

CIMON AND ATHENIAN AID TO SPARTA: ONE EXPEDITION OR TWO?

I have no hesitation in rejecting the *two* Athenian expeditions to Ithome, which some historians have accepted on the strength of the doublet in Plut., *Cim.* 16.8–10; 17.3.¹

Did Cimon lead two Athenian expeditions in the late 460's to aid Sparta during the 3rd Messenian War or only one? De Ste. Croix's pithy assessment of the problem quoted directly above nicely sums up the majority view: Plutarch provides the only significant evidence for two campaigns, and his account is easily dismissed as a doublet. This point of view, moreover, has a longstanding and august pedigree,² and in the middle of the last century calmly survived the direct assault launched against it by Papantoniou (taking Grote's objections as his cue).³ It is thus fair to say that the one-expedition point of view has remained the orthodox one,⁴ and so much so that in surveys of the period, outside of specialist treatments, the possibility of the occurrence of a first expedition before the one recorded by Thucydides at 1.102 is usually not even mentioned.⁵

1) De Ste. Croix (1972) 173 n. 19.

2) Being supported, e.g., by Grote (1856) 316–317; Wilamowitz (1893) v. 2, 291 n. 3; Busolt (1897) 243–244, 260–262; Beloch (1916) 195–198; Uxkull-Gyllenband (1927) 71–72; and Taeger (1932) 10 n. 10.

3) Papantoniou (1951) 176–181.

4) Post-Papantoniou one-expedition adherents include: Jacoby (1954) iii b, v. 2, 369; Reece (1962) 117; Oliva (1971) 152–163; Deane (1972) 100–101 n. 36; Meiggs (1972) 89 n. 3; Cole (1974) 374–376; Blamire (1989) 172; Lewis (1992) 109; Rhodes (1992) 69; Parker (1993) 131 n. 13. French (1955) 113–117, had accepted the two campaigns, but later dismissed Plutarch's account as a complication of the problem (1971) 42 n. 52.

5) This is even the case in very thoughtful and otherwise detailed treatments such as those of Domaszewski (1925) 11; Walker (1927) 69–72; Gomme (1945) 301, 403–405, 410; Bengtson (1950) 183; Ehrenberg (1973) 201–204; Unz (1986) 68–85; Henderson (1987) 201; Cartledge (2002) 186–194; and Hornblower (2011) 21–25; see also Jacoby (1954) iii b, v. 2, 455–461; Botsford / Robinson / Kagan (1969) 161–162; Bury / Meiggs (1972) 213. The possibility is not even mentioned by Bloedow (2000) 89–101, even though the eventuality of social revolution at Athens during Cimon's first absence would seem to have been an important one to consider for his thesis.

Orthodoxy, however, has not proved to be absolute unanimity. In the past half-century, a handful of ancient historians have, to a greater or lesser degree, given voice to doubts about the certainty of the majority view.⁶ It is hoped that it may be shown here that this dissent has indeed been on the right track, and that Plutarch's testimony for two expeditions can be sufficiently buttressed by other evidence to warrant accepting it as valid.

I Thucydides and Silence

Thucydides' mention of only one Athenian mission to Sparta has always been a key concern in the general reluctance to give the possibility of two expeditions serious consideration.

Had [Thucydides] known of any such [prior expedition], he could not have written the account which stands in his text.⁷

But of course Thucydides did omit other significant events in his treatment of the Pentecontaetia. For example, we find no mention of the battle of Oinoe (Paus. 1.15.1; 10.10.4),⁸ or of Pericles' expedition to Pontus (Plut. Per. 20.1–2), or of the Peace of Callias (Diod. 12.4.4–6; 12.26.2)⁹ – and while the historicity of these and other items has likewise been doubted on the basis of Thucydides'

6) In an important note, Pelling (2007) 97 n.75, provides a comprehensive synopsis of the scholarship and is "inclined to think" that Plutarch is correct in claiming two expeditions. Hammond, in his survey (1967) 290–291, presents the two campaigns under Cimon's leadership as fact, and had earlier argued forcefully for the existence of the first: (1955) 377–378, 381, 404; Sealey (1957) 370, supported Hammond's defense of Plutarch's account, but exhibited more diffidence in later years about the possibility of two campaigns: (1964) 22 n.37; (1976) 256; McNeal (1968) 15–61, argues for two, with only the first campaign being led by Cimon; Badian (1993) 89–90; 208 n.31, n.34, praising Hammond and Sealey's analysis, accepted both expeditions; Wright (1998) 128–129, also accepted Plutarch's testimony; Green (2006) 129 n.235, appears to allow the possibility of two campaigns (based upon his presumption of two major earthquakes wracking Sparta during this period).

7) Grote (1856) 317 n.1. Grote does acknowledge that "mere silence on the part of Thucydides, in reference to the events of a period which he professes to survey only briefly, is not always a very forceful negative argument".

8) See Hammond (1967) 292.

9) See Bresson (2010) 386 ff., for discussion and bibliography regarding these and other examples.

omission of them from this section of his *History*, taken together they tend to prove the point that his silence alone should not be seen as a decisive argument against the historicity of events testified to in other sources.

It should be noted at the outset that Thucydides does not deny the existence of a prior expedition, nor, chronological considerations aside (see below), is the possibility of a first mission to Sparta ruled out by his text. These are important considerations in analyzing Plutarch's testimony: unless Plutarch has concocted not only the fact of a first expedition but also the differences he relates in the historical circumstances between the two, the information about the first campaign which conflicts in substance with the *History's* account of the Ithome mission will have had to come from some source to which Thucydides also had access. It therefore seems at least as likely that Thucydides would have felt compelled to correct the record vis-à-vis Plutarch's source regarding the circumstances of the Ithome campaign (or about the fact of a prior campaign, had there been none) as he was to avoid the issue entirely.¹⁰ Thucydides' omission thus cuts both ways, at least to some degree, even in the case of a potential doublet on Plutarch's part.

