

CONON'S EMBASSY TO PERSIA

In his discussion of the diplomatic affairs of Athens, Sparta and Persia *c.* 392 B. C. Jacoby examined Xenophon's account of the Athenian embassy, consisting of Conon, Dion, Callisthenes, Hermogenes and Callimedon, which was sent to the Persian satrap Tiribazus to oppose the efforts of Antalcidas, the Spartan envoy¹). His observations led him to dismiss the account as "probably apocryphal"²).

Jacoby's objections were twofold. What he termed the external difficulty was the problem of fitting in the embassy of Conon to Persia with that of Andocides to Sparta within a convincing chronological framework. The internal difficulties which he saw were that (1) none of the envoys to Persia also went to Sparta, (2) Conon's four listed colleagues cannot be identified with certainty or probability, or are unknown otherwise, (3) there is an apparent contradiction in Xenophon's apparent statements both that all the envoys returned home and that Conon was arrested by Tiribazus and (4) Conon appears both as a Persian admiral and an Athenian diplomat.

By now there is a general acceptance of a suitable chronological sequence which places first the conference with Tiribazus at Sardis, where the Spartans and the Athenians, represented by Conon and his colleagues, confronted each other³). Then after those discussions ended the centre of renewed diplomatic activity was at Sparta, where the Athenians sent Andocides and his colleagues to present their case⁴).

We are then left with the internal difficulties, which I propose to consider in reverse order, for my principal purpose is to comment on the aspects of the selection of personnel for Athenian embassies. As Jacoby admits, Conon could be described in 392 as a Persian admiral or an Athenian diplomat according to whether the ancient commentator was writing with a Spartan or Athenian bias, and Xenophon's position as an Athenian exile in the Peloponnese was ambivalent. But whatever were Conon's recent services or current obligations to Persia he was playing a role vital to the welfare of his native Athens. Not

1) Xen. *Hell.* 4, 8, 13.

2) F. Jacoby, *FGrHist.* 3b Supp. (Notes) p. 417, n. 27.

3) See T. T. B. Ryder, "Koine Eirene" (London 1965), 27f.

4) Andoc. 3; Jacoby *op. cit.* 328, Philochorus, F 149; Ryder *op. cit.* 27f.

only was that the substance of Antalcidas' complaints to Tiritibazus but also some of Conon's contributions, albeit derived from Persia, are well attested⁵⁾.

The contradiction noted in Xenophon's account that all the Athenian envoys returned home from Sardis and that Conon was arrested may be more apparent in the translation than necessarily shown by the text, for whereas the two key words most commonly would be taken to mean "they returned home" they could also mean "they departed homewards"⁶⁾, and we do not find suitably precise information on the time and place of Conon's arrest by Tiribazus.

Of the four colleagues of Conon, Dion may be identified with the orator who was mentioned as a contemporary of Archinus at the end of the fifth century⁷⁾. A Hermogenes, brother of Callias the younger⁸⁾, himself an important diplomat and Spartan *proxenos*⁹⁾, is otherwise known from this period. A Callimedon of Collytus is known to have been connected with the family of Agyrrius¹⁰⁾, a politician active in those years. Callisthenes, however, is completely unassociated. But even if all five envoys were otherwise unknown that would not create any insuperable difficulty in accepting the account of the composition of the embassy; for there are other well documented embassies which consisted of envoys whose names are otherwise unknown. For example, of the ten envoys sent to Olynthus in 383 the names of five men survive, Nicostratus, Phaenippus, Thrasyclus, Hermippus and Athenion¹¹⁾, but all are otherwise unknown. Of the five envoys sent to Byzantium in 378¹²⁾ nothing further is known about two men, Xenodocus and Alcimachus, and little is known of two more, Excestides and Orthobulus. Of the three envoys sent to Mytilene in 368/7¹³⁾ Timonothus and Aristopeithes are known only by name, and of the three envoys sent to Thrace in 356¹⁴⁾ only Thrason finds a chance mention elsewhere¹⁵⁾.

