

War and Peace

in Ancient and Medieval History

Edited by
Philip de Souza and
John France

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3 War, peace and diplomacy in Graeco-Persian relations from the sixth to the fourth century BC

Eduard Rung

This chapter considers the evolution of Graeco-Persian diplomatic relations in the wider context of political relations between the Greek states and Achaemenid Persia. At first glance the history of Graeco-Persian relations looks like a clash between the free Greek city-states and the Achaemenid Empire, which ought to have resulted in the subjugation of the Greeks to a despotic Persian monarch. However, the unification of the Greeks in the Hellenic League in order to defend themselves prevented Persian expansion to the west, and after the initial period of the Persian Wars (499–479 BC) an uneasy peace developed, which was based on a balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. It quickly became clear that the most effective way to maintain that balance of power after the failed Persian attempt to conquer the Greeks in the early fifth century BC was by diplomacy. Persian power was balanced by the rise of the hegemonial states of Greece (Athens, Sparta, Thebes and Macedon), which were continually involved in diplomatic relations with Persia during the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Although a long-standing enmity had been created, which the Greeks characterised as a clash between Hellenes of Europe and the ‘barbarians’ of Asia, and there were periods of open warfare between some of the Greek states and Persia, peaceful relations seem to have been preferable to both sides and numerous peace treaties were negotiated by the representatives of Greek states and the Persian king.

Early contacts

The Achaemenid Persian Empire was created in the second half of the sixth century BC as the result of conquests by Cyrus the Great, Cambyses and Darius I.¹ Within the first decades of its existence the question of relations with the Greeks was one of the most important ones in Persian imperial policy. The demand for submission by the Greeks to the

¹ On the early history of the Achaemenid Empire see P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. Peter T. Daniels (Indiana, 2002), Part I.

authority of the Persian kings was on the agenda since Cyrus' conquest of Lydia in 546 BC. It was addressed to the Greek cities of Ionia and Aeolis. When Athenian envoys came to Sardis in 507 BC for the negotiation of a treaty of alliance with the satrap Artaphernes, they were faced with a demand for earth and water from the Persian king (Hdt. 5.73).²

The first actual demonstrations of the Persian imperial policy were the missions of Persian heralds to the Greeks asking them to give earth and water to the Great King of Persia. The Persian heralds (*hoi kerykes*) visited Greece twice. They were sent by King Darius I in 491 BC, and by Xerxes in 481 BC.³ The Persians hoped by diplomacy to divide the Greek world into two camps: those who would consent to submit themselves to the Persians and conclude an alliance against other Greeks, and those who would prefer to fight. This diplomatic action was crowned with success (Hdt. 6.48–9; 7.32, 132–3; Diod. Sic. 11.2.3; Paus. 3.12.7; Plut. *Them.* 6). According to Herodotus, the heralds who had been sent into Greece obtained what the king had bid them ask for from a large number of the states upon the mainland, and likewise from all the islanders whom they visited (Hdt. 6.49).

There were some Greek states which preferred to enter into alliances with the Great King. The *Aleuadae* of Thessaly sent their embassy to Xerxes in 486 BC (Hdt. 7.6). They consented to be the king's ally and, as Herodotus says, invited him to invade Greece.⁴ The Thebans and the Argives also were on friendly terms with the Great King, and rumours were spread that it was at their instigation that Xerxes invaded Greece (Argives: Hdt. 7.152; Thebans: Thuc. 3.62.3). These were the states against which the Hellenes concluded an agreement with one another (Hdt. 7.132). The philo-Persian attitude of many Greek states was designated by the Greeks as *medism*. As David F. Graf notes, 'to designate collaborating with Persia, the Greeks employed the verb *medizo* "side with the Medes" or the noun *medismos* "leaning toward the Medes, Medism", both derived from *medos*'.⁵

The causes of medism are not so easy to define, and each case of medism among the Greeks needs to be considered specifically. It is

² L. L. Orlin, 'Athens and Persia ca 507 BC.: A Neglected Perspective', *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of G. C. Cameron* (Ann Arbor, 1976), 255–66.

³ On these missions: R. Sealey, 'The Pit and the Well: The Persian Heralds of 491 B.C.', *The Classical Journal* 72 (1976), 13–20; L. M. Wery, 'Le meurtre des herauts de Darius en 491 et l'inviolabilité du heraut', *L'Antiquité Classique* 35 (1966), 468–88; A. Kuhrt, 'Earth and Water', in A. Kuhrt and H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (eds.), *Achaemenid History* (Leiden, 1988), vol. III, 87–99.

⁴ A. Keaveney, 'The Medisers of Thessaly', *Eranos* 93 (1995), 30–8.

⁵ D. F. Graf, 'Medism: The Origin and Significance of the Term', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 104 (1984), 15–30 at 15.

certain that the significant factor in the origin of the phenomenon of medism was the Greeks' fear of the might of the Great King of Persia, the danger of war and devastation of their own territory. However, this factor became less and less influential as the Persian threat decreased after 479 BC. Meanwhile the cases of medism did not disappear, even when the political history of the Greek world was dominated by the struggle for hegemony between Athens and Sparta in the fifth century BC. The hostile attitude of the Greeks to medism and medisers appeared during the Persian Wars, although the phenomenon of medism had its origins in the second half of the sixth century BC. When considering the development of Greek opposition to medism in Greece it is necessary to take into account several factors, above all the fact that Xerxes' invasion of 480–479 BC allowed the patriotic Greeks to unite against those who were siding with the Persians.

There were new features in Persian diplomacy concerning the Greeks after the Persian Wars. Following the Hellenic victories of Salamis and Plataea, the Persians for the first time began to use informal diplomacy, which could be successful when the official diplomatic missions were fruitless. The first instance of such diplomacy was the visit of Arthmius of Zeleia to Greece. Unfortunately Arthmius' mission is not attested by the Greek historians of the fifth century BC, Herodotus and Thucydides, but it is known to us owing to several mentions of it in the speeches of fourth-century Attic orators Demosthenes, Aeschines and Dinarchus and later writers, including Plutarch (Dem. 9.41–3, 19.271–2; Aesch. 3.258–9; Din. 2.24–5; Ael. Arist. *De Quat.* 2.287, 392, *Lept.* 2.676, *Panath.* 1.310; Harpocrat, s.v. *Arthmius, ati-mos*; Plut. *Them.* 6).⁶ However, there is no reason to question the historicity of the mission. Attic orators mention the existence of an Athenian decree concerning Arthmius, which was inscribed on a bronze *stela* and installed on the Acropolis on the right-hand side near the large bronze statue of Athena Promachos. The decree denounced Arthmius as an enemy of the Athenian people for bringing Persian gold to the Peloponnese. Some authors consider Themistocles as the man who proposed the decree in the assembly. One *scholiast* on Aristides' speeches attributes Arthmius' mission to Sparta to the time of Xerxes' invasion of Greece. He considers it as part of Xerxes' plans to dissolve the Hellenic League by bribing the Spartans (*Schol. Ael. Arist.* 3.327). There are some reasons to date Arthmius'

⁶ Scholars accept different dates for Arthmius' mission and the Athenian decree. On Arthmius of Zeleia see, for example: J. Hofstetter, *Die Griechen in Persien* (Berlin, 1978), 32; D. M. Lewis, 'Persian Gold in Greek International Relations', in R. Descat (ed.), *L'or perse et l'histoire grecque, Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 91 (1989), 227–34 at 230; P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 563 and 969.

mission to the period of the embassy to Athens from Mardonius, a Persian general, after the battle of Salamis in 480 BC. This embassy was intended to achieve an understanding between Athens and Xerxes; it also should have meant the dissolution of the Hellenic League.

