

# The Treaties between Persia and Athens

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ACCORDING TO the ancient tradition represented by Diodorus (12.26.2, derived from Ephorus) and Demosthenes (15.29), there were two treaties (*διττὰὶ συνθήκαι*) between Persia and Athens (or Greece), the famous Peace of Kallias and the equally famous Peace of Antalkidas.<sup>1</sup> The genuineness and the historicity of the Peace of Kallias have been questioned by Theopompus (*FGrHist* 115 F 154) because its Attic copy was written in Ionic script (which came into official use not before the end of the fifth century) and by the moderns because Thucydides does not specifically refer to it. The date assigned to this treaty is the time immediately following the death of Kimon (Diodorus 12.4.4), but its absolute date and its connection with the so-called Congress Decree of Pericles (Plutarch, *Pericles* 17) will have to be argued separately.<sup>2</sup> The historicity of the Peace is further attested by Diodorus (9.10.5), who emphasizes the fact that the Athenians in signing the treaty with Artaxerxes were breaking the oath of everlasting enmity against the barbarian, which they had sworn on the battle field of Plataea.<sup>3</sup> Its validity, however, is made doubtful by the fact that the chief negotiator, Kallias, was accused of bribery, condemned, almost executed, and fined fifty talents.<sup>4</sup> Plutarch's account (*Cimon* 13) suggests that the document itself was available in the Athenian archives, and that the treaty was kept by the Persians while they were militarily weak and disregarded by the Athenians while they were militarily strong. In fact, Demosthenes referred to the two treaties with Persia as examples of the general

<sup>1</sup> See now H. Bengtson, *Die Staatsvertraege des Altertums* 2 (1962) Nos. 152 and 242, where may be found all significant references.

<sup>2</sup> See my tentative suggestion in "Kimon's Zurückberufung," *Historia* 3 (1954/5) 379-380, that the death of Kimon be placed before 455 B.C.

<sup>3</sup> See my remarks in "The Covenant of Plataea," *TAPA* 91 (1960) 181 with n.6 (also on p. 182).

<sup>4</sup> Demosthenes 19.273; see my remarks in "Herodotus and the Inscriptions," *University of London, Institute of Classical Studies, Bulletin* 8 (1961) 61.

statement *ἅπαντας πρὸς τὴν παρούσαν δύναμιν τῶν δικαίων ἀξιουμένους* (15.28) which, I think, alludes to the view expressed by Thucydides (5.89) *δίκαια . . . ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἀνάγκης κρίνεται, δυνατὰ δὲ οἱ προύχοντες πρᾶσσοσι καὶ οἱ ἀσθενεῖς ξυνχωροῦσιν*, and again (5.105.2) *οὐδ' ἂν κρατῆ ἄρχειν*.

It is, however, not with these two famous treaties that I am concerned at the moment but with two others which have not fared so well in our literary tradition, ancient and modern; they are the treaty with Dareios concluded in the last decade of the sixth century and that with the second Dareios concluded shortly before 415 B.C.

Herodotus reports (5.73) that the Athenians sent an embassy to Sardis to conclude an alliance with the Persians, after they had driven out Isagoras and Kleomenes, and because they feared to be subdued by the Spartans under Kleomenes. This passage, as well as that other about the famous shield signal (6.121-131), has given rise to a protracted debate about the existence in Athens of a pro-Persian party.<sup>5</sup> What is important is the fact that the Athenians wished to conclude an alliance with Persia which should protect them against an impending Spartan attack, and that the ambassadors actually concluded an alliance by offering on their own account submission to Dareios. The concluding sentence of Herodotus' story ("these [namely the Athenian envoys] went back home and were then held greatly responsible [for what they had done]") has been taken to mean that the Athenians at once repudiated the agreement of the envoys with Artaphrenes. B. D. Meritt pointed out, however, that "the Athenians were on good terms with Persia and that they were interested in maintaining friendly relations" when they once more sent envoys to Sardis complaining about the propaganda of Hippias and asked the Persians not to believe people who had been exiled from Athens (Herodotus 5.96).<sup>6</sup> Such a complaint was justified if Athens considered herself still an ally of Persia.<sup>7</sup> There is, however, *pace* Meritt and Robinson, not the slightest indication of any friendly attitude on the part of Athens towards Hippias. The refusal by the Athenians to restore Hippias and especially their participation in the Ionian Revolt (Herodotus 5.97)

<sup>5</sup> Most of the references have now been conveniently assembled by P. Lévêque and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Clisthène l'Athénien* [*Annales . . . de Besançon* 65] (Paris 1964) 113, n.2.