Rather than understanding the absence from the pages of the *History* of the first Athenian expedition to Sparta as proof of its non-existence, however, given Thucydides' purpose and method in the Pentecontaetia it seems preferable to see the omission as thematic rather than substantive. The digression which is the Pentecontaetia has generally been understood as serving to highlight the growth of Athenian power in the pre-war period along with Spar-

10) This would seem to be particularly the case if that source was Hellanicus. Thucydides did, of course, name Hellanicus as the only previous historian to cover the Pentecontaetia, and criticized him for his brevity and inaccuracy in this very section (1.97.2). Parker (2004) 35–36, argues that both Thucydides and Ephorus were utilizing Hellanicus in treating the Pentecontaetia, but that he was followed more “faithfully and fully” by Ephorus. In any case, Hellanicus is probably the ultimate source for any information Plutarch had about this era which was not derived from Thucydides (and Plutarch seems to have had direct access to Hellanicus as well: e. g., de Herod. mal. 869A, where he compares his account with that of Ephorus). For Ephorus' use of Hellanicus see also Barber (1935) 120–123. For bibliography and discussion on the question of Thucydides' use of Hellanicus or lack thereof, see Joyce (1999) 1–5, esp. 4 n. 14. For a brief on not automatically preferring Thucydides to contrary information about this period which may ultimately come from Hellanicus, see Schreiner (1997) 11–20.

ta's fear of that growing power as the main catalyst for war (Thuc. 1.23.6; cf. 1.89.1; 1.99.3; 1.118.2).¹¹ It is therefore entirely understandable that Thucydides would focus upon material that illustrated that theme to the exclusion of neutral or potentially contradictory information (whereas an uncritical cataloging of events would not be the best way to achieve his goal of demonstrating that Spartan fear of Athenian growth and aggressiveness led to the war).¹²

The Pentecontaetia is constructed on a bipolar opposition between Athens and Sparta that amply suffices to justify the "holes" in the sequence of events attributed to it...¹³

Since a first expedition to a Sparta in serious trouble and saved by Athenian intervention may be argued to have undermined Thucydides' overall theme of Spartan aggression in response to pernicious Athenian growth, it is easy enough to see how passing over the event in silence was for him the better choice.¹⁴ Furthermore, even if we assign to Thucydides no particular bias, in his broad-sweep treatment of these years there is no doubt but that some events had to be omitted (even if we may deem them more important than Thucydides did).¹⁵ From a purely stylistic point of view,

11) Connor (1984) 42, notes that this section of the *History* is "highly selective and focused on themes and ideas rather than on comprehensive coverage". On Thucydides' thematic focus in the Pentecontaetia, see also Stader (1993) 53–55; and Bresson (2010) 387–388. For the point that this thematic approach also helps to explain apparent chronological difficulties, see Walker (1957) 36.

12) According to Badian (1993) 93, Thucydides "only selects and presents to us what will contribute to his thesis [in the Pentecontaetia]"; Bresson (2010) 386: "we are dealing with a narrative justifying Thucydides' view..."; on Thucydides' omission elsewhere in the *History* of material which "would have tended to put the pre-war behaviour of the Athenians in a more aggressive light, or the Spartans' behavior in a more favorable one", see Hornblower (1994) 140–148. On Thucydides' potential bias in this regard, see also Schreiner (1976) 19–63; (1977) 19–38; and Luginbill (2011) 46–49.

13) Bresson (2010) 383.

14) Badian (1993) 208 n.34: Thucydides may have left out the first expedition to avoid reader suspicion regarding his report of the Spartan pledge to help Thasos as being too duplicitous to believe in the wake of genuine and needful Athenian help.

15) McNeal (1968) 17, believes that Thucydides mentions only the second of the two expeditions "because of its disastrous consequences"; similarly French (1955) 113: "Thucydides perhaps chose to mention only the second, and more important, expedition – important, that is, in its consequences for Athenian-Spartan relations."

therefore, an argument can be made that the inclusion of both campaigns along with the concomitant necessity of chronicling the comings and goings of Cimon (who was by no means a focus of his) would have been for Thucydides a detriment to the stylistic flow of the *History* in this section.¹⁶

All historical writing is necessarily selective, and Thucydides' program was professedly so (1.22.2–4).¹⁷ Given that the Pentecontaetia is itself a digression away from the main narrative and is notorious for its "Lückenhaftigkeit",¹⁸ the absence of evidence in the *History* for Cimon's first expedition to aid Sparta should not be taken as evidence of historical absence.

II Aristophanes and Exaggeration

And ye, Laconians, for I'll turn to you,
Do you not mind how Pericleidas came
(His coat was scarlet but his cheeks were white),
And sat a suppliant at Athenian altars
And begged for help? 'Twas when Messene pressed
Weighing you down, and God's great earthquake too.
And Cimon went, Athenian Cimon went
With his four thousand men, and saved your State.
And ye, whom Athens aided, now in turn
Ravage the land which erst befriended you.

