender to his generals. By the conquest of Tyre, Alexander gained this fleet for himself. Syria and Palestine quickly submitted to him once the ships had deserted the King's cause, since his fleet now controlled the eastern Mediterranean.

This rapid survey suggests that the Phoenician navy was a "papyrus tiger;" it served the King (cf. Thuc. 1.16) but was relatively unpowerful and perhaps untrustworthy.[49] Its chief service for two centuries was to serve as a coast guard and to police and control eastern sea-lanes (cf. Hdt. 6.33, 104). It is no coincidence that there never was a Phoenician empire. There was neither the internal political unity nor the naval power to support external political dominion.[50] Persian commanders did not use the Phoenician navy as a war-fleet unless their numbers were overwhelmingly superior, and even then they generally lost battles, if not entire fleets. Of course, if the Peloponnesians and Phoenicians had united their forces in 411, they would have had a five-to-two superiority. The Athenians, to be sure, would have tried to prevent this in any way possible. That the significance of such a union was evident, we see in Alcibiades' pledge (Thuc. 8.88). The Athenians were well placed between the two to forestall this unification, and Tissaphernes was not willing to risk the King's navy. Perhaps we should ask "where was the Persian army?" The Persians were particularly adept in combined naval and military campaigns.[51] It is as probable that the navy was awaiting land support as that it was called away to fight another, almost unknown, war. But we hear nothing of it.

I do not suggest that the Phoenician fleet was entirely incompetent, but merely inferior, and not possessed of high morale, when facing

[49] Doubt about their loyalty certainly existed in the fourth century; cf. Hauben (above, note 43) 7 note 33, referring to Arrian 2.15.6. The excellent reputation of Phoenician merchant seamen (e.g., Eur. *Helen* 1272, 1451 ff.), I repeat, is not relevant to their training on military craft and in military maneuvers. Plying heavily laden merchant craft was no adequate preparation for meeting the Athenian fleet in battle. Although Herodotus praises the sailing skill of the Phoenician fleet (7.44, 96, 98, 128; 8.67–68), Artemisia set little value on their fighting ability against Greeks (8.68a), a judgment echoed after the fact by Xerxes (8.88.3) and by Mardonius (8.100.4). The incident of the Phoenician fault-finders at Salamis (8.90) does not reflect well on them. Search turns up nothing positive in the ancient authorities on the Phoenician navy's effectiveness. Sosylus (*F.Gr. Hist.* 176, Fl, II vv. 20 ff.) offers an account of Phoenician-Carthaginian naval tactics.

[50] Harden (above, note 42) 69.

[51] Lloyd, *JEA* (above, note 41) 271 note 1. E.g., Xerxes' invasion of Greece.

Greeks.   Thucydides' emphatic assertion that 250 ships *could* defeat 100 Athenian only reinforces this view.   The record is incomplete, but, so far as it goes, it indicated Persian lack of confidence in the Phoenician navy as a fighting force.   The Ionians or the Cypriots alone on occasion were able to neutralize the Phoenicians.   The Athenians were generally a more numerous, and always a more fearsome, enemy than these.   The Athenians' radically different system of training and handling techniques in the fifth century produced a lopsided list of victories.   This explains the absence of the Phoenician navy from western waters for forty years (449–411) and its reappearance after the Athenian catastrophe in Sicily.   Now the Phoenicians were both more numerous and had a better chance of winning against smaller fleets and more hastily trained crews.   They carried with them, moreover, the threat of a Persian army's advance into the war.   Tissaphernes and Cyrus, however, never used the fleet, knowing its value better than Alcibiades or even Thucydides.   The Phoenicians were effective at supplying and supplementing the Persian armies, no mean or insignificant task.   They suffered, however, repeated losses against the Athenians in the fifth century, and their lackluster record in the fourth century betrays reluctance to engage them in battle.   They were then rarely employed and almost never effective.