<sup>6</sup> "An Early Archon List," *Hesperia* 8 (1939) 63-64.

<sup>7</sup> While M. F. McGregor questioned this interpretation in "The Pro-Persian Party at Athens," *HSCP Suppl.* 1 (1940) 79, C. A. Robinson, Jr in "Athenian Politics, 510-486 B.C.," *AJP* 66 (1945) 247, seems to accept it.

constituted a violation of their treaty with Persia, for which Dareios wanted to punish them at Marathon (Herodotus 5.105).

Closely connected with the question whether or not there was a pro-Persian party at Athens is another—whether Kleisthenes and his family (the Alcmeonids) were responsible for the first embassy to Persia, and thus for the conclusion of the treaty. Herodotus certainly does not say so (5.73), nor does he identify the envoys, either the first ones or the second ones (5.96), but in talking about the shield signal after the battle of Marathon (6.115) he emphasizes that the responsibility for the plot with the Persians was given to the Alcmeonids, and in his lengthy apology (6.121 and 123) he repeatedly states that the Alcmeonids were anti-tyrannical; I think that it is significant that he has nothing to say about their connection with the Persians. The question may well be asked whether Herodotus did not deliberately suppress some information on the part played by the Alcmeonids in making and in keeping the treaty with the Persians, because he did not want to taint Pericles with the charge of a pro-Persian attitude (6.131).

There can be little doubt that the punishment to which the Alcmeonids were subjected because of the suspicion that they had plotted with the Persians was the ostracism to which Megakles and Xanthippos were condemned, the one a nephew of Kleisthenes, the other the husband of a niece.<sup>8</sup> Kleisthenes may have meant the law of ostracism to be strictly anti-tyrannical, but it was used at once not only against the leader of the tyrant's party, Hipparchos, but also against those Alcmeonids who, by being pro-Persian, seemed to have contributed to the danger of the restoration of tyranny.<sup>9</sup> It may well be, therefore, that Kleisthenes, Megakles, and Xanthippos had something to do with the two embassies to Persia, and that the punishment of the envoys to which Herodotus alludes (5.73) consisted in the ostracism of Megakles and Xanthippos.

Seen in this way, the first Athenian embassy to Sardis seems less surprising because Alkmeon, after whom the family was named, was a friend of Kroisos and had visited him in Sardis.<sup>10</sup> Considering that the Persians were the successors of the Lydians and that Kroisos re-

<sup>8</sup> See my remarks on "The Ostracism of Xanthippos," *AJA* 51 (1947) 259, and on the chronology "Die Rueckkehr des Aristeides," *Historia* 8 (1959) 127–128.

<sup>9</sup> See my remarks in "The Origin of Ostracism," *AJA* 55 (1951) 221 and 225–226.

<sup>10</sup> Herodotus 6.125; for the family see F. W. Mitchel in "Megakles," *TAPA* 88 (1957) 127–130 and T. L. Shear, Jr in "Koisyra," *Phoenix* 17 (1963) 99–112.

tained good relations with the Persians (Herodotus 3.36), the Alcmeonids may have suggested sending envoys to Sardis. The emotionally charged contrast between Greeks and barbarians belongs to a later time, that of the Persian Wars.

If Pericles' father, uncle, and grandfather had good relations with Persia before the Persian Wars, it is understandable that Pericles himself should have had little enthusiasm to continue the war against Persia when he rose to prominence. This was at a time when the Persian War had virtually come to a standstill, that is after Kimon's great victories in Pamphylia, towards the end of the sixties of the fifth century. Having had no share in the Egyptian Expedition, and pursuing an active policy within Greece proper, Pericles was glad to see the Persian War come to an end and to make peace with Persia. The effect of this policy upon the Athenian alliance, which had been founded for the purpose of continuing the war against Persia, is a problem which must be discussed separately; for our purposes it suffices to place the Peace of Kallias into the context of the treaty relations between Athens and Persia which began soon after the return to power of the Alcmeonid Kleisthenes.