Lysistrata 1137–1146¹⁹

In Thucydides' description of the expedition to Ithome, we find no such indication of Spartan desperation or of effective Athenian help as evidenced in Lysistrata's words above. Indeed, in Thucydides' account the rebels are already confined to Ithome when the summons is issued, and he tells us that the principal reason Sparta even asked for this help was the perceived relative superiority of

16) This is all the more so to the extent that we find in the Pentecontaetia evidence of ring-composition or similarly deliberate stylistic parallelism; see Hammond (1952) 127–141; Katičić (1957) 179–196; (1960) 41–60; Chambers (1963) 6–14; McNeal (1970) 312–325; Wick (1982) 16; Bresson (2010) 385 ff.

17) De Romilly's view: (1956) 2–3.

18) Robert (1890) 421.

19) Translation by Rogers (1924) 109.

the Athenians in siege warfare (ὅτι τειχομαχεῖν ἐδόκουν δυνατοὶ εἶναι, 1.102.2).²⁰ Rather than actually benefitting from the Athenian aid even in this respect, however, the contingent was summarily dismissed to the great consequent damage of relations between the two powers. In short, while Aristophanes describes an Athenian expedition summoned and sent to Sparta at the beginning of the crisis, the circumstances behind the sending of the expedition related in the *History* do not seem at all critical nor the dispatch of it immediate, and no benefit whatsoever is rendered upon its eventual arrival. The disparity between the respective circumstances of the two accounts is so great that it is hard to see how this can be attributed merely to comic exaggeration.²¹ Had there been no appreciable threat (as seems to be the case at the time of the mission described by Thucydides), the argument given to Lysistrata here by Aristophanes would lack all credibility (whereas, for all its comic elements, it is represented as being a serious one).²²

The scholion [Σ^R at *Lys.* 1142b] concludes ἔως Κίμων ἐλθὼν διὰ τὴν ἱκετηρίαν ἔσσωσεν αὐτούς. This was obviously drawn from our passage but may have been accepted as historically true (not merely a scholiast's embellishment of his source).²³

It may be argued that there are reasons why such acceptance was not unreasonable, then or now. The scholiast seems to have had access to additional information about these events not otherwise attested (i. e., the destruction of “the Odeion”), and provides details,

20) Criticism of Thucydides' representation here, based upon Athens' dubious record in siege warfare, is misplaced. In his narrative, the Spartans seem to be thinking more about Athenian derring-do in such situations (exemplified at Plataea: *Hdt.* 9.70), rather than special technical skill: they consider the Athenians in such situations to be *δυνατοί*, not necessarily *ἐμπειροί*. Thucydides represents the Spartans as intending to utilize the Athenians as shock troops as at Plataea (apparently in hopes of minimizing their own casualties); see Classen / Steup (1919) 271; and Gomme (1945) 301–302.

21) That is the justification generally employed for dismissing Aristophanes: e. g., Grote (1856) 317 n. 1; Lewis (1992) 109; Henderson (1987) 201. Papantoniou (1951) 179, while admitting to elements of comic exaggeration here (in the physical appearance of Pericleidas, the salvation of all of Sparta, and even the size of the expedition), argues that the effects of the earthquake and revolt are not exaggerated.

22) Hammond (1955) 377 n. 1; Pelling (2007) 97 n. 75: “Yet even in comedy, Lysistrata would find it difficult to talk of Cimon ‘saving all Sparta’ ... if the response to Pericleidas’ appeal had simply been the humiliating rebuff”.

23) Henderson (1987) 201.

albeit in slightly different phraseology), which are very similar to what we find in Plutarch (e.g., the dramatic effects of the earthquake on Taygetus and the near totality of the devastation visited on the city of Sparta).²⁴ In short, along with Plutarch, he seems to have a source not dependent on Aristophanes whose description is quite different from the circumstances behind Thucydides' Ithome campaign. Nor is this the only evidence to suggest that Aristophanes is referencing an earlier situation. Xenophon represents the Spartans at this time as the besieged rather than the besiegers (ἐπολιορκούντο: Hell. 6.5.33–34),²⁵ while Diodorus likewise describes a Sparta initially devastated (15.66.4), and compelled as a result to seek Athenian help.²⁶

οἱ δὲ Σπαρτιάται καταφυγόντες ἐπὶ τὴν παρὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων βοήθειαν προσελάβοντο παρ' αὐτῶν δύναμιν· οὐδὲν δ' ἦττον καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων συμμάχων ἀθροίσαντες δυνάμεις ἀξιόμαχοι τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐγενήθησαν.

Diodorus 11.64.2²⁷

Ion of Chios' report of Cimon's argument that Athens should "not suffer Hellas to be crippled, nor their city to be robbed of its yoke-fellow" (FGrH 392 F 14)²⁸ is another indication of the perilous na-

24) καὶ γὰρ τοῦ Ταῦγέτου τι παρερράγη . . . καὶ τὸ Ωιδεῖον καὶ ἕτερα καὶ οἰκίαι πλείσται, καὶ Μεσσηνιοὶ ἀποστάντες ἐπολέμουν καὶ οἱ εἴλωτες ἐπ(αν)έστησαν, ἕως Κίμων ἐλθὼν διὰ τὴν ἰκετηρίαν ἔσωσεν αὐτούς. Hangard (1996) 50.

25) Cited by Henderson (1987) 201, who also notes that the scholiast gives "the standard Atthidographic date of 468/7 for earthquake and revolt". Regardless of whether or not one wishes to accept so early a date, pegging this effective campaign of Cimon to "the twelfth year after the battle of Plataea" (ΣΡ at Lys. 11.44a: Κίμων, μετὰ τὴν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς μάχην ἰβ' ἔτει) makes it all the more difficult to combine with the Ithome campaign which must have come significantly later.

