NOTES / KORT BYDRAES

HERODOTUS 9.35.1; OR, COULD ISAGORAS HAVE BECOME A SPARTAN?

According to Lysias 12.72 two individuals named Philochares and Miltiades were present with Lysandros of Sparta at the fateful meeting of the Athenian assembly that in 404 was coerced into setting up the 'Thirty'. The common view, evidently shared by Poralla who included neither Philochares nor Miltiades in his Prosopographie der Lakedaimonier, has been that both men were Athenians exiled by the democracy. The name Miltiades, prominent in Athenian history, no doubt indicated scholarly consensus. In an obiter dictum contained in a miscellany published in 1974 I argued, echoing the lone dissent of Shuckburgh in 1882, that Philochares and Miltiades were Spartiates. I conjectured that both men were naval officers, and went on to suggest that Miltiades was so named because he was a descendant of Isagoras Teisandrou, the opponent of Kleisthenes the Alkmeonid in the political struggles at Athens which broke out after the fall of the Peisistratid tyranny. Isagoras, I had previously tried to show, was the cousin of Miltiades the hero of Marathon. Driven from his city by the demos, I now proposed, he received Spartan citizenship from his friend and ally king Cleomenes of Sparta. His descendants, also Spartiates, continued to use traditional family names.

In a note which appeared in 1979 D.H. Kelly accepted my identification of Philochares and Miltiades as Spartans but disagreed with my other suggestions. Both individuals, he considered, were ambassadors from Sparta despatched to Athens to spell out that Lysandros was acting with the full sanction and approval of his home authorities. 'Philochares', Kelly surmised, was either identical with, the text of the Lysias passage being corrupt, or belonged to the same family as one Philocharidas who figures as a Spartan envoy to Athens over the two decades prior to 404. Miltiades, he suggested, was so named because his father was an associate of the Athenian Kimon, son of Miltiades, a proxenos of Sparta and a consistent philo-Lakonian who named one of his own sons Lakedaimonios. Kelly discounted my view that Isagoras was a relation of Miltiades of Marathon and insisted that it was out of the question that he became a Spartan.

I readily endorse Kelly’s view that Philochares/idas and Miltiades of Lysias 12.72 were Spartan ambassadors rather than naval officers, and he is no doubt right about the identity or connection of the former with Poralla, P.L. no. 731. It is certainly possible, too, that Miltiades was the son of a phil-Athenian Spartan who was close to Kimon. I continue to believe, however, that Isagoras and the Miltiades, son of Kimon Koalemos, were cousins and I emphatically reject Kelly’s dismissal of even the possibility of Isagoras having become a Spartiate.

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Given that the possibility is conceded, then my own explanation of the nomenclature of Miltiades the Lakedaimonian envoy continues to be viable.

As to the syggeneia of Isagoras and Miltiades, I am prepared to let the case that I put forward in 1972 rest on its merits. I appreciate the fact, highlighted by Kelly, that Herodotos claims ignorance of Isagoras’ pedigree, but I am simply unimpressed by what now seems to me a piece of transparent disingenuousness. I refuse to credit that the necessary information was unavailable and undiscoverable where and when Herodotos wrote, and I presume that the historian, so palpably well informed concerning the genealogy of other noble Athenian families, deliberately concealed facts embarrassing to contemporary representatives of the house of Miltiades and Kimon. With respect to the alleged inconceivability of Kleomenes conferring Spartan citizenship on Isagoras I offer the following response.

Essentially, Kelly’s case rests squarely on a single sentence at Herodotos 9.35.1. The context is the story of the diviner Teisamenos of Elis who received a cryptic oracle from Delphoi. Their interpretation of its contents persuaded the Spartans to solicit his services in their wars. Teisamenos’ price, Spartan citizenship, was at first refused. Eventually with the Persians on their doorstep, the Lakedaimonians became more accommodating. Offered citizenship Teisamenos now demanded it for his brother Hegias, too, and the Spartans consented. In the words of the received text Herodotos comments: μόνοι δὲ δὴ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἔγένοντο οὗτοι Σπαρτῆται πολίται (‘Of all men these were the only ones that became Spartan citizens’).