If there are larger gaps in Attic prosopography than is convenient, is there any substance in the objection made to

5) Xen. *Hell.* 4, 8, 9-10: 12-13; Dem. 20, 72-4.

6) Xen. *Hell.* 4, 8, 15.

7) Plato, *Menexenus*, 234b.

9) Xen. *Hell.* 6, 3, 4.

11) *I. G.* II² 36.

13) *I. G.* II² 107.

15) Aesch. 3, 138/9.

8) *id.* *Cratylus*, 384b.

10) Ath. 8, 340c.

12) *I. G.* II² 41.

14) *I. G.* II² 127.

Xenophon's list of names on the grounds that none of them corresponds with the four surviving names of the ten envoys who went to Sparta in 392/1? Further is Xenophon's credibility diminished because Epicrates and Phormisius, who went as envoys to Persia in 394¹⁶⁾, were not listed in 392? The answer to both questions is probably negative. For whatever remarks Demosthenes may have made about Leon and Timagoras, envoys to Persia in 367, serving together as envoys for four years¹⁷⁾, continuity of diplomatic representation was not a feature of Athenian diplomacy. For from some dozen Athenian embassies to Persia between *c.* 450 and *c.* 340, which included twenty three men who are known by name, there are only two possible instances, involving Callias and Diotimus, where one man went on more than one embassy to Persia, and neither instance is beyond dispute. Callias certainly visited Susa, possibly in 462/1¹⁸⁾, when his visit coincided with that of an Argive embassy, and again *c.* 449 to arrange what came to be known as the Peace of Callias¹⁹⁾. A Diotimus has been credited with an embassy to Susa in 433/2²⁰⁾ and perhaps the same man went in 409/8 as Alcibiades' representative to the satrap Pharnabazus²¹⁾. Therefore the omission of Epicrates in 392, despite his earlier appointment in 394, need not have been remarkable; and it must be remembered that he had been involved in a minor scandal concerning the acceptance of gifts on his embassy in 394, although the matter had been the subject of public mirth rather than of prosecution²²⁾.

If there was little continuity of representation on embassies to a particular destination then we should even less expect embassies to different states to have a composition similar to each other – even over a short period. Of all the known Athenian envoys to Persia from *c.* 450 to *c.* 340 only two are known to have been despatched elsewhere; Callias was sent on the embassy to arrange the Thirty Years Peace with Sparta in 446/5²³⁾, and Epicrates went to negotiate with the Spartans in 392/1²⁴⁾. If anything was remarkable about the embassies of 392 to Persia

16) Plut. *Pel.* 30, 7; Ath. 6, 229f. 17) Dem. 19, 191.

18) Hdt. 7, 151. See E. M. Walker, *CAH* V, 75 and 470, who gives a date *ca* 461, and S. K. Eddy, "On the Peace of Callias", *CP* 65 (1970), 11, who dates Callias' earlier embassy to 464/3.

19) Diod. Sic. 12, 4, 5.

20) *FGrHist* I 5, Damastes, F 8.

21) Xen. *Hell.* 1, 3, 12.

22) Plut. *Pel.* 30, 7.

23) Andoc. 3, 16; Diod. Sic. 12, 7.

24) Philoch. *op. cit. supra* n. 4.

and 392/1 to Sparta it was rather that Callias, the Spartan *proxenos*, who in 371 claimed to be fulfilling his third mission to Sparta²⁵), was omitted in spite of the fact that he was sufficiently senior to be one of the generals in 391/0²⁶).

On general grounds, it would be a rash historian who would accuse Xenophon of fabrication as distinct from distortion or selective presentation. Certain incidental details that the embassy of 392 involved consultations with the Boeotians, Argives and Corinthians lend an air of conviction. In addition the selection of Conon was by no means improbable and the details of his career suggest that he would have been a powerful contender for election.