26) See Hammond (1955) 378–379: Diodorus seems to conflate the two campaigns. He assumed, perhaps, that the allied contingents stayed on station for some considerable time until the Spartans "gained the upper hand" in the conflict. Diodorus's addition at 11.64.4 of the ten years of the war to the period following the Athenian dismissal (as it is only at this point that the helots revolt πανδημεῖ) is redolent of a conflation of accounts.

27) This description follows the pillaging of Laconia by Messenians allied with helots (after the initial plan to take Sparta is frustrated by Archidamus' quick response), and is followed in turn by the dismissal of the Athenians, ὑποψίας γενομένης.

28) Translation by Perrin (1914) 457. The meaning rather is "ill-matched with its yoke-fellow" according to Pelling (2007) 96 n. 71. Sparta must be rescued because if allowed to be seriously damaged she would not be able to assist in putting up a solid front against the barbarian.

ture of Sparta's situation at the time of the first request for aid: there is little likelihood that such a plea would have been made or accepted were the circumstances of its delivery not far more dire than those reported by Thucydides in his description of the background to the Athenian mission to Ithome.²⁹ And there are certainly other indications as well that the crisis which initially prompted Sparta to seek help from Athens was not so short-lived that she was able to confine her adversaries to their defensive works on Ithome before the Athenian contingent was even able to arrive. There is, for example, the matter of Spartan casualties,³⁰ as well as a number of events subsequent to the earthquake and the outbreak of the revolt that are difficult to constrict to the short period between the initial embassy requesting aid and the arrival of the Athenian hoplites.³¹

29) De Ste. Croix (1972) 170, effectively defends the historicity of the quotation. See also Pelling (2007) 95–97.

30) The revolt was, according to Oliva (1971) 163, the “greatest upheaval” Sparta suffered in the classical period. The casualties from the earthquake are said to have been significant (Diod. 15.66.4), and, according to Philochorus (FGh 365 F 117), to have led to Athens' ascendancy over Sparta; this, in the opinion of Henderson (1987) 201, “probably reflects knowledge of a disastrous and long-lasting fall in the Spartiate population as a result of the earthquake and revolt” (cf. Thuc. 118.2). Diodorus put the number killed at 20,000; in commenting on Diodorus' figure, Green (2006) 128–129 n.235, connects this disaster to the apparent decline in the number of hoplites Sparta fielded at Plataea as compared with the first phase of the Peloponnesian War; one might add the surprisingly docile approach Sparta took in the 1st Peloponnesian War, especially before Tanagra; see Cole (1974) 372, for discussion. The devastation resulting from the earthquake, coupled with the concomitant loss of manpower (however substantial), certainly militates against any assumption of a Blitzkrieg-like campaign that drove the rebels all the way back to Ithome in Messenia almost instantaneously. On the manpower issue, see also Grundy (1908) 77–96; Ziehen (1933) 218–237; Toynbee (1969) 346–352; Cartledge (1976) 25–28; Hansen (1982) 172–189; Cawkwell (1983) 385–400; Figueira (1986) 165–213; Hodkinson (1986) 378–406; Lewis (1992) 108; and Cartledge (2002) 190–191.

31) As problematic as the chronology of the 3rd Messenian war surely is, there are certainly indications of a series of military actions and developments which, especially taken together, seem virtually impossible to compress into the narrow window between Pericleidas' embassy and Cimon's arrival at Ithome (were we to take Thucydides' expedition as the only one); these include the significant level of help Sparta requested and received (e. g., Thuc. 2.27.2; 3.54.5; 4.56); Lewis (1992) 109; Hornblower (1991) 158; Sparta's resultant inability to aid Mycenae (Diodorus 11.65.4); Hammond (1955) 380; the possibility of a general Arcadian revolt: Wright (1998) 131–135; Sealey (1976) 256, notes the possibility but decides against it; cf. also Kelly (1974) 82–83; but with at least a greater level of activity among the Peloponnesians.

But perhaps the most serious objections to construing Lysistrata's words as mere comic excess come from Thucydides himself: he reports that the Spartans were prevented from checking Athenian growth during this period on account of "internal wars" (1.118.2: τὸ δὲ τι καὶ πολέμοις οἰκείοις ἐξαιρεγόμενοι);³² that the Aeginetans, after their expulsion, were particularly well treated by the Spartans precisely because of their support at the time of the earthquake and helot revolt (2.27.2: ὅτι σφῶν εὐεργέται ἦσαν ὑπὸ τὸν σεισμόν καὶ τῶν εἰλώτων τὴν ἐπανάστασιν); and that the Plataeans made their support of Sparta at this time in response to the "exceptional threat" occasioned by the earthquake and the revolt the crowning argument in their plea for mercy (3.54.5: ὅτεπερ δὴ μέγιστος φόβος περιέστη τὴν Σπάρτην μετὰ τὸν σεισμόν τῶν ἐς Ἴθώμην εἰλώτων ἀποστάντων, τὸ τρίτον μέρος ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐξέπεμψαμεν ἐς ἐπικουρίαν, cf. 4.44.3; 4.55.1; 4.80.2–5).³³

Λακεδαιμόνιοι δέ, ὡς αὐτοῖς πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Ἴθώμῃ ἐμῆκνετο ὁ πόλεμος, ἄλλους τε ἐπεκαλέσαντο ξυμμάχους καὶ Ἀθηναίους· οἱ δ' ἦλθον Κίμωνος στρατηγούντος πλήθει οὐκ ὀλίγη.