It is unfortunate, but perhaps not surprising, that the Athenian treaty with Dareios has left so few traces in our literary tradition that it was not even included in Bengtson's *Staatsvertraege*. After all, it was first broken by Persia when she supported Hippias, who had been expelled from Athens, and later by Athens when she supported the Ionian Revolt, and it became quickly forgotten during the long Persian Wars which lasted almost a whole generation, that of Kimon. When Kimon died and a new treaty was drawn up, the power situation had radically changed. No longer did Athens seek protection against Sparta by attaching herself to Persia, but both powers were willing and anxious to recognize each other's spheres of influence and power in order to be able to devote themselves to other more pressing problems, the Persians to other parts of their far-flung empire, the Athenians to the organization of their allies and to the impending conflict with Sparta.

Considering the Persian successes in Egypt, where they were able to crush the native revolt and the Athenian expeditionary force, and considering the traditionally aggressive policy of Athens, one should recognize that the peace between Persia and Athens remained undisturbed for many years. The claim has been made that Pericles'

Pontic Expedition (Plutarch, *Pericles* 20.1–2) violated the peace with Persia and must have been undertaken before this peace was signed.<sup>11</sup> Since Sinope was a Greek city, the Athenians had a right to concern themselves with her, and the treaty did not limit the range of the Athenian fleet; in fact, in this very passage Plutarch emphasizes Pericles' restraint and his care not to provoke Persia (20.3). More serious, however, was the support given to the Samian oligarchs by Pissouthnes, the Persian satrap in Sardis;<sup>12</sup> the entry of the Phoenician fleet into the Aegean was feared,<sup>13</sup> but it may never have taken place. Even if the satrap had acted on his own, this was an unfriendly move, the danger of which was not lost on Pericles. The ruthlessness of his conduct in crushing the Samian revolt was caused to a large extent by Persia's support of the rebels. Years later, on the occasion of the revolt of Mytilene, it was suggested to ask for help from Pissouthnes, but nothing came of it (Thucydides 3.31.1). Pissouthnes himself revolted from the King after the accession of Dareios, and his son Amorges did the same, perhaps at the same time.<sup>14</sup>

It is a fair assumption that Athens was at peace with Persia ever since Kimon's death. This assumption is supported by several pieces of evidence, all coming from the mid-twenties of the fifth century. First of all, there is a scene in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (61–127), which if nothing else shows clearly that the Athenians were on friendly terms with Persia, that the sending of ambassadors to Persia and the receiving of envoys from Persia was considered nothing unusual, and that the Athenians were not surprised at the notion that they were asking for financial assistance from the Great King.<sup>15</sup> In full agreement with this passage in a comedy which was produced early in 425 B.C. is a story told by Thucydides, which speaks of another Athenian embassy which was sent to Susa but actually went only as far as Ephesos when word was received of the death of Artaxerxes; at this news the Athenian envoys returned home (4.50). Both Wade-Gery and Andrewes<sup>16</sup> have called attention to this episode, but they have not

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. J. H. Oliver in "The Peace of Callias and the Pontic Expedition of Pericles," *Historia* 6 (1957) 254–255.

<sup>12</sup> Thucydides 1.115.4–5; Plutarch, *Pericles* 25.3–4.

<sup>13</sup> Thucydides 1.116.1–3; Plutarch, *Pericles* 26.1.

<sup>14</sup> Ctesias, *Persica* 52 ed. Henry; Thucydides 8.5.5; 19.2; 28.2–5; 54.3.

<sup>15</sup> See also Thucydides 2.7.1, a passage in which the historian says that "both sides" (ἐκάτεροι) sought aid from Persia.

<sup>16</sup> "The Peace of Kallias," *HSCP* Suppl. 1 (1940) 131; "Thucydides and the Persians," *Historia* 10 (1961) 1–5.

emphasized that the Athenian envoys went under an existing treaty and not in order to conclude a new one. Obviously, the Athenians were shocked to hear that the Spartans were trying to negotiate for aid from Persia,<sup>17</sup> and they were prepared to complain about it, just as eighty years earlier they had complained about the anti-Athenian propaganda of Hippias. When news of the king's death reached them, they returned home because they realized that this was no time to discuss this matter at the Persian court. Together with the scene in the *Acharnians*, the story in Thucydides testifies to the continuation of friendly relations between Athens and Persia during the Archidamian War.