After Arthmius' journey to Greece informal Persian diplomatic missions were so frequent that they became a characteristic feature of Persian diplomacy. In all known cases of informal Persian missions to Greece the role of messenger was carried out by Asian Greeks, or by political refugees, but there were frequent official visits by Persians. During the First Peloponnesian war Artaxerxes I, the Great King of Persia, sent a certain Megabazus the Persian to Sparta with gold (c. 456 BC). It was a time when many Athenians were fighting against Persia on Cyprus and in Egypt, supporting the revolt of the Egyptians led by Inarus and Amyrteus (462–456 or 460–454 BC). The purpose of the mission, as it is stated by our sources, was to bribe the Spartans and to incite them to invade Attica and so draw off the Athenians from Egypt. In spite of hostile relations between Athens and Sparta, Megabazus' mission failed. Thucydides says: 'Finding that the matter made no progress, and that the money was only being wasted, he [the king] recalled Megabazus with the remainder of the money' (Thuc. 1.109.2–3). The reason for this unsuccessful outcome to Megabazus' mission was that the Spartans, despite their enmity with Athens, were not inclined to discredit themselves by co-operation with the Persians.

The Peace of Callias

The Peace of Callias was not an epoch-making event that ended the Persian wars with Greece, as is commonly supposed. It is not mentioned by either Herodotos or Thucydides in the context of the Persian Wars and the history of the Pentecontaetia. All information about the treaty negotiated by Callias comes from the fourth-century Greek historical tradition (e.g. Ephorus/Diodorus, Theopompus, Callisthenes, Isocrates, Demosthenes, Lycurgus, etc).⁷ Herodotus also finished his *Histories* with the expulsion of the Persians from Greece after the battle of Plataea in 479 BC and was reluctant to tell the story of the continued Graeco-Persian struggle in the period known as the Pentecontaetia (478–431 BC). It is probable that the Graeco-Persian military collisions between the end of the Persian Wars and the Peace of Callias would have been considered by contemporaries in the context of the conflict between Athens and Persia.

⁷ See W. E. Thompson, 'The Peace of Callias in the Fourth Century', *Historia* 30 (1981), 164–77.

Cimon, who was elected an Athenian *strategos* on numerous occasions to make war against Persia in the 470s and 460s BC, initiated the expansion of the Delian League in the Aegean. He liberated many Greek islands and cities of Asia Minor, and might have been the instigator of the Hellenic expedition to Egypt. Cimon died at the time of the siege of Kition c. 450 BC and his death ended the Athenian expedition on Cyprus. Callias, elected as Athenian *strategos*, negotiated a peace treaty with Persia in 449/8 BC. It was only a treaty between Persia, the Athenians and their allies. Sparta, as formal *hegemon* of the Hellenic League, and her allies had not taken part in the continuation of the war against Persia since 478 BC. Therefore some scholars rightly state that Sparta was 'technically' at war with Persia until 412 BC, when she negotiated three treaties of alliance.⁸

The Peace of Callias was the first Helleno-Persian peace treaty concluded between the Athenians and Persians on equal terms. It reflected the final collapse of Persian imperial ambitions to rule over the Greek world. The Peace of Callias resulted in the situation of a balance of power in the Aegean, which lasted from 448 BC at least until the beginning of Persian intervention in the Peloponnesian War on behalf of Sparta in 412 BC. Which clauses in this treaty might reflect the establishment of a balance of power? First of all the condition of delimitation in the Aegean: under this treaty no Persian ship of war should come west of the Phaselis–Chelidonea line and the Cyanean rocks, while Athens on its side covenanted, if the king observed his obligations, not to attack 'the land over which King Artaxerxes rules'.⁹ The treaty included clauses protecting the Asian Greeks who were proclaimed as autonomous.

The strengthening of Athenian power under Pericles promoted the maintenance of a *status quo* in Athenian–Persian relations for more than thirty years. Some scholars argue that the Greeks and the Persians sometimes broke the main conditions of the Peace of Callias. S. K. Eddy stated about the situation after 449/8 BC: 'there were no major operations of fleets numbering hundreds of warships as there had been in the past. Instead, for over thirty years there was a kind of cold war between the

⁸ See M. Amit, 'A Peace Treaty between Sparta and Persia', *Rivista Storica dell'Antichità* 4 (1974), 55–63; D. M. Lewis, *Sparta and Persia* (Leiden, 1977), 93; E. Levy, 'Les trois traités entre Sparte et le Roi', *Bulletin de Correspondance Helléniques* 107 (1983), 229; S. Hornblower, *The Greek World 479–323 B.C.* (London, 1983), 73; D. Kagan, *The Fall of the Athenian Empire* (Ithaca, 1987), 81.

⁹ The sources were collected and translated by C. Fornara, no. 95. The most important piece of scholarship is E. Badian, 'The Peace of Callias', *From Plataea to Potidea* (Baltimore, 1993), 1–72, with further bibliography.

two powers, a situation of vague menace, of raids, of small successes, of countermoves, of embassies and threats.¹⁰

However, G. L. Cawkwell argued for the strict observation of the peace conditions by both parties: 'After the death of Cimon in Cyprus circa 449 BC (Thuc. 1. 112.4) there were no hostilities between Athenian forces and Persian until 412 when the satraps of the Aegean seaboard are found supporting Sparta, and if Diodorus (12.4) is to be trusted, this cessation of hostilities was due to the making of a peace in 449 between Athens and Persia.'¹¹ It may be asserted that all hostile incidents in Graeco-Persian relations in 448–412 BC were connected with the activity of the satraps of Asia Minor (Pissuthnes, satrap of Sardis, and Pharnaces, satrap of Dascyleum), who were mainly responsible for Persian foreign policy toward the Greeks.

A clear sign of the reluctance of the Great King to interfere in Greek affairs in this period is the Samian revolt, when the Phoenician fleet, contrary to all expectations, did not appear in the Aegean to assist the Samians in their fight against Athens in 440 BC, although they were assisted by the Persian satrap at Sardis, Pissuthnes (Thuc. 1.115). The Peace of Callias established also the boundaries for the movement of Persian armies near the Asian seaboard ('three days' journey on foot or one day's journey on horseback'). The observance of these limits may explain why Ionia had no fortified cities in the early years of the Peloponnesian War. There is an opinion that the walls of the Ionian cities could have been destroyed by the Athenians who feared the rebellion of their Asian allies, but this fact demonstrates that these cities were protected by the Peace of Callias' conditions.¹²

The Peace of Callias promoted the further development of Graeco-Persian diplomatic relations. The sources have no detailed information about envoy exchanges between the Peace of Callias and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (449–431 BC). However, these were years of peace in the Aegean and one can reasonably suppose that a number of Athenian embassies visited the royal Persian court during that time. Plato the philosopher mentions the diplomatic missions of Pyrilampes: 'Pyrilampes is reputed never to have found his equal, in Persia at the court of the great King, or on the continent of Asia, in all

¹⁰ S. K. Eddy, 'The Cold War between Athens and Persia ca 448–412 B.C.', *Classical Philology* 68 (1973), 241.

