

# Leon and Timagoras: Co-envoys for Four Years?

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IN HIS SPEECH against Aeschines, *Περὶ τῆς παραπρεσβείας*, Demosthenes asserted (19.191) that in bringing a charge against his former colleague on the embassies to Macedon in 346 he was doing nothing unprecedented, for even Leon, he said, had denounced his fellow-envoy Timagoras on their return from Persia in 367 although they had been fellow-envoys (*συμπεπρεσβευκώς*) for four years.

The prosecution of Timagoras is mentioned elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> but nowhere else do we find the statement that he and Leon served together for four years. Perhaps Demosthenes' statement ought to be dismissed as an unwarranted assertion, but it has been defended, and the circumstantial evidence which may be of interest has not been sufficiently discussed.

In the first place it appears strange in a world where there were no permanent extra-territorial diplomatic agencies and where envoys were chosen to go on specific and individual missions that an envoy should be described as having been the colleague of another for four years. From Xenophon's account (*Hell.* 7.1.33ff) it is plain that the one mission which occasioned the accusations was of limited duration and was confined to 367. Leon and Timagoras are not known to have fulfilled any other specific mission to Persia or to any other state before 367.

Grote, who attempted to combine the accounts of Demosthenes and Xenophon,<sup>2</sup> pointed out that four years before the episode of 367 occurred the battle of Leuctra and the renewal of the King's Peace; and he supposed that the significant four years were those from 371 to 367 in relations between Athens and Persia.

There has been the temptation to draw a parallel from the activities

<sup>1</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 30; Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.33f.

<sup>2</sup> G. Grote, *History of Greece* X (London 1852) 384 n.1. The conflation of the accounts of Demosthenes and Xenophon was attacked by R. Whiston, ed. *Demosthenes, with an English Commentary* II (London 1868) p.92, where it is pointed out that any discussion of an embassy from 371 is quite conjectural.

of the Spartan envoy Antalcidas in the years 371 to 367, for it has been supposed that Antalcidas again visited Persia in 371 and 367. The sources do not permit us to conclude that Antalcidas was an envoy to Persia either in 371 or 367.<sup>3</sup> Plutarch in his life of Artaxerxes merely records subsequently to a mention of the battle of Leuctra that Antalcidas starved himself to death after a diplomatic failure in Persia.<sup>4</sup>

An examination of the career of Antalcidas and of relations between Greece and Persia is of little use in discussing Demosthenes' assertion since sufficiently detailed evidence for the diplomatic dealings of the years from 371 to 367 does not exist. If, however, Leon and Timagoras had been co-envoys for four years, that would have been unusual from what we know of the diplomatic practice of the Athenians, who, unlike the Spartans,<sup>5</sup> do not seem to have maintained intact teams of envoys either generally or to particular states. The only conditions under which in the one hundred and fifty years or so to 338 B.C. there is known to have been an attempt to maintain continuity of representation are when more than one embassy was sent out in a particular episode or sequence of diplomatic operations. Theramenes, for example, was sent twice to Sparta during 405/4 in order to discuss terms for the termination of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>6</sup> Ctesiphon and Aristodemus had dealings with Philip of Macedon concerning the release of Athenians held prisoner in the winter of 348/7<sup>7</sup> and were sent to Macedon again in 346 to arrange the Peace of Philocrates,<sup>8</sup> concerning which the three major Athenian embassies were substantially the same in composition. But in view of the fact that over 150 envoys are known by name for the period 480–338, the list is not very impressive. Callias, we are told, went as envoy to Sparta for the third time in 371,<sup>9</sup> but the other two occasions

<sup>3</sup> With reference to events of 371 there is an allusion to the idea of a visit of Antalcidas to Persia in Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.12, but no statement that he did go or even intended to go. Plut. *Pel.* 30.4 offers a comparison of the diplomatic treatment in Persia of Pelopidas, who did visit Persia in 367, and Antalcidas, who is not said to have visited Persia in 367. Any strict interpretation of the literary sources other than Demosthenes seems to support the statement of H. Swoboda, *RE* 12 (1925) 2007 s.v. LEON 15, that Demosthenes' version "muss auf einem Irrtum beruhen."

<sup>4</sup> Plut. *Art.* 22.3–4. In this section Plutarch talks of the events of 367 as being just after Leuctra.

<sup>5</sup> For Spartan practice see D. J. Mosley, "Pharax and the Spartan Embassy to Athens in 370/69," *Historia* 12 (1963) 247–50.

<sup>6</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.16–17.

<sup>7</sup> Aeschin. 2.12–13; Dem. 19.10ff (Ctesiphon); Aeschin. 2.15–16 (Aristodemus).

<sup>8</sup> Dem. 19.10ff, 315.