Thucydides 1.102.1

In the very passage where Thucydides describes the expedition to Ithome, he specifically states that the Spartans summoned the Athenians not immediately, but only after the war "was stretching on". In and of itself, therefore, ἐμῆκνετο ὁ πόλεμος would seem to suggest that rather than excluding here the possibility of a prior expedition, Thucydides was instead choosing to focus on the second stage of Athenian help, the campaign which, for his purposes, was the significant one. Aristophanes' account better match-

ponnesian neutral states: Lewis (1992) 109–110; a battle at Stenyclerus where Aeimnestus and 300 Spartans were lost (Hdt. 9.64.2), and perhaps culminating in a "battle at the Isthmos" (Hdt. 9.35.2); for discussion, see Macan (1908); How / Wells (1928) 304; Flower / Marinocola (2002) 172–173. Despite the vexed nature of these questions, the war seems to have progressed in two phases, and it seems probable that the first phase was more than a few months in duration: Wright (1998) 129; cf. Hammond (1955) 380 n. 2, commenting on Xen. Hell. 5.2.3; Blamire (1989) 168–169, discusses this and other possible theories; in any case, Thucydides' treatment of the revolt suffers from "severe concision": Cartledge (2002) 190–191.

32) Hornblower (1983) 100; the phrase no doubt is meant to have a meaning wider than the helot revolt: De Ste. Croix (1972) 94–95; Wright (1998) 128.

33) For the effect of Sparta's fear of helot revolts on her foreign policy, see Luginbill (1999) 174–175.

es the evidence of the situation in Sparta at the time of Pericleidas' appeal than does the one described by Thucydides at 1.102, but the widely divergent circumstances only present difficulties if we refuse to accept that two different campaigns are in view in the respective passages.³⁴ Given the large amount of evidence which comports with Lysistrata's description, the differences between the two cannot be put down to exaggeration on the part of Aristophanes, carried forward and embellished by lackadaisical historians such as Plutarch and his possible sources later on:

No one trying to formulate a rival chronology would have *invented* an entirely different historical framework for it.³⁵

III Cimon and Chronology

Thucydides relates that Sparta was on the verge of invading Attica in support of Thasos when the earthquake and subsequent rebellion occurred (1.101.1–2). Since the siege of Thasos had begun in ca. 465/4 and lasted over two years (Thuc. 1.101.3),³⁶ and because the break with Sparta under the new leadership of Ephialtes and Pericles (after which it is impossible to place the Ithome expedition) cannot be dated much later than 462, those skeptical of two campaigns have generally been led to conclude that there is insufficient space in the chronology of the period for more than one expedition.³⁷ It should be noted at the outset, however, that the possibility of an earlier chronology for the first expedition in ca. 468/7 (based upon accepting the earlier Atthidographic date for the great

34) Not everyone, of course, accepts the later date for the great earthquake (and both Diodorus 11.63.1 and ΣR at Lys. 1142a speak of multiple Spartan earthquakes). See especially Sealey (1957) 368–371; Hammond's response (1959) 490; the discussion in Chambers (1963) 10–11; and Badian (1993) 93–95. Green (2006) 128–129 n. 35, suggests positing more than one earthquake as the most plausible way to harmonize all the data; cf. Kelly (1974) 83, who seems to split the Messenian revolt from that of the helots in 465; compare Cartledge's discussion of the conflict in the sources on distinguishing the two: (2002) 187–188.

35) Badian (1993) 104.

36) E. g., Walker (1927) 486; Gomme (1945) 395; Hammond (1967) 289; Deane (1972) 13; Rhodes (1992) 507–508.

37) Meiggs (1972) 89 n. 3: "... there seems to be no time left for another expedition not otherwise recorded."

earthquake) has not been without its adherents.³⁸ That eventuality would remove the objection.³⁹

Even retaining the more widely accepted date for the earthquake and subsequent revolt, however, the reasoning which would deny the possibility of a first expedition on account of chronological restrictions makes two assumptions, each of which may be legitimately questioned: the first, that the campaign seasons of 463 and 462 provide insufficient time for two expeditions to Sparta, is disposed of easily enough: there is no basis for rejecting the possibility *a priori*;⁴⁰ the second, that Cimon remained at Thasos for the duration of the siege – whereas we know of other instances in which cities, once invested, were left in the care of a garrison (e. g., Plataea on the part of the Peloponnesians: Thuc. 2.77–78; Scione on the part of the Athenians: Thuc. 4.133.4). As Gomme notes, it was in fact standard Athenian practice, once a siege had been effectively begun, to leave only a sufficient blockading force behind rather than to tie up the fleet and its entire complement of hoplites unnecessarily.⁴¹ Cimon was most likely free to conduct other operations after his initial victories and the investment of Thasos that first year.⁴² Indeed, he was prosecuted precisely for refusing to do

38) Notably, Badian (1993) 93–95.

39) It does admittedly create other difficulties such as the dating of the battle of Eurymedon; see Gomme (1945) 407–409; Unz (1986) 69–71; Hornblower (1991) 153; Badian (1993) 7–9, 76–77, 203 n. 6.

40) See section IV below. If we reject the common tendency among chroniclers – ancient and modern – to distribute important events one per year, other activities of Cimon, such as a possible expedition to Cyprus during this same period, will not obviate the possibility of two Spartan expeditions; see Domaszewski (1925) 11; Barnes (1953) 163–176; Raubitschek (1966) 40; and Blamire (1989) 158. As discussed immediately below, the Cyprus campaign, if historical, could theoretically also fall into the window of the somewhat lengthy siege of Thasos.