Conon's last recorded military exploit on behalf of the Persians was in the spring of 393²⁷), when he raided the Peloponnesian coast before his return to Athens together with Evagoras of Cyprus in the following autumn²⁸). Soon after his return, which was commemorated by the erection of a statue²⁹), Conon in 393 proposed the embassy of his friend Aristophanes and Eunomus, the guest-friend of Dionysius, to Syracuse³⁰); and before long Aristophanes went as envoy to Cyprus³¹), where Conon had established such close links. Before his return Conon had helped the Athenian revival and after his return he assumed an important political role, enjoying considerable popularity.

His reputation for trustworthiness among the Greeks, with whose liberty he was closely identified³²), made him an eminently suitable envoy to send to Tiribazus. In addition he had served well the Persian cause and the Athenians would have had no prior reason to think that he would be exposed to any particular risk on a mission to Persia. They did miscalculate the reactions of Tiribazus, but equally Tiribazus miscalculated the reactions of his King, of whose intentions the Athenians had for the moment the sounder appraisal³³): There was an occupational risk involved on embassies to Persia, for they were frequently intercepted by third parties before their arrival, and after arrival they ran the risk of corruption by gifts, or of being

25) Xen. *Hell.* 6, 3, 4.

27) Xen. *Hell.* 4, 8, 7f.

28) Dem. 20, 71; Diod. Sic. 14, 84, 4.

29) Dem. 20, 68-70.

31) Lys. 19, 23.

33) Xen. *Hell.* 4, 8, 17f.

26) Xen. *Hell.* 4, 5, 13.

30) Lys. 19, 19.

32) Isoc. 4, *Paneg.*, 142.

led around in circles³⁴), but Conon's escape from Tiribazus was contrived, by design or accident, and he lived to enjoy his property in Cyprus before an honourable burial in Athens³⁵).

Of Conon's embassy to Tiribazus in 392 there remains little doubt.

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UNKENNTNIS UND MISSVERSTEHEN ALS PRINZIP UND QUELLE DER KOMIK IN MENANDERS SAMIA¹)

Die Menanderfunde- und Publikationen der letzten Jahre haben unsere Kenntnis des Dichters mächtig erweitert. Dabei wurden vor allem schon bekannte Wesenszüge bestätigt: die Dichte seiner Kompositionsweise, die seine Handlungen straff und fugenlos aufbaut, die menschliche Wärme, die die gestalteten Schicksale so ergreifend macht, das Lauern menschlicher Tragik hinter dem heiteren Geschehen, die Kunst der Menschencharakterisierung, die Eigenheiten der Personen bis in einzelne Worte und Wendungen herausarbeitet und ihnen wieder im Aufbau des Ganzen ihre Funktion gibt. Deutlich wurde aber auch – vielleicht weniger erwartet – Menanders Freude an ausgelassener Komik: man denke an die Rüpelszene mit dem Koch Sikon und dem Sklaven Getas im Dyskolos, oder zwischen dem Koch und seinem Diener in der Aspis, an die Possenszene des falschen Arztes in der Aspis.

Diese Freude am Lustigen, an Situationskomik, die das Publikum zu Stürmen des Lachens mitreißen soll, scheint sich in der Samia im ganzen Verlauf der Handlung auszuleben: der Dichter schafft und reiht Situationen aneinander, in denen die Personen die wesentlichen Sachverhalte nicht kennen und daher ihre vorgefaßten Pläne und Absichten, sobald ausgeführt, sich als absurd erweisen und in denen sie lächerlich verkehrt reagieren, reden und handeln; mit diesem Effekt nahe verwandt ist der

34) Strabo 17, 1, 19.

35) Lys. 19, 39: 41; Paus. 1, 29, 15.

1) Verwiesen sei auf H. Lloyd-Jones, *Menander's Samia in the light of the new evidence*, Yale Classical Studies, Cambridge 1972, S. 119ff. und seine Bibliographie auf S. 119, Anm. 1.