We learn from Andocides (3.29) that his uncle Epilykos, who later died in Sicily (1.117), negotiated a treaty of friendship for all time between Persia and Athens, that the Athenians abandoned this treaty soon after it was concluded by supporting Amorges, and that the Great King accordingly agreed to give financial aid to the Spartans, as recorded by Thucydides (8.14.4–5; 17.4–18). It has been assumed by Wade-Gery and Andrewes<sup>18</sup> that this treaty was concluded “in the first half of 423” B.C. (Andrewes) because during this Attic year Epilykos was first secretary and Neokleides was secretary of the tribe Aigeis, and we have a decree in which a treaty with the Great King is mentioned and which was passed on the day on which Neokleides was *epistatēs*;<sup>19</sup> Thucydides proposed this decree, and a Thucydides was treasurer during the year 424/3. All this is good but circumstantial evidence, and Andrewes pointed out its chief weakness when he observed that the “negotiations must have been rapid, since they necessarily begin after Dareios' accession (December, 424 B.C.) and yet were complete in time for Herakleides' decree to be passed before the end of the Attic year 424/3 B.C.”<sup>20</sup> I would prefer assuming that both the treaty with Dareios and the honorary decree for Herakleides (who had aided the Athenian envoys) belong to a somewhat later time, soon before the Sicilian Expedition in 415 B.C.<sup>21</sup> I also find it difficult to believe that this treaty was merely a renewal of the Peace of Kallias.<sup>22</sup> Not only was there no cause for a renewal (unless it had been broken)

<sup>17</sup> See also Thucydides 1.82.1; 2.7.1; Diodorus 12.41.1.

<sup>18</sup> *Op.cit.* 127–132; *loc.cit.*

<sup>19</sup> *IG*<sup>2</sup> 2.8 = *SEG* 19.16.

<sup>20</sup> See Andrewes *loc.cit.* 2–3.

<sup>21</sup> See the doubts expressed by Gomme in “The Treaty of Callias,” *AJP* 65 (1945) 332, and in his *Commentary* 1.333–334.

<sup>22</sup> See Gomme *loc.cit.* 333 n.36 and Andrewes *loc.cit.* 5–6.

but the new treaty was according to Andocides a treaty of friendship, while the Peace of Kallias was no such thing. If the report of Andocides can be trusted at all, we should assume that the Athenians sought to strengthen their hand by getting financial aid from Persia, and to protect their back while they were engaged in Sicily. True enough, Thucydides fails to mention that the Athenians had a new treaty with Persia when they embarked on their venture to Sicily, or that the Athenians had abandoned an alliance with Dareios and supported the rebellious Amorges when Alcibiades promised to reconcile them with Tissaphernes (8.45–47). This would, however, explain and clarify the policy of Alcibiades. One could assume that he was behind the treaty with Dareios, that this treaty was abandoned when Alcibiades fell into disgrace, and that he made his way from Sparta to Persia because he had previously established contact with Tissaphernes. There may be some support for these assumptions in several writings of Demosthenes (10 and 11), in which he emphasizes the fact that the Persian king supported at one time or another the Athenians or the Spartans in order to let neither of them get too strong (10.51 and 11.6), a policy the advocacy of which Thucydides attributed to Alcibiades (8.46).

The treaty between Persia and Athens may have been broken by the Athenian support of Amorges, and it may have been superseded by Dareios' treaty with Sparta (Thucydides 8.18). Thucydides may have failed to mention it for one reason or another, but the Athenians thought highly enough of it to honor the Clazomenian Herakleides for having aided in its conclusion; and when the stele recording these honors was destroyed, the Athenians renewed it early in the fourth century (*SEG* 19.16). At about the same time (392 B.C.), the orator Andocides made a special reference to the treaty which had been negotiated by his uncle.

In this connection belongs the hostile remark of Theopompus, who rejected as spurious not only the Oath of Plataea<sup>23</sup> but also the treaty with Dareios (*FGrHist* 115 F 153); the passage is quoted by Bengston (*Staatsvertraege*) in connection with the Hellenic Oath before the battle of Salamis (No. 130) with which it has nothing to do, but it is neglected in connection with both the Peace of Kallias and that of Epilykos (Nos. 152 and 183). 'Ο 'Ελληνικός ὄρκος καταφύδεται, ὄν 'Αθηναίοι φασιν

<sup>23</sup> See my remarks in "Herodotus and the Inscriptions," pp. 60–61 (*supra* n.4).

ὁμόσαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας πρὸς τῆς μάχης τῆς ἐν Πλαταιαῖς πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους, καὶ αἱ πρὸς βασιλέα Δαρεῖον Ἀθηναίων πρὸς Ἕλληνας συνθήκαι. This text has been unnecessarily amended and not fully interpreted, although Wade-Gery emphasized<sup>24</sup> that Theopompus refers here to the treaty between the Athenians and Dareios II which was concluded soon after the accession of this monarch; whether Theopompus refers in another fragment (154) to the Peace of Kallias (as is generally assumed) or also to the later treaty with Dareios is not possible to say with confidence. The important thing, however, is the recognition of the contrast which Theopompus makes between the Oath which was sworn before the *battle against the barbarians* (πρὸς τῆς μάχης . . . πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους) and the treaty which was made with Dareios (πρὸς βασιλέα Δαρεῖον) against the Greeks (πρὸς Ἕλληνας). The falsehood and duplicity of the Athenians lie not in the fabrication of documents (as has been generally thought) but in the changed attitude towards the barbarians. Oath and treaty are contrasted in one and the same sentence which has but one verb; Theopompus challenges here the Hellenic patriotism and the sincerity of the Athenians. In fact, he was not the only historian who pointed to the contrast between the bold anti-barbarian language of the Greeks (and especially of the Athenians) during the Persian Wars and their willingness to establish peace and friendly relations with Persia not too long afterwards. Diodorus reports (9.10.5), following a fourth century source: ὡς ποιῆσαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας ὅτε κατηγωνίσαντο τὸν Ξέρξην. ὤμοσαν γὰρ ἐν Πλαταιαῖς παραδώσειν παίδων παισὶ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Πέρσας ἔχθραν, ἕως ἂν οἱ ποταμοὶ ῥέωσιν εἰς τὴν θάλατταν καὶ γένος ἀνθρώπων ἢ καὶ γῆ καρποὺς φέρῃ. τὸ δὲ τῆς τύχης εὐμετάπτωτον βεβαίως ἐγγυησάμενοι μετὰ τινα χρόνον ἐπρεσβεύοντο πρὸς Ἀρταξέρξην τὸν υἱὸν Ξέρξου περὶ φιλίας καὶ συμμαχίας.

The oath and the treaty mentioned by Diodorus and those referred to by Theopompus are different. The one oath was sworn before the battle of Plataea and its text is well known (SEG 19.167), the other was sworn after the battle under circumstances reported by Plutarch (*Aristides* 21).<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Diodorus mentions the treaty with Artaxerxes, thus the famous Peace of Kallias, the historicity of which is once more placed beyond all doubt, while Theopompus, as shown above, refers to the peace with Dareios II.

<sup>24</sup> *Op.cit.* 125–127.

<sup>25</sup> See my remarks in “The Covenant of Plataea,” *TAPA* 91 (1960) 178–183.



Looking back at the treaty relations between Persia and Athens, it appears that the first treaty was concluded with Dareios I at the request of the Athenians, who sought protection against the Spartans. This treaty was broken within ten years by the participation of the Athenians in the Ionian Revolt. Then came the great Persian Wars in which Persia sought to reduce Athens and to punish her. Instead, the power of Athens increased to such an extent that it was the Persian king who asked for a treaty, the famous Peace of Kallias, which ended a period of more than forty years during which Athens and Persia were at war with each other. From before the middle of the fifth century on, there existed once more treaty relations, but while at first the power of Athens dictated the terms, the situation changed during the Peloponnesian War, when Athens sought financial aid from Persia.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, a new treaty was signed but hardly implemented, since the Athenians once more supported a revolt against Persia, and Persia herself, in turn, felt constrained to give aid to the Spartans. Subsequently, Persia's power increased until the famous Peace of Antalkidas could be signed, which the Athenians sadly compared with the Peace of Kallias. As the century wore on, the threat of Macedonian power grew, and some Athenians considered once more the possibility of asking Persia for financial assistance. It is in this connection that Demosthenes' plea is to be understood, and his suggestion to send an embassy to Persia; he urged his audience to forget the ancient prejudices against the "barbarian" (10.33), and to remember that Persia had been of help in the past (10.34 and 51) and might aid Athens in the future (10.52 and especially 11.6).<sup>27</sup> In the more than one hundred and eighty years from the end of the sixth century to the twenties of the fourth, Athens and Persia had been at war for little more than forty years, from the Ionian Revolt to the Peace of Kallias.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

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<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to fit into this story the notice of Satyros that Anaxagoras was accused of medism (Diogenes Laertius 2.12); see my remarks in "Theopompus on Thucydides," *Phoenix* 14 (1960) 84.

<sup>27</sup> For Demosthenes 10 (the 'Fourth' Philippic) see S. D. Daitz, *CP* 52 (1957) 145-162, and especially 159 on 10.31-34.