<sup>9</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.4.

and his colleagues on them are not known. Demosthenes was despatched to the Peloponnese on three occasions to counter the interests of Philip and gain support for Athens in 344/3,<sup>10</sup> 343/2<sup>11</sup> and 341.<sup>12</sup> The precise details of his itinerary are not clear, but it seems that he was accompanied by Polyeuctus on each of the first two occasions. Cimon was sent as envoy to Sparta in 479<sup>13</sup> and was responsible for the five years' truce in 451,<sup>14</sup> and Aeschines went to Philip in 346<sup>15</sup> and 338.<sup>16</sup> Aeschines tells us (3.138–139) that Thrasybulus was trusted in Thebes as no-one else was and that he was one of those men of good will who were sent there often, but we know only of his embassy to Thebes in 377.<sup>17</sup>

No doubt the general picture may be distorted by the nature of the evidence; Themistocles, for example, is only known to have visited Sparta on one occasion, yet it was on account of his popularity in that state that he was despatched there.<sup>18</sup> Individuals might well have had their connections with states to which they were sent, but one is hard put to it to find retention of diplomatic teams apart from the transactions of 346. The embassy of Cimon, Xanthippus and Myronides, for example, to Sparta in 479/8<sup>19</sup> was entirely different in composition from that of Themistocles, Aristides and Habronicus to Sparta shortly after.<sup>20</sup> The surviving names of the embassy to Sparta in 392/1,<sup>21</sup> on which Andocides served, correspond with none of those whom Xenophon lists as having gone with Conon in 392.<sup>22</sup> Of all the embassies to Persia only Callias the elder may have fulfilled more than one mission, so far as we know, in 462/1<sup>23</sup> and for the Peace of Callias;<sup>24</sup> but what may be two separate episodes may equally well have been only one.

It cannot be definitely established that Leon and Timagoras were in

<sup>10</sup> Dem. 6.19ff; 18.79.

<sup>11</sup> Dem. 9.72.

<sup>12</sup> Aeschin. 3.97: [Plut.] *X Orat.* 841E.

<sup>13</sup> Plut. *Arist.* 10.8.

<sup>14</sup> Theopomp. fr.88a (OCT) = F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 115 F 88.

<sup>15</sup> Dem. 19.12f; Aeschin. 2.18ff.

<sup>16</sup> Dem. 18.282; Aeschin. 3.227.

<sup>17</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 43 = M. N. Tod, *Greek Historical Inscriptions II* (Oxford 1948) no. 123.

<sup>18</sup> Thuc. 1.91f.

<sup>19</sup> Plut. *Arist.* 10.8.

<sup>20</sup> Thuc. 1.91.3.

<sup>21</sup> Philochorus, *FGrHist* 328 F 149.

<sup>22</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.13.

<sup>23</sup> Hdt. 7.151; see E. M. Walker, *CAH V* (1927) 75.

<sup>24</sup> Diod.Sic. 12.4.5.

opposition before their embassy to Persia, or, on the other hand, that their differences arose only subsequently to their appointment, as was probably the case with Aeschines and Demosthenes. There certainly were differences of opinion in Athens over policy from 371, for Leodamas, who had favoured co-operation with Thebes,<sup>25</sup> laid an accusation against Callistratus, who had come to favour a policy of co-operation with Sparta,<sup>26</sup> and there was room for political opponents to serve on the same embassy.<sup>27</sup> If, however, Leon and Timagoras were political opponents for a considerable length of time it would have been remarkable if they had been paired off on more than one occasion over a period of four years, and it is worthy of notice that we have no further relevant political information about them.

If the comment of Demosthenes is a gross exaggeration, that would in any case cause no surprise, but embassies to Persia especially lent themselves to such exaggeration or assertions of scandal. In 408/7 Athenian envoys to Persia were ordered by Cyrus to be detained for three years,<sup>28</sup> and Strabo (18.1.19) tells us that the Persians had a reputation for leading embassies around in circles. Such delays were parodied by Aristophanes (*Ach.* 65ff) when he depicted an embassy to Persia as wallowing in luxury and taking eleven years over its mission, and Epicrates and Phormisius caused a scandal in 394 as a result of the splendid and luxurious reception given to them in Persia.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps it is against such a background after all that we ought to take Demosthenes' statement and attach to it no more credit than to his assertion (19.273) that Callias who made the Peace in the fifth century was once charged with *parapresbeia* and fined fifty talents. Both statements went unchallenged in the speech for Aeschines' defence, but although political and legal speeches bristled with inaccuracies of fact and historical recollection, that was not the kind of point to which an opponent paid attention, for that was no way to weaken or demolish an opponent's case. It was the more immediate facts of character, conduct and motives to which primary attention was given.

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<sup>25</sup> Aeschin. 3.138–139.

<sup>26</sup> Dem. 20.146.

<sup>27</sup> See D. J. Mosley, "The Size of Embassies in Ancient Greek Diplomacy," *TAPA* 96 (1965) 263ff.

<sup>28</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.8–9.

<sup>29</sup> Athen. 6.229f (Plato Comicus); Plut. *Pel.* 30.6; Dem. 19.137, 191.