41) (1945) 18; in addition to the documented cases, Gomme mentions Aegina and Egypt as probable examples of this practice evidenced from Athens' ability to deploy considerable forces (to Corinth and Tanagra-Oinophyta respectively) in spite of these sieges. We may add as parallels deliberate stay-behind operations such as at Decelea, and the relief of commanders in the field such as Cleippides at Mytilene by Paches (Thuc. 3.18.4).

42) In a similar situation, Phormio had left a contingent behind at Potidaea to carry on the siege while he and the bulk of his force departed to exploit targets of opportunity in Chalcidice (Thuc. 1.64–65; 3.17.4). It is not necessary to accept Parker's contention, (1993) 131 n. 13, that the implications of Plutarch, Cim. 14.2 are that "Cimon saw the siege through to the end", at least not in the sense of remaining at Thasos for what may have been the better part of three campaigning seasons.

just that, thereby missing a putative opportunity to attack Macedon.⁴³ Even for those who wish to assume that Cimon's orders had initially entailed staying on Thasos for over two years uninterrupted until it surrendered as in the manner of Syracuse (although of course the relative distances involved and the comparative ease of returning to Athens once the campaigning season was over make the comparison a specious one), it must still be accepted that the Athenian demos had no qualms about recalling generals from their commands even while military operations were in train. Alcibiades was recalled from Sicily, and Cimon could have been summoned home all the more easily. If he had been recalled from Thasos for trial, following his acquittal Cimon may well have been the logical choice to head the first relief mission to Sparta.

We are thus left with a number of possibilities to explain how Cimon might have had the time and opportunity to conduct two such expeditions: 1) the first campaign was conducted before the siege of Thasos began (possibly by as much three years); 2) Cimon led the first campaign while the siege of Thasos was being conducted by a blockading force;⁴⁴ 3) despite the 'busy' chronology, Cimon's trial and acquittal and the two expeditions to Sparta did fall within the window of the two campaigning seasons of 463–462.⁴⁵ While it will be argued below that the last possibility best fits the evidence and is in fact what Plutarch means us to understand, the numerous alternative scenarios should suffice to categorize the chronological objection as somewhat less than an insurmountable one.

IV Plutarch and Credibility

Deutlich ist allein die grenzenlose Verwirrung, die hier stattfand . . .⁴⁶

"Confusion" has been the customary verdict leveled against Plutarch's account in his *Cimon* of these two campaigns by scholars

43) Pritchett (1974) 128, sees the charge as one of bribery (δῶρων γροφή); if so, this would indicate that the censure for inactivity may have covered more than just the time period after the surrender of Thasos.

44) Deane (1972) 18–19, considers as possible an expedition while the siege continued.

45) This window, moreover, will be widened considerably, should we prefer, along with Lang (1967) 271–272, to date the revolt of Thasos to 469–467.

46) Uxkull-Gyllenband (1927) 72.

who choose to find only one.⁴⁷ Where the reasons for Plutarch's putative confusion are explored and explained, a willingness to sacrifice chronology and the historical facts to his biographical objectives is generally found to be the root cause of Plutarch's 'doubling' of this event.

In der Tat, sind also drei Züge ausgeführt ...⁴⁸

Uxkull-Gyllenband is referring to Plutarch's statement at Cimon 15.2 that, following his acquittal on the Thasos affair, Cimon "sailed off on campaign again" (ὡς δὲ πάλιν ἐπὶ στρατείαν ἐξέπλευσε). Adding this to the two expeditions treated at 16.8 and 17.1 respectively, Uxkull-Gyllenband facetiously finds Plutarch guilty of tripling the episode.⁴⁹ Wilamowitz had already identified the problem in this section of the *Cimon* as consisting in Plutarch's need to link back into the historical, chronological progression of his main source at 17.2 after leaving it at 15.2 for the purpose of including the intervening digressions, and does so "gleich als ob nicht er die erzählung verdoppelte".⁵⁰ Plutarch's need to harmonize his sources in the process of weaving together the various anecdotes and supplemental material he desired to include here is therefore what stands at the root of the confusion.⁵¹ It remains to be answered, however, whether Plutarch confused himself along with us, or was deliberately playing fast and loose with history for the sake of producing a more readable biography. Absent two actual expeditions, after all, there would be only these two possibilities.⁵²

47) "Plutarch's whole account of Kimon's actions before his ostracism, *Kim.* 15–17.3, is chronologically so confused that little can be made of it": Gomme (1945) 411 n. 1; see also Wilamowitz (1893) 291–292 n. 3; Beloch (1916) 197; Taeger (1932) 10 n. 10; Hignett (1952) 339–340; Jacoby (1954) 369; Cole (1974) 376; Blamire (1989) 159; cf. Walker (1927) 467–468.

48) Uxkull-Gyllenband (1927) 72.

49) "... even the attentive student of this life can find three expeditions, one per chapter": Cole (1974) 376.

50) Wilamowitz (1893) 291–292 n. 3.

51) "So kehrte er zur Vorlage zurück und um diese mit dem Vorhergehenden in Einklang zu bringen, konnte er sich nicht anders helfen als mit einem zweiten Zuge nach Ithome": Uxkull-Gyllenband (1927) 73.

52) This is so even for those who wish to defend Plutarch without accepting two expeditions. Cole's statement (1974) 376: "Rather than being hopelessly confused historically, Plutarch's account is perfectly clear morally", sidesteps the issue of whether or not Plutarch got it horribly wrong on the one hand or deliberately sacrificed truth for the sake of art on the other.