¹¹ G. Cawkwell, 'The Peace between Athens and Persia', *Phoenix* 51 (1997), 115, 117–18. For a more cautious assessment of the effectiveness of the peace, stressing how favourable it was to the Great King, see Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 580–2.

¹² Cawkwell, 'Peace between Athens and Persia', 122–5, thought the destruction of the walls was required by the Peace of Callias.

the places to which he went as ambassador, for stature and beauty' (Plut. *Charm.* 158a; cf. Athen. 9.397c–d). Plutarch speaks about him as the friend of Pericles (Plut. *Per.* 13). It is possible that there were ties of friendship (*xenia*) between the house of Pyrilampes and the Persian kings.

Another Greek embassy to Persia which may be dated to before the Peloponnesian War is that of Diotimus, son of Strombichus, to Susa reported by Strabo, quoting Damastes, a Greek historian (Damastes *FGrH* 5. F8 = Strabo. 1.3.1, p. 47). It is impossible to date this mission precisely. M. C. Miller suggests several possible occasions for Diotimus' embassy, including the Samian revolt (440 BC) and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (431 BC). She also proposes a connection between this mission and the Athenian embassy to Persia mentioned by Aristophanes in his *Acharnians*.¹³ Aristophanes placed the departure of envoys from Athens under archonship of Euthymenes (437 BC: Ar. *Ach.* 65–7). Their return could be dated before the performance of *Acharnians* for first time in Athens (425 BC). So, the envoys could have stayed in Persia for twelve years, but this is hardly likely. Aristophanes says that the envoys had intended to get gold from the Persian king and this may reflect the situation in the early years of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides records a wish of the Athenians and Spartans to send their embassies to Persia on the eve of the war: 'They resolved to send embassies to the King and to such other of the barbarian powers as either party could look to for assistance' (Thuc. 2.7.1).

The Peloponnesian War

In his second book Thucydides reports a Peloponnesian embassy to Persia which was intercepted *en route* by the Athenians in Thrace and all its members executed: 'At the end of the same summer (430 BC) the Corinthian Aristeus, Aneristus, Nicolaus, and Stratodemus, envoys from Lacedaemon, Timagoras, a Tegean, and a private individual named Pollis from Argos, on their way to Asia to persuade the King to supply funds and join in the war' (Thuc. 2.67.1–5; cf. Hdt. 7.137). The execution of these envoys at Athens looks like a successful attempt by the Athenians to prevent Sparta's rapprochement with Persia. Reasons for this are given in the speech of Archidamus, the Spartan king, who

¹³ M. C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC: A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (Cambridge, 1997), 110. On the dating of Diotimus' mission: Hofstetter, *Die Griechen in Persien*, 53 n. 9; Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, 60 n. 70; D. Hegyi, 'Athen und die Achämeniden in der zweiten Hälfte des 5 Jahrhunderts v.u.Z.', *Oikoumene* 4 (1983), 56.

stressed the Spartans' need to seek help from the barbarians because of the lack of necessary resources for the war (Thuc. 1.79.3-4, 82.1). It is possible, as Aristophanes attests, that a Spartan embassy reached Persia c. 425 BC (Ar. *Ach.* 645-51). The Persian answer to the Spartan approaches was the diplomatic mission of Artaphernes to Sparta in 425 BC, intercepted at Eion on the Strymon by Aristides, son of Archippus, the Athenian *strategos*. Thucydides says the Persian was conducted to Athens where the Athenians got his dispatches translated and then read them. These dispatches gave the answer of Artaxerxes I to the Spartans: 'With numerous references to other subjects, they in substance told the Lacedaemonians that the King did not know what they wanted, as of the many ambassadors they had sent him no two ever told the same story; if however they were prepared to speak plainly they might send him some envoys with this Persian' (Thuc. 4.50.1-3). As we saw, this mission failed. The Athenians quickly arranged their own embassy to Persia, which, escorted by Artaphernes, reached Ephesus, but the rumours of the king's death at Babylon stopped this mission.

Another embassy from Athens including Epilycus, son of Teisander, maternal uncle of the orator Andocides, negotiated a peace treaty with Darius II (Andoc. 3.29). Most scholars consider Epilycus' peace treaty as the renewal of the Peace of Callias, since it was negotiated after the accession of the new king in Persia in 424/3 BC. However, Andocides' report (3.29) on this treaty mentions a new clause of 'eternal friendship', which was inappropriate under the Peace of Callias and may be explained by the changed conditions of the Peloponnesian War.¹⁴ The existence of this treaty is proved also by an Athenian honorific decree for Heraclides, a Clazomenian, who could have acted as an interpreter during the negotiations on *spondai pros basilea* ('the treaty with the King') (IG i³ 227 = ML 70; trans. Fornara, no. 138).

Epilycus' peace treaty was a short-lived event and was broken, on the one hand, by the Athenians who supported Amorges' revolt against Darius II, and on the other hand, by the king, who, after the Athenian disaster in Sicily in 413 BC, ordered his satraps in Asia Minor to establish diplomatic relations with Sparta. In the winter of 413/12 BC Tissaphernes, satrap of Sardis and general-in-chief, sent his ambassador to Sparta to discuss waging war against Athens and negotiate a treaty of alliance with the Spartans (Thuc. 8.5.5). At the same time Sparta was visited by messengers from Pharnabazus, satrap of Dascyleum. They

¹⁴ On Epilycus' peace treaty: W. E. Thompson, 'The Athenian Treaties with Halai and Dareios the Bastard', *Klio* 53 (1971), 119-24; A. Blamire, 'Epilycus' Negotiations with Persia', *Phoenix* 29 (1975), 21-6; Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, 76f.

were Kalligeites of Megara and Timagoras of Cyzicus, both Greek exiles, who brought with them twenty-five talents of silver. They intended to persuade the Spartans to send a military force to the Hellespont (Thuc. 8.6.1). The two Persian satraps pursued rival policies, but Sparta accepted Tissaphernes' proposals. In the spring of 412 BC a Peloponnesian fleet commanded by Chalcideus, the Spartan *naumarchos* (admiral), sailed for Ionia to co-operate with Tissaphernes. The Spartan decision, other factors excepted, may be explained by the official character of Tissaphernes' appeal to Sparta. Thucydides uses the word '*presbeutes*' (ambassadors) when he reports on the embassy from Tissaphernes, but he describes Pharnabazus' messengers as '*pempsantos Pharnabazou*' (those sent by Pharnabazos) and his phrase suggests an unofficial deal by this satrap with Sparta.

The Spartans negotiated three treaties with the Great King of Persia in 412–411 BC and agreed to hand over the Asian Greeks to the Persians in exchange for financial support of their fleet (Thuc. 8.18.1–3, 37.1–5, 58.1–7 = *StV*. no. 200–2).¹⁵ Good Spartan–Persian diplomatic relations prevailed for the rest of the Peloponnesian War, and were dangerous for Athens. After 410 BC a Spartan embassy led by Boeotius travelled to Persia because of the break with Tissaphernes who, as the Spartans asserted, was guilty of failure to respect his treaty's obligations. Tissaphernes was not able to bring the Phoenician fleet into the Aegean, nor did he provide the Spartans with money in sufficient amounts and on time (Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.2).