Thucydides' second motive for Tissaphernes' not using his navy, namely that he brought them to Aspendus to extract money from the sailors whom he never intended to employ at war, might support this hypothesis of the Phoenicians' marginal utility.[52]   Once we accept the idea that this navy was of questionable value, all four of Thucydides' explanations are of some use.   That is, keeping the large fleet on the edge of the theater of war wore down the ill supplied Peloponnesians; brought closer the uncertain threat of the large Phoenician navy although Tissaphernes never planned to commit them to battle; bolstered the satrap's story for the Spartans that he was gathering an unbeatable force; and wore down all the Greeks through delay and so promoted their equalization.   Here we sense one of Thucydides'

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[52] The Athenian ambassadors (56.4) earlier had balked at the idea of a Persian navy in the Aegean.   Even a fleet weak in battle could control coastal cities.   This demand ended the negotiations.   The proposal was perhaps a "trial balloon" to test Athenian intelligence on the fleet's strength as well as a way to break off negotiations.

reasons for not discarding the three contemporary conjectures.   All of them may have contributed to the satrap's decision.

V.   CONCLUSION

"Equalization," Tissaphernes presumably reasoned, would eventually bring the King his victory at less expense than a potentially costly battle.   By this explanation, Tissaphernes was still disingenuous in his explanation of why the Phoenician triremes remained in Aspendus, but Thucydides' contemptuous rebuttal misses the point, because he did not correctly gauge the fleet's efficacy and thus did not understand the thrust of Tissaphernes' excuse.   Tissaphernes never planned to use those ships, because they could not have won the war.   This interpretation "saves" our opinion of Thucydides' knowledge of important contemporary Mediterranean events.   It contradicts from the longer perspective of Greco-Persian conflict which we possess (i.e., the fourth century; cf. Isocr. 4.139) only his *evaluation* of a factor *never* tested in this war.   It explains Tissaphernes' behavior at a critical moment when his actions seemed inexplicable.   "Persia's ablest diplomat," I believe, made the most efficient use of his fleet: a threat to one side, a promise to the other; or both to both.   He wore down the two sides at the least expense to the King of life and money, and his policy of attrition did contribute to winning the war.[53]   Quite unnecessary was Alcibiades'

[53] In this paper I postpone the question of the composition of Book VIII.   Many believe that much or all is provisional, without the author's firm commitment, an "early draft" written soon after the events of 413–11 and not revised.   I have no easy solution to the problem, but I am impressed by the skill of the organization of the narrative and by the many careful cross-references.   The reader may well ask what became of Thucydides' MS. between 410 and 400?   Thucydides' procedure, however many—and they are not many—inconsistencies we find in the last book, allowed him to elaborate certain events (of which 8.87 is one).   Professor Antony Andrewes has suggested by letter that 8.87 "represents only where he had got to at the time of writing, and is based on opinions current in the Peloponnesian fleet."   The resulting summary of reports, he believes, ignores the King who controlled the fleet and wastes effort trying to read Tissaphernes' mind.   If we ask not only " why the ships came no further than Aspendus? " but also "why they came that far west at all?," he thinks that Thucydides' problem disappears, for we can assume that Tissaphernes *did* intend to use the fleet, but control was taken out of his hands.

I believe that the ships' presence at Aspendus indicates the King's delegation of authority over them to his satrap.   They were present for at least a few months (ἤδη, 8.81.3, from June on) while Tissaphernes pretended to prepare to use them.   The burden of proof lies on those who think that Tissaphernes could not use them, since Thucydides

advice to Tissaphernes not to hurry the war on to its conclusion by
means of the fleet, but to wear down both sides without the danger of
contesting with his own forces and in complete personal security
(46.1–2; Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.9).[54]

never hints at this, and all the parties present expected that he could.   Alcibiades' advice,
Tissaphernes' usual tactics, and the King's regular strategy all tilted away from pitched
battle.   Artaxerxes acted in the same way (Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.12; Polyaenus 7.16.2).   We know
very little about satraps' powers that limited their freedom of action while they were
in favor, and a great deal which indicates their latitude of action (see note 32 above).   If
we throw out Thucydides' belief in Tissaphernes' relative autonomy, little of his account
of the satrap remains.   Perhaps in a final revision Thucydides would have said more
about this fleet, but why, if it was materially wrong, did he not modify the conjectural
account already written?   Further, ch. 87 is not a mere summary but a full account of,
and a careful answer to, a vexing question.   There is no evidence here that Thucydides
was moving towards a single explanation.   Even if his preference for one neat explanation
were operative, we would expect a simplified presentation, not a completely different
explanation, for his puzzled curiosity never suggested to him a cause originating from
beyond the Aegean.   8.87.4 has the tone of long reflection, not current opinion.   If new
information had come his way in the next decade, I believe that Thucydides would not
have forgotten this remarkable chapter, easily excised or replaced.