Plutarch has certainly employed considerable skill in this section of his *Cimon*, folding in the quotations from Eupolis and Aristophanes and the anecdotes related by Ion and Stesimbrotus, and combining material from a number of additional sources in an artistic and readable way.⁵³ However, we have no reasonable grounds for indicting Plutarch of deliberately manipulating the historical record just to make his task in this section easier.⁵⁴ Not only do we have no indication that he ever did so but there is also the obvious point that a writer of his considerable abilities could certainly have found some other workable way of exiting the digression without (falsely, in the hypothetical) representing the Spartans as having sent to Athens for help a second time (Οἱ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τοὺς Ἀθηναίους αὐθις ἐκάλουν, *Cim.* 17.3).⁵⁵ The word αὐθις would seem to be the key here, because its use (or the idea behind using it), if it did not originate from Plutarch himself, had to have come from one of his sources.

It is obvious that [Plutarch's] αὐθις ἐκάλουν must come from his source (the fact, not the words). He was an experienced writer.⁵⁶

For a man so well-versed in the literature of the period, how likely is it that Plutarch could have been so uncertain of his facts about this particular chain of events that he became confused enough to insert an entire, additional campaign?⁵⁷ After all, it is not as if the

53) For the ring-composition here, see Cole (1974) 375–376; foreshadowed by Wilamowitz' comments: (1893) 291–292 n. 3.

54) E. g., there was no need for him to posit an additional expedition in order to be able to make use of the Lachertus anecdote, as implied by Uxkull-Gyllenband (1927) 72; also Hignett (1952) 339–340: the Lachertus digression caused Plutarch to “lose the thread of his narrative” and that “may be the reason” he speaks of a second expedition; but if Plutarch had suspected that there had really only been one expedition it is difficult to see what in his narrative presentation would have prevented him from attaching it to the return from the Ithome campaign.

55) This was not his first composition, after all, and Plutarch was never in the habit of using one source at a time without the interjection of other material: Flower (1994) 4.

56) Gomme (1945) 411 n.1, contradicting Weizsäcker (1931) 63–64; cf. McNeal (1968) 16: “But there are parts of Diodorus' narrative which make sense only if one presumes two separate expeditions – if one presumes, that is, that certain ancient sources were accustomed to speak of two campaigns.”

57) As noted by Connor (1968) 111–116, although Plutarch does utilize a wide swath of sources and adapts them to his purposes, he does so carefully; he is “not a drudge”.

Ithome expedition was an obscure historical side-note: the fact that Thucydides had played it up as the major break-point in the relationship between Athens and Sparta could not have been lost on him (and is clearly referenced at Cim. 17.2).⁵⁸ Could such an important episode really have been accidentally doubled in Plutarch's thinking? If Plutarch had been genuinely confused on the point, moreover, the more likely result would have been a conflation of all of the disparate information involving Athenian help sent to Sparta under Cimon into one single campaign.⁵⁹ Indeed, it seems highly unlikely that Plutarch would have risked censure on this point – or that it would have even occurred to him to write of two campaigns – unless he had little doubt that there had in fact been two, that is, unless this had been the tradition in the source or sources available to him.⁶⁰

Writing ἀὐθις was deliberate. If Plutarch really did not have information about the Ithome campaign being a second expedition, this would be an amazing example of mere speculation on his part elevated to the plane of historical truth in the full knowledge of so doing. Moreover, since Plutarch was writing for an educated and

58) Hornblower (2002) 22.

59) See Wardman (1974) 161–168: Plutarch was often confronted with alternatives and he did choose between them, not infrequently by repeating both and deciding in favor of one or the other by means of probability. But that is something quite different from using different accounts to concoct additional historical events. According to Kaesser (2004) 372–374, Plutarch's "tweaking" in the construction of his biographies consists of leaving out some things historiography would have to include and adding others it would overlook in terms of anecdotes; that is to say, it is selective in a different way from history-writing rather than being shoddy or fictive. To quote McNeal (1968) 24–25, to reject the two campaigns requires us to see Plutarch as a "literary hack", but "the crux of the problem" in assuming such an error here is "the man's wide reading". According to Schettino (2014) 418, Plutarch cites approximately 135 historians in the course of the *Lives* .

60) For a listing with commentary of Plutarch's sources in the *Cimon* , see Blamire (1989) 4–10; see also Schreiner (1977) 21–29, for the extent of his reliance on Callisthenes; Walker (1927) 468, finds Theopompus at fault for Plutarch's errors in this section; on which see Blamire (1989) 8; Wilamowitz (1893) 291–292 n. 3, sees Ion as the main source Plutarch is following here; Hammond (1955) 378, suggests Ephorus. Barrow notes that Plutarch had read Ephorus "in extenso": (1967) 158–160; and Parker (2004) 35–36, sees Ephorus' use of Hellanicus behind his divergence from Thucydides in the *Pentecontaetia* generally; on the nexus between Hellanicus, Thucydides, Ephorus and Diodorus, see also Rainey (2004) 236. Schettino (2014) provides a creditable overview of Plutarch's sources and general methodology of their use.

well-read audience, one would think that he would have been reluctant to make such a statement (*viz.*, confirming the historicity of two campaigns) if there were no source or tradition whatsoever to back him up. Since he puts this in such a matter-of-fact way, it seems dangerous to conclude that Plutarch's representation is merely conjecture.