Apparently decisive; the fact is, however, that this unqualified, blanket assertion is certainly in direct contradiction with Herodotos’ own statement at 4.145 that the Spartans conferred their citizenship on the Minyai. In addition, the clear implication of 4.147–9 and 7.134 is that he recognised that the Spartans also gave citizenship to the Kadmeian Aigeidai and Achaian Talthybiadai respectively. Of course, one might attempt to argue, contrary to the seemingly uncompromising precision of 9.35.1, that the reference there is only to historical times and that the ‘mythical’ period is tacitly excluded, but then, one has to ask, can Herodotos have been unaware of the probably historical epeunaktai and totally ignorant of the traditions according to which Spartan citizenship was accorded to the certainly historical poets Tyrtaios and Alkman? Further difficulty is presented by Aristotle, Politics 2.9. 1270a 34–36. Having commented on the disastrous effects, manifest after Leuktra, the author observes: λέγουσι δ’ ὡς ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν πρωτέρων βασιλέων μετεδόθην τῆς πολιτείας, ὥστε ὁ γίνεσθαι τότε ἀλγανθραπόντων πολεμοῦντων πολλῶν χρόνων: (‘they’—presumably the Spartans themselves—‘assert that under the former kings they made grants of citizenship so that the population did not dwindle in the course of their continual wars’). No one without an axe to grind, surely, would insist that the relevance is to prehistoric times. πρωτέρων not παλιωτῶν. The natural inference is that Aristotle does not hark back many reigns prior to that of Agesilaos (399–361) under whom the battle of Leuktra was fought. Can Herodotos have been worse informed than
Aristotle? The only possible conclusion, I submit, is that the text of his extraordinary sentence is wrong. οὐτός is to be emended to οὖτος. Teisamenos and Hegias are not alleged to be the only foreigners ever who acquired the citizenship of Sparta; rather Herodotos makes the point that they were the only individuals to acquire it in a particular way, by virtual blackmail.

If I am right then there is no reason whatsoever in principle for ruling out of court the possibility that Kleomenes, who could well be one of the earlier kings to which Aristotle alludes, made Isagoras a Spartiate. Whether he actually did, of course, is another matter. Herodotos' silence, noted by Kelly, signifies nothing; such a fact, too, he would most surely have thought it diplomatic to suppress. There is little force also in Kelly's contention that Kleomenes would have dropped Isagoras when he had no further use for him. Actually it is striking that Isagoras was not 'dumped' by the Spartan king after the debacle, basically a consequence of Isagoras' miscalculation of the extent of support for himself at Athens, recounted at Herodotos 5.72. Instead, after surrendering the Akropolis to his besiegers on condition that he and his Lakedaimonian troops be allowed to depart in safety from Attika, he took Isagoras with him, presumably in disguise, and then assembled a Peloponnesian league army with the intention of installing his friend as tyrant. The disruption of this project by his fellow king Demaratos was hardly Isagoras' fault; why should Kleomenes have completely abandoned him at this juncture? It is true, as Kelly points out, that later Kleomenes projected the restoration to Athens of Hippias, but this move may have been suggested by the growing influence in the city of the ex-tyrant's relation Hipparchos son of Charmos. That shifts in the Athenian political kaleidoscope eventually dictated the choice of a different puppet scarcely implies that Kleomenes ceased to have regard for Isagoras or felt that his obligations to him were exhausted.

While conceding, therefore, that Kelly offers a plausible alternative explanation for the existence in 404 of a Spartan named Miltiades, I still claim that my own is tenable. Moreover, it does have positive attractions. In particular, the Spartan despatch to Athens, to oversee the democracy's