D. M. Lewis proposed that Boeotius and his colleagues negotiated a treaty with Darius II and as a result the king sent his younger son Cyrus to Asia Minor with orders to co-operate with the Spartans. The treaty is hypothetical. It has been accepted as a real event by some scholars and rejected by others.¹⁶ The Athenians also twice attempted to negotiate agreements with Persia for the rest of the Peloponnesian War. In 411 BC Peisander and his colleagues discussed the conditions of a treaty with Tissaphernes, but, according to Thucydides, were prevented from reaching an agreement by Alcibiades' interference (Thuc. 8.56).¹⁷ In 409 BC the Athenians attempted to get their ambassadors' access to the

¹⁵ Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, 50; A. W. Gomme et al. *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* (Oxford, 1945–81), vol. v, 40–2, 79–82, 138–46; Levy, 'Trois traités', 221–42; Kagan, *Fall of the Athenian Empire*, 47–9, 80–2, 98–101.

¹⁶ Treaty of Boeotius: Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, 123ff; C. J. Tuplin, 'The Treaty of Boiotios', in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Achaemenid History* (Leiden, 1987), vol. II, 133–53; P. Cartledge, *Agisilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (London, 1987), 189–90; A. G. Keen, 'Persian Policy in the Aegean, 412–386 BC.', *Journal of Ancient Civilization* 13 (1998), 103.

¹⁷ See Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, 130 n. 133.

Great King of Persia secured by a treaty negotiated with Pharnabazus – the so-called treaty of Chalcedon (Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.8–9; Plut. *Alcib.* 31; Diod. 13.66.3).¹⁸

In this period the Persian satraps were mainly responsible for relations with the Greeks, and the Great King of Persia was reached by Greek embassies only on very specific occasions. Some Greek authors present the satraps' policy toward the Greeks as the maintenance of a balance of power in the Greek world. Thucydides says that Tissaphernes was convinced to pursue this policy by Alcibiades, who acted in his own interests (Thuc. 8.46.1–2). Thucydides uses such phrases to describe Tissaphernes' policy as *echein d' amphoterous ean dica ten archen* (each of the two having their separate area of control; 8.46.1) and *epanisoun tous Hellenas pros allelous* (putting the Greeks on equal terms with each other; 8.57.2), which stress the maintenance of a balance of power among the Greeks.¹⁹ Thucydides records the Spartans accusing Alcibiades and Tissaphernes of 'playing a double game' (Thuc. 8.85.2). This policy, which appeared then for the first time, became a characteristic feature of Persian diplomacy toward the Greeks in the fourth century BC, as was realised also by Xenophon (*Hell.* 1.5.9) and Demosthenes (10.51). The financial power of Persia was the dominant factor in the development of Graeco-Persian diplomacy from the Peloponnesian War onwards. The Greeks understood the weakness and imperfection of the Persian system for their financial support in alliance with Persia, and considered the Great King and his satraps responsible for the lack of money.

There are two cases of Persian diplomatic missions to Greece in the period from 412 to 404 BC. In 411 BC Tissaphernes sent his diplomatic agent, Gaulitas, who was bilingual, to Sparta aiming to explain himself to the Spartans for his 'double game playing'. Another Persian embassy to Sparta was sent by Cyrus the Younger in 405 BC, requesting that the Spartans appoint Lysander to the post of *nauarchos*. After the first appointment of Cyrus as satrap and general-in-chief in Asia Minor and Lysander's election as *nauarchos* at Sparta (408 BC), Graeco-Persian relations were more determined by personal ties between the influential Greeks and Persians. These personal ties were another important factor in the development of Graeco-Persian diplomacy.

¹⁸ Treaty of Chalcedon: M. Amit, 'Le traité de Chalcédoine entre Pharnabaze et les stratèges athéniens', *L'Antiquité Classique* 42 (1973), 436–57. The Athenian decree for Euagoras of Salamis records an attempt at negotiations with Persia, because it mentions Tissaphernes and the Persian king (*IG* i³ 113.1, 34).

¹⁹ Tissaphernes' policy: H. D. Westlake, 'Tissaphernes in Thucydides', *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985), 43–54; T. Aidonis, 'Tissaphernes' Dealings with the Greeks', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 47 (1996), 89–108.

After the Peloponnesian War

Sparta defeated Athens in the Peloponnesian War, and established herself as *hegemon* of the Greek world. After their victory the Spartans continued to co-operate with Persian satraps. Their most fruitful relations were with Pharnabazus and, especially, Cyrus the Younger. The Spartan support of Cyrus' revolt against his brother, Artaxerxes II (404–359 BC), resulted in the Spartan–Persian war of 400–394 BC and provided one reason for the subsequent hostile attitude of the new Persian king toward Sparta. Plutarch quoting Dinon, a Greek historian who wrote in the fourth century BC, supposes that Artaxerxes abominated the Spartans and considered them to be the most impudent men alive (Plut. *Artax.* 22).

The Spartan–Persian war waged in Asia Minor between the Spartan commanders Thibron, Derkylides and Agesilaus and the Persian satraps Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus was a period when diplomacy continued to be very important in Graeco-Persian relations.²⁰ The truces concluded between the Spartans and Persians served as the means to maintain a state of peace during the war in Asia. The Persians tried to establish diplomatic relations with Sparta's opponents in Greece, and this resulted in a number of exchanges of envoys between them. In 398/7 BC an Athenian embassy including Hagnias and Telesgoras departed for Persia but was intercepted *en route* and executed by the Spartans (*Hell. Oxy.* 7(2).1; Harpocr. s.v. *Hagnias* = Androtion *FGrH* 324 F18 = Philoch. *FGrH* 328 F147; Isaeus. 11.8).²¹ In 395 BC Timocrates the Rhodian went on his unofficial mission to Greece, sent jointly by Tithraustes, the Persian *chiliarchos*, and Pharnabazus. The goal of Timocrates' mission was to deliver Persian gold worth fifty silver talents (10,000 darics) and distribute it among the leading Greek politicians at Athens, Thebes, Corinth and Argos (Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.1; *Hell. Oxy.* 7(2).2–5, 13(17).1; Paus. 3.9.8; Plut. *Ages.* 15, *Artax.* 20; Polyae. 1.48.3). Xenophon and the Oxyrhynchus Historian agree that Timocrates' money was a bribe to the politicians in the Greek city-states, which prompted all the largest states to unite to wage war against Sparta, and Xenophon stresses that it was the main factor in the origins of the Corinthian War.²²

²⁰ For a detailed account of the Spartan–Persian war see H. D. Westlake, 'Spartan Intervention in Asia, 400–397 B.C.', *Historia* 35 (1986), 405–26.

²¹ On this embassy: I. A. F. Bruce, 'Athenian Embassies in the Early Fourth Century B.C.', *Historia* 15 (1966), 276.

²² On Timocrates' mission: M. L. Cook, 'Timokrates' 50 Talents and the Cost of Ancient Warfare', *Eranos* 88 (1990), 69–97.

The Corinthian War of 395–387 BC resulted in the appearance of several new features in relations between the Greeks and Persia, including, first of all, diplomacy by conference in the form of peace negotiations at Sardis and Sparta of 393–392 BC. These diplomatic conferences were attended by representatives of all the main belligerents, namely the Spartans, Athenians, Corinthians and Argives. They discussed the conditions of a common peace (*koine eirene*) for all Greeks (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.12–16; Philoch. *FGrH* 328 F149a–b). However, the first conference originated from peace negotiations between the Spartans and the Persians. When the Spartans sent Antalcidas to Asia, they hoped to end the war with Persia and convince Tiribazus, the Persian satrap at Sardis, of the advantages of an alliance with Sparta to co-operate against her enemies in Greece. This Spartan policy was crowned by success only in 387/6 BC, when Antalcidas negotiated at Susa the ‘eternal friendship’ between the Spartans and Artaxerxes II (Isoc. 4.128), and the king ‘sent down’ his rescript with peace conditions for all Greeks. This rescript was sworn to by Greek envoys at the meeting in Sardis.²³

The King’s Peace

The peace conditions agreed in 386 BC, as Xenophon states them, look like a great Persian diplomatic victory:

The King, Artaxerxes, deems it just that the cities in Asia, with the islands of Clazomenae and Cyprus, should belong to himself; the rest of the Hellenic cities he thinks it just to leave independent, both small and great, with the exception of Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros, which three are to belong to Athens as of yore. Should any of the parties concerned not accept this peace, I, Artaxerxes, will wage war against him or them with those who share my views. This will I do by land and by sea, with ships and with money. (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.31)

The King’s Peace ended the Corinthian War.²⁴ It was also a new kind of agreement between Greeks and Persians, under which the Persian king was not only a contracting party, as he was in the Peace of Callias and the Spartan–Persian allied treaties, but he also established himself as the guarantor of the peace conditions, proclaiming that he would wage war against all disturbers of the peace. How far did Persia dominate

²³ For a more detailed analysis and discussion of the circumstances of the common peace and its significance in the Greek world see the chapter by P. J. Rhodes in this volume.

²⁴ The bibliography of the King’s Peace is extensive; for discussion see E. Badian, ‘The King’s Peace’, *Georgica: Greek Studies in Honor of G. Cawkwell*, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement* 58 (1991), 25–48.

the Greeks in the period from the King's Peace to the rise of Macedon?²⁵ It may be argued that the period 386–380 BC was the culmination of Persian influence upon Greek affairs.

According to Isocrates' *Panegyrikos* (c. 380 BC), the Persian king was the one who stood guard over the peace, decided the issue of war, directed the terms of peace, and presided over Greek affairs (Isocr. 4.121, 175). Isocrates' judgement may be considered as rhetorical exaggeration, intended to inspire anti-Persian feelings among his fellow Athenians and other Hellenes, and thereby convince them to launch a campaign against the barbarians. However, there are some traces of respect for the conditions of the King's Peace in a number of Greek diplomatic documents. An Athenian public decree proclaiming the alliance with the Chians (c. 383 BC) refers to the '*common agreements* that have been written by the Hellenes, namely that they [the Chians] will maintain, like the Athenians, *the peace and the friendship and the oaths and the treaties* that are in existence, which were sworn by the King and the Athenians and the Lacedamonians and the other Hellenes' (Tod. 2.118, 5–20; trans. Harding, no.31); the Athenians committed to treat the Chians as their allies on terms of *freedom and autonomy* (ll.20–1). In the Charter of the Second Athenian Confederacy (378/7 BC) it is stated that 'if anyone wishes, of the Hellenes, or the barbarians who are living on the mainland, or of the islanders, as many as *are not subject to the King*, to be ally of the Athenians and of their allies, it shall be permitted to him [to do so], remaining free and autonomous, living under whatever constitution he wants, neither receiving a garrison nor having a governor imposed upon him nor paying tribute' (Tod. 2.123, 10–24; trans. Harding, no.35). To crown it all, the conditions of the King's Peace were renewed in the common peace of 375/4 BC, as Philochorus explicitly states (Philoch. *FGrH* 328. F151).

There is no doubt that the king's influence upon Greek affairs was maintained by Sparta's dominant position in Greece. This was owing to the position of the Spartans as the defenders (*prostatai*) of this peace, which had been obtained by them because of their friendship with Persia. When Sparta lost her hegemony after the battle of Leuctra in 371 BC, the King of Persia was deprived of the key agent for his dominance of Greek affairs. In the 360s BC most Persian diplomatic actions were fruitless. In 369/8 BC Artaxerxes II ordered Ariobarzanes,

²⁵ For a review of scholars' opinions on this problem: M. Zahrnt, 'Hellas unter persischen Druck? Die griechisch-persischen Beziehungen in der Zeit vom Anschluss des Königsfriedens bis zur Gründung des Korinthischen Bundes', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65 (1983), 250–1. Most scholars consider the fourth century as a period of Persian dominance over the Greeks.

satrap of Dascyleum, to send Philiscus of Abydos to Greece. Philiscus gathered the envoys from various Greek states, including the Thebans and their allies, and the Spartans, at the conference in Delphi where he proposed the conditions of a Common Peace supported by the king. This conference was unsuccessful. The king's conditions of peace were favourable for Sparta but damaging to the interests of the Thebans who, after the victory at Leuctra, had become the new *hegemonoi* of Greece: 'when the Thebans refused to acquiesce in the dependency of Messene upon Lacedaemon, Philiscus set about collecting a large foreign brigade to side with Lacedaemon and to prosecute the war' (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.27; cf. Diod. 15.70.3). After the conference at Delphi and Ariobarzanes' revolt against the king in 367/6 BC, Artaxerxes transferred his backing from Sparta to Thebes. In the peace conference at Susa in 367 BC envoys from various Greek states, this time including the Spartans, Athenians, Thebans, Eleans and Arcadians, discussed peace conditions favourable for Thebes. The Thebans were unable to convince the Greeks to ratify this peace treaty (Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.33-40; Plut. *Pel.* 30-1, *Artax.* 22).

During the 360s BC there were a number of revolts in the Achaemenid Empire, involving not only satraps (Datames, Ariobarzanes, Autophradates, Orontes, Mausolus), but also many peoples from the Asian coastline (the Ionians, Lycians, Pisidians, Pamphilians, Cilicians, Syrians, Phoenicians, etc) and the Egyptians under King Tachos (Diod. 15.90.3). As Diodorus stresses, the revolts were so extensive that half the revenues of the king were cut off and what remained was insufficient for the expenses of the war (Diod. 15.90.4). There were substantial differences in the attitudes of various Greek states toward the Great Satraps' Revolt of 362/1 BC. The Spartans were offended by the Persian support given to their enemy, Thebes, and sided with the rebellious satraps: they concluded alliances with Ariobarzanes and Tachos of Egypt, and sent them mercenary forces under the aged King Agesilaus (Xen. *Ages.* 2.26; Plut. *Ages.* 36-40).

While Thebans pursued a philo-Persian foreign policy and hoped to benefit from the conference at Susa of 367 BC, the Athenians also were dissatisfied with the king's attitude to them, especially the royal rescript ordering the Athenians to lay up their ships of war, but their relations with Artaxerxes II were more cautious. They wished to preserve neutral relations with the Persian king as well as the rebels. So, on the one hand, the Athenians rewarded Strato, King of Sidon for his assistance to the embassy travelling to the Persian royal court (Tod 2.139; trans. Harding, no.40).²⁶ On the other hand, they sent the *strategos* Timotheus to aid

²⁶ R. A. Moysey, 'The Date of the Strato of Sidon Decree (*IG* II² 141)', *American Journal of Ancient History* 1 (1976), 182-9.

Ariobarzanes, adding to the decree the phrase 'provided he does not break the treaty with the King' (Dem. 15.9). J. Heskell has proposed that this last phrase was the Assembly's addition to the main decree and had been voted after the departure of Timotheus for Asia Minor.²⁷ Around 360 BC the Athenians gave some honours to envoys from Tachos, the King of Egypt, as an inscription attests (*IG* ii² 119), and the Athenian *strategos* Chabrias departed for Tachos at the head of Greek mercenary force without the approval of the Athenian *demos* (Plut. *Ages.* 37).

The Athenian Assembly might have been responsible for the cautious reply to an ambassador from the satraps stated in one inscription:

They [the Hellenes] are not aware that the King has any war against them, If therefore he keeps quiet and does not set the Hellenes against each other and does not, in the case of the *peace* that we now have, attempt to dissolve it by any device at all or by stratagem, we too shall be at peace with the King. But if he makes war against any of those who share the treaty with us or makes trouble for any of them with a view to the dissolution of this peace, either in person against the Hellenes who have made this peace or through someone else from his territory, we shall defend ourselves jointly. (Tod. 2.145; trans. Harding, no. 57)

Thus, by 362/1 BC a decline in the influence of the King's Peace upon Greek affairs had become apparent in the different attitudes of various Greek states towards the Persians. Furthermore, the Persian king was not included in the Common Peace treaty (*koine eirene*) signed by the Greeks after the battle of Mantinea in 362/1 BC.

The rise of Macedon

The rise of Macedon in the 350s–340s BC re-ignited the issue of Greek relations with Persia. Philip II's policy towards the Greeks prompted the Athenians and Thebans not only to unite with one another, but also to seek Persian assistance. In this period only the Thebans continued to be on friendly terms with the Persian king. In 351 BC they received a gift of Persian money worth 300 talents, which was spent on Theban participation in the Third Sacred War (Diod. 16.40.1–2). The Athenians pursued their policy of non-involvement in Persian affairs until the end of 340s BC. In 356 BC they recalled from Asia, in accordance with the king's demand, their *strategos* Chares who was at the head of a mercenary force in the service of Artabazus, the rebellious satrap of Dascyleum (Diod. 16.22.1–2, 34.1–2; *FGRH* 105. F1; Schol. Dem. 3.146a, 4.84b).²⁸ In 351

²⁷ J. Heskell, *The North Aegean Wars, 371–360 BC* (Stuttgart, 1997), 96–7.

²⁸ Cf. R. A. Moysey, 'Chares and Athenian Foreign Policy', *Classical Journal* 80 (1985), 221–7.

BC there were rumours spread at Athens about the preparations for a Persian expedition against the Greeks, and they were discussed by the Assembly, as Demosthenes' speech '*On Symmories*' shows (Dem. 14 *passim*; Liban. ad. Dem. 14.1-2; cf. Diod. 16.22.2). When King Artaxerxes III Ochus (359-338 BC) was preparing a second expedition to re-conquer Egypt in 344 BC, Greece was visited by Persian envoys requesting mercenaries. As a result Theban and Argive forces departed for Asia to serve under Persian command. The Athenians and the Spartans, however, abstained from taking part in this expedition. In 344/3 BC the Athenians received a Persian embassy which proposed terms of friendship with Artaxerxes, and their reply was the same as in the inscription cited above: 'They would remain at peace with the Great King if he did not attack the Greek cities'. This reply is called by Didymus more haughty than it was necessary (Didym. 8.1.8 = Philochorus *FGrH* 328. F157; Androton *FGrH* 324. F53; Anaximenes *FGrH* 72. F28).²⁹

Persia and the Athenians were not allied with one another in 340 BC when Philip II went to war against some Greek cities in the Hellespontine area and the Propontis, resulting in the sieges of Perinthus and Byzantium, and sent his expeditionary forces commanded by Attalus and Parmenio to Asia Minor. It is probable that there was the possibility of such an Athenian-Persian alliance against Macedonia, but it was prevented by Greek defeat in the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC.

Features of Graeco-Persian diplomatic relations

When one considers general issues in Graeco-Persian diplomacy one needs to answer a number of questions. How was the selection or appointment of Greek ambassadors determined? Of what size were the embassies? Which routes were taken by ambassadors? What were the circumstances of the ambassadors' reception, and how did the course of negotiations proceed? Certainly, all these questions are answered only by our Greek sources with the Greek point of view. Recently M. C. Miller has attempted to consider Oriental material; however, it is hard to find in the Persian documents anything concerning the history of Persian diplomacy toward the Greeks.³⁰

²⁹ G. L. Cawkwell, 'Demosthenes' Policy after the Peace of Philocrates. I', *Classical Quarterly* 13 (1963), 121-3, 127-30, 136-8; N. G. L. Hammond and G. T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia* (Oxford, 1979), vol. II, 484; E. M. Harris, 'More Chalcenic Negligence', *Classical Philology* 84 (1989), 36-44; J. Buckler, 'Philip II, the Greeks and the King 346-336 BC', *Illinois Classical Studies* 19 (1994), 60-77.

³⁰ Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 117-30.

How was the choice of ambassadors made in the Greek city-states? It can be supposed that the Greeks, when selecting their envoys to Persia, took into account both their experience of negotiations and the personal hereditary connections between them and the Persians. Thus, in Athens personal ties with the Persian royal house were considered in the choice of Callias and Pyrilampus as ambassadors to Persia; they were thought as significant for including Conon in the Athenian embassy to Sardis (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.13). The Spartans sent to Persia Nicolaus and Stratodemes who were the sons of Bulis and Sperthius, who had departed for Persia one generation earlier (Hdt. 7.137). The Thebans sent to Susa Ismenias (2) as one of envoys (Plut. *Artax.* 22) who was the son of Ismenias (1), accused of medism and executed at Thebes c. 382 BC. Xenophon lists the accusations against Ismenias (1): 'He was accused of playing into the hands of the barbarian; of seeking amity with the Persians to the detriment of Hellas; of accepting sums of money as bribes from the King' (Xen. *Hell.* 2.35).³¹

However, more than personal or hereditary ties with the Persians underlay the choice of ambassadors from the Greek states. Sometimes the Greeks chose as their envoys the most influential politicians and prominent generals whose authority could influence the outcome of negotiations. Thus, it is possible that Callias concluded the peace of 449 BC by virtue of his office. He was elected as *strategos* after the death of Cimon on Cyprus c. 450 BC (Aristod. *FGrH* 104. F13.2; Suid. s.v. *Kallias*). Epilycus, some scholars think, was appointed to serve on an embassy to Persia as a member of the Council for 424/3.³² In the cases of Pisander (411 BC) and Epicrates (393 BC) the Athenians chose men from leading political groups for their embassies to Persia. Alcibiades in 408 BC took part in organizing an Athenian embassy which included his *protégés* Euripptolemus and Mantitheus (Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.13).³³ Epicrates and Cephalus were responsible for the sending of Hagnias and Telesegoros to Persia in 398/7 BC (*Hell. Oxy.* 7(2).1). Conon was renowned as the victor at Cnidus when he departed for Sardis in 393 BC.

Xenophon notes on the sending of Pelopidas by the Thebans to Persia in 367 BC: 'In addition, there were two things which contributed to raise the prestige of Thebes, and redounded to the honour of Pelopidas. These were the victory of the Thebans at Leuctra, and the indisputable

³¹ S. Dušanič, 'Le medisme d'Ismenias et les relations greco-perses dans la politique de l'Academie platonienne (383–378 av. J.C.)', *La Beotie antique* (Paris, 1985), 227–39.

³² H. T. Wade-Gery, 'The Peace of Callias', in *Essays in Greek History* (Oxford, 1958), 209–10; Blamire, 'Epilycus' Negotiations with Persia', 24.

³³ Amit, 'Le traité de Chalcédoine', 452 n. 16.

fact that they had invaded and laid waste the territory of Laconia' (Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.35). Plutarch says of the same episode:

Now the Thebans, understanding that the Spartans and Athenians had sent an embassy to the Persians for assistance, themselves, likewise, sent Pelopidas; an excellent design to increase his glory, no man having ever before passed through the dominions of the King with greater fame and reputation. For the glory that he won against the Spartans did not creep slowly or obscurely; but, after the fame of the first battle at Leuctra was gone abroad, the report of new victories continually following, exceedingly increased, and spread his celebrity far and near. Whatever satraps or generals or commanders he met, he was the object of their wonder and discourse. 'This is the man,' they said, 'who has beaten the Lacedaemonians from sea and land, and confined that Sparta within Taygetus and Eurotas, which, but a little before, under the conduct of Agesilaus, was entering upon a war with the great King about Susa and Ecbatana.' (Plut. *Pelop.* 30)

It is apparent that the success of the Theban embassy was due to the achievements of Pelopidas.

The size of none of the Greek embassies to Persia is recorded in our sources. D. J. Mosley suggested that embassies to the Persian court were smaller than those to Greek cities.³⁴ M. Miller noted that the Athenians and other Greeks most commonly sent three men per embassy, but two, five, or ten were also possible.³⁵ This opinion seems to be right since it supposes that the size of any Greek embassy to Persia was not strictly defined. Callias is described by Diodorus as the head of 'plenipotentiary ambassadors' (*presbeis autokratores*; Diod. 12.4.5), meaning that they were empowered to conclude the treaty without its further ratification by the Athenian Assembly.³⁶ The envoys sent from Athens to the Persian court possessed some letters from Council instructing them for future negotiations (Andoc. 3.35; Dem. 19. 277-9).

There are three routes by which the Greek and Persian heralds, messengers or envoys typically travelled to their destinations: a route via the Hellespont, another via Cilicia or Phoenicia, and one along the Royal Road via Ionia and Sardis. The Greek envoys to Persia were helped by Persian satraps who provided a guard for such embassies and secured their safety on the journey. The satraps' mediation was preferable from the Greek viewpoint, since the satraps, as the highest Persian officials in

³⁴ D. J. Mosley, 'The Size of Embassies in Ancient Greek Diplomacy', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965), 260.

³⁵ Miller, *Athens and Persia*, p.112.

³⁶ On the *presbeis autokratores*: Andoc. 3.33-4; A. Missiou-Lady, 'Coercive Diplomacy in Greek interstate relations (with Special Reference to Presbeis Autokratores).', *Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987), 336-45; F. S. Pownall, 'Presbeis Autokratores: Andocides' *De Pace*', *Phoenix* 49 (1995), 140-9.

Asia Minor, were experts in Greek affairs, as well as in the life of the Persian court. It is probable that the most popular route was along the Royal Road, travel by which from Ephesus to Susa would have taken three months (Hdt. 5.53). The popularity of this route could be explained by the importance of Lydia and the Ionian cities for ancient trading, political and cultural connections between Greece and the Near East. Such a route was taken by the Athenian embassy to Artaxerxes I in 425 BC, accompanied by Artaphernes (Thuc. 4.50.3).

The first cases of Greek embassies travelling via the Hellespont relate to the period of the Peloponnesian War. In 430 BC three Spartan ambassadors hoped to reach Persia helped by Pharnaces, son of Pharnabazus, the Persian satrap of Dascyleum, although, as was mentioned above, they were intercepted by the Athenians in Thrace and executed at Athens (Thuc. 2.67.1–3). In 409 BC the Athenian *strategoï* negotiated a treaty with Pharnabazus, son of Pharnaces, by which he promised to conduct their embassy to the king. In the spring of 408 BC the Athenians, Spartans and Argives took the route via the Hellespont for their journey to Persia, but they were stopped by the news from Boeotius and his colleagues (Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.11–13, 4.1–7).

When Diotimus' embassy reached Susa, he probably sailed to Cilicia, went overland to Tapsacus, and sailed down the Euphrates (Damastes *FGRH* 5. F8 = Strabo 1.3.1). This route may be considered as most appropriate because of the hegemony of the Athenians in the Aegean. In the 360s BC another Athenian embassy travelled to Persia via Phoenicia helped by Strato, the King of Sidon, as an Athenian inscription records (*IG* ii². 141.1–4 = Tod. II, 139).³⁷

The Greek envoys' journey to Persia by the Royal Road could take more than three months, but shorter trips were also possible. Thus, Diotimus' embassy reached Susa in forty days, and 'perhaps the unusual choice of route was conditioned by the need for speed and the hesitation to rely on the Anatolian satraps to expedite the journey'.³⁸ The sources report that the king usually received embassies at Susa, which was one of the capitals of the Persian Empire. Susa was visited by Callias and Diotimus, Antalcidas and the members of Greek embassies of 367 BC. According to Xenophon, the Persian king spent the three months of the spring at Susa, two summer months at Ecbatana, and the remaining seven months at Babylon (Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.6.22). Athenaeus (more plausibly) makes it winter at Susa, summer at Ecbatana, autumn at Persepolis, and Babylon for the rest of the year (Athen. 12.513f). Miller notes that

³⁷ Moysey, 'Strato of Sidon Decree', 185; Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 117.

³⁸ Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 117.

'Babylon, closer to the West and the fourth of the King's annual places of residence, would reasonably be considered a place for receiving embassies, but none are attested there.'³⁹ There is evidence of a visit to Ecbatana by Greek envoys in Aristophanes' play *Acharnians* (Ar. *Ach.* 64).

The Greeks coming to the Persian king could stay temporarily at the satrapal courts, requesting the satraps to serve as mediators in their relations with the king. In 408 BC the Greek envoys met with Pharnabazus at Cyzicus and then continued their journey to the king (Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.13). In dealing with royal courts one could not expect to act with speed unless it was in the interest of both parties. Waiting for an audience could cause delays; trying to meet even the satrap at Sardis required patience. Thus, Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* depicts the long wait for the king who is away on campaign. Callicratides, the Spartan *nauarchos*, was annoyed at waiting attendance on Cyrus the Younger at Sardis (Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.7). On the fourth-century comic stage, the *hetaira* *Lais* was said to have been more difficult to approach than even Pharnabazus (Epikrates, *PCG* v. *Antilais* fr. 3.11–13 = Athen. 13.570b).

The Greek envoys visiting the king's court reported their business to a Persian official named a *chiliarchos* by Greek authors (the head of the King's Guard). They were admitted to the king, but were permitted to speak with him only after the performance of *proskynesis*. Timagoras, an Athenian envoy, performed *proskynesis* and was rewarded by the Persian king (Athen. 2.31). Plutarch records the case of coming of a Theban delegation at Susa: 'Ismenias, also, the Theban, and Pelopidas, who had already gained the victory at Leuctra, arrived at the Persian court; where the latter did nothing unworthy of himself. But Ismenias, being commanded to do obeisance to the King, dropped his ring before him upon the ground, and so, stooping to take it up, made a show of doing him homage' (Plut. *Artax.* 22).

Persian officials were deeply involved in relations with the Greeks. The satraps not only escorted the Greek embassies to the Persian royal court, but also played a leading role in negotiating peace treaties, and were responsible for their observance by the Persians. We know that the king often sent his satraps a letter with some instructions.⁴⁰ Diodorus begins his report about the conclusion of the Peace of Callias with the following note: 'Artaxerxes the King, however, when he learned of the reverses his forces had suffered at Cyprus, took counsel on the war with

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴⁰ The king's letters to satraps are reported by ancient authors: Diod. 12.4.4 (Artabazus and Megabyzus); Thuc. 8.5.5, 6.1 (Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus); Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.3–4 (Cyrus the Younger); Diod. 14.80.7 (Tithraustes) etc.

his friends and decided that it was to his advantage to conclude a peace with the Greeks. Accordingly he dispatched to the generals in Cyprus and to the satraps *the written terms* on which they were permitted to come to a settlement with the Greeks. Consequently Artabazus and Megabyzus sent ambassadors to Athens to discuss a settlement' (Diod. 12.4.4–5). According to Aristodemes, Callias 'made a treaty with Artaxerxes and *the rest of the Persians*', that is probably, Artabazus and Megabyzus (Aristod. *FGrH* 4 F.13.1).

The Spartan–Persian allied treaties were concluded not only with King Darius II, but also with the satrap Tissaphernes, who was ordered to co-operate with the Spartans in the war against Athens (Thuc. 8.18.1, 37.1, 58.1). The third treaty mentions other Persians (Hieramenes and the sons of Pharnaces), but their position in Asia Minor is obscure (Thuc. 8.58.1). In the early fourth century BC Tiribazus, the satrap of Sardis, twice served as mediator in Greek relations with the king (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8. 12–16, 5.1.25). V. Martin points out that the king cannot be imagined as swearing an oath, on equal terms, to a Greek city. Rather he sent down an edict setting out his terms, as they 'seem just' to him.⁴¹

In fact, there are three references in our fourth-century Greek sources to the royal rescripts, setting out the king's terms of peace. Philochorus reports that the Greeks discussed the king's terms at the conference in Sparta: 'In the archonship of Philokles of Anaphlystos [392/1]: And the peace, the one in the time of Antalcidas, was sent down by the King. But the Athenians did not accept it, because there had been written in it that the Greeks who were living in Asia should be all in the King's household accounted members' (Philoch. *FGrH* 328. F149b, trans. Harding, no.23A).⁴²

Xenophon describes the swearing of an oath to a royal rescript (*ta gegrammena*) announced by Tiribazus to the Greeks at the meeting in Sardis in 387 BC (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.31). At the meeting in Thebes in 367 BC the Greeks heard another royal rescript (*ta grammata*), delivered by a Persian messenger and sealed by the king. It set down the king's terms of Common Peace for all Greeks negotiated at Susa by Greek envoys. However, the Greeks refused to swear an oath to them (Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.39–40). So, one can say the participation of the Great King at the conclusion of the treaties with the Greeks may be considered as 'sending

⁴¹ Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea*, 41; V. Martin, 'Le traitement de l'histoire diplomatique dans la tradition littéraire du ive siècle avant J. C.', *Museum Helveticum* 1 (1944), 13–30.

⁴² Some scholars relate Philochorus' statement to the King's Peace. For discussion see A. G. Keen, 'A "Confused" Passage of Philochoros (F 149 a) and the Peace of 392/1 B.C.', *Historia* 44 (1995), 1–10.

down' his letters to satraps in the fifth century BC, or his rescripts to the Greeks a century later. The preliminary truces negotiated by the Greeks with the satraps needed to be further ratified by the Great King, as the events of the Spartan-Persian war show (see Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.20; Diod. 14.39.6).

The Greek envoys visiting Persia had certain material stimuli. There are many references in the sources to the receipt by envoys of different kinds of gift from the Great King of Persia. For contemporaries it was hard to make the differentiation between gifts and bribes. Some scholars emphasise the great importance of gift exchange in the Achaemenid Empire. They suggest the patterns and types of exchange of gifts were not always in accordance with the expectations of the Greeks, which caused disappointment or accusations of bribery.⁴³

There are some cases when the Greek envoys to Persia received extremely large gifts. Thus, according to Demosthenes, Callias, son of Hipponicus, was accused by his fellow citizens and fined fifty talents for taking bribes from the Persians (Dem. 19.277). The comic poet Plato represents the envoys Epicrates and Phormisus receiving from the king many bribes of 'gilt and silvered plates' (Plato *CAF* 1. F119). According to Plutarch, the people only laughed at the joke when Epicrates not only confessed that he had received gifts from the king, but made a motion, that instead of nine archons, they should yearly choose nine poor citizens to be sent as ambassadors to the king, and to be enriched by his presents (Plut. *Pel.* 30.12; cf. Heges. ap. Athen. 6.58.251a-b). Pelopidas, according to the custom, was given the most splendid and sizeable presents and his desires were granted (Plut. *Pel.* 30). More extravagant were the gifts given to Timagoras: 'He not only took gold and silver, but a rich bed, and slaves to make it, as if the Greeks were unskilful in that art; besides eighty cows and herdsmen, professing he needed cows' milk for some distemper; and, lastly, he was carried in a litter to the seaside, with a present of four talents for his attendants' (Plut. *Artax.* 22.5-6, *Pel.* 30.6).

However, the significance of the king's 'hospitality' lies in the politics more than the diplomatic customs. The Athenians condemned and executed Timagoras for receiving so many presents from the king (Dem. 19.137). Xenophon says that Timagoras was convicted on the indictment of Leon, who proved that his fellow envoy not only refused to lodge with him at the king's court, but in every way played into the hands of Pelopidas, and hence Timagoras was put to death (Xen. *Hell.*

⁴³ On the importance of gifts for Graeco-Persian relations: L. G. Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationship in the Greek World, 435-323 BC* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 115ff.

7.1.38). Plutarch notes that Artaxerxes was so gratified with some secret intelligence which Timagoras sent to him by the hand of his secretary Beluris, that he bestowed upon him ten thousand darics (Plut. *Artax.* 22).

This chapter has examined an important aspect of political interaction between the Greeks and the Persians. The main conclusion is that Graeco-Persian diplomacy was a constantly evolving system affected by, and responding in a pragmatic fashion to, the changing political circumstances.⁴⁴ It may be argued that it was not war but diplomacy that determined the general development of Graeco-Persian relations after the expulsion of the Persians from Greece early in the fifth century BC. The principal aim of this diplomacy was to maintain a balance of power in interstate relations in the Eastern Mediterranean. The preferred means of achieving it, and the main focus of so many of the diplomatic missions, were bilateral and 'common' peace treaties. Both the Greek states and the Persian king were involved in numerous internal political problems, which reduced their capacities for direct confrontation and increased their readiness to retain the *status quo* in their relations in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. This situation changed with the beginning of Macedonian expansion into the East. The Macedonian conquest of the Achaemenid Empire under Alexander the Great interrupted 150 years of gradual evolution in diplomatic relations between the Greeks and the Persians. There were some episodes of Graeco-Persian co-operation in the face of the Macedonians which relate to the period of the Spartan king Agis' revolt in Greece in 331 BC, but they were a last unsuccessful attempt at diplomatic interaction by the Greeks with the dying Persian Empire.

⁴⁴ See also the chapters by A. D. Lee and Michael Whitby in this volume for the importance of flexibility and pragmatism in Roman diplomatic relations with the Persian kings in Late Antiquity.

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