Those rare historians who know their subject so thoroughly that they can write about it from memory are not apt to make silly blunders of the type discussed above. Whatever contradictions appeared in their sources are mentally resolved long before anything is set down on paper. As in the case of Plutarch, the written result is very carefully organized for a special purpose.⁶¹

Considering Plutarch's account on its own terms yields a workable result, one which is not only historically and chronologically sound, but which is also completely consonant with his method of illustrating character.⁶² Simply put, 15.1–2 of the *Cimon* is a forward-looking summary meant to stand as a structural support in the narrative; it is employed to open a window for Plutarch to explore Cimon's predilection for all things Spartan and the consequences of acting upon that predisposition – and very rightly so, since the bridge passage of 15.1–2 spans the time from the first legal process to his ostracism, for which misfortune (in Plutarch's view) Cimon's philolaconism was mostly to blame. Once this important excursus is completed, Plutarch takes the narrative back up in chronological order at 17.3. The material in-between, therefore, is much more than a digression (or even a ring-composition for the sake of stylistic artistry). It is a critically important explanation of this aspect of Cimon's character demonstrating how it guided his actions and affected his fortunes. The salient points may set forth as follows:

15.1–2: Bridge passage:

- Cimon is acquitted.
- Cimon then “sails away on military service”, and in his absence . . .
- the demos gets out of control; Ephialtes and Pericles disenfranchise the Areopagus.

61) McNeal (1968) 25, writing about this passage in the *Cimon*.

62) According to Van der Stockt (2014) 325, “the bulk of the achievements that bring out the hero's character are presented in chronological order”.

- Cimon returns and attempts to restore the old order.
- His enemies accuse him of philolaconism (Λακωνισμόν ἐπι-καλοῦντες).

15.3–17.2: Excursus on the charge of philolaconism:

- As illustrated by Eupolis.
- As illustrated by his naming of his sons.
- As illustrated by his relationship with the Spartans before the 3rd Messenian War.
- As illustrated by Stesimbrotus (ὄθεν φθόνον ἑαυτῷ συνῆγε καὶ δυσμένειάν τινα παρὰ τῶν πολιτῶν).
- As illustrated by his orchestration of the first Athenian relief expedition (ἡ δ' οὖν ἰσχύσασα μάλιστα κατ' αὐτοῦ τῶν διαβολῶν).
- As illustrated by his conduct of the second, abortive Athenian relief expedition to Ithome ...
- resulting in his ostracism (ἤδη τοῖς λακωνίζουσι φανερώς ἐχαλέπαινον).

17.3: Resumption of the narrative: Tanagra.

The worst charge that can be legitimately leveled against Plutarch's bridge passage in general (and about *πάλιν ἐπὶ στρατείαν ἐξέπλευσε* in particular) is that it is somewhat vague in its anticipation of future events. As a forward-looking summary to ground the reader chronologically in preparation for the excursus, however, it fulfills its purpose perfectly well, and without the historical inaccuracy of which Plutarch has been so often accused. We need not even resort to seeing Cimon's "sailing off" as a synopsis of all of his activities in the intervening years. Since the point of the bridge is to anticipate Cimon's ostracism – which the change of regimes at Athens coupled with the humiliation of Ithome made possible – this naval departure is likely meant to represent the Ithome campaign (the details of which along with preceding events, notably also the first Athenian expedition, were to be filled in shortly in the excursus).⁶³ Plutarch's purpose in this section, af-

63) Transporting both Athenian expeditions by ship would in any case be the most likely method, especially during a time of instability in the Peloponnesus and

ter all, is not to provide a detailed narrative of the events of these years but to explain how a great commander like Cimon could or would be ostracized, and to demonstrate that it was his affection for Sparta which led to the two Athenian expeditions that were in turn the proximate causes of his loss of influence and ostracism.

Conclusion

At Cimon 2.2, Plutarch says that he will “go through the deeds of the man in a truthful fashion”, and makes this claim in comparing his account to a portrait, a work of art also capable of bringing out a person’s character and disposition. Plutarch is talking about moral qualities, it is true, but to be guilty of such shoddiness in his representation of historical events (so as to add an additional campaign for which there was no precedent) would seem to be on the same level of offense as supplying – out of his own imagination – a character trait his subject did not possess. In short, to disbelieve Plutarch, a number of poorly supported assumptions have to be made about his method, his sources, and the other historical evidence in support of two campaigns (in particular, that provided by Aristophanes, Xenophon, and Thucydides himself). Given this other evidence, it is more prudent to accept the historicity of the first expedition than to deny it.⁶⁴

It may be more convenient for ancient historians simply to dismiss Plutarch’s representation, but there is no sound basis for doing so (even if this makes the already problematic chronology of the Pentecontaetia somewhat more difficult). In writing very clearly of two expeditions, Plutarch was following a source (possibly

Corinthian disaffection with Sparta in particular. As illustrated by the Lachertus anecdote, even the Athenian return by land from the first expedition was opposed. Given that time was of the essence in that first instance, a seaborne mission was all the more necessary. Meiggs (1972) 89 n.3, doubts, without explanation, that the Athenians went by sea, but goes on to admit that “most Athenian expeditions were sea-borne”. Cole (1974) 375; and Blamire (1989) 171, accept that Plutarch is correct in making the Lachertus episode take place on the return journey.

64) Thucydides, after all, would not have been mindful of potential controversy caused by his omission. He included what was important and necessary for the reader to receive “a clear view of what actually happened” (1.22.4), and that included in his view the second expedition, but not the first.

Hellanicus or someone, such as Ephorus, relying on Hellanicus – or another source now lost to us). Since Thucydides, who would certainly have been aware of this tradition, does not go out of his way to debunk the idea of two expeditions, his silence on the matter is actually evidence in favor of the historicity of this tradition as preserved for us by Plutarch (rather than a reason to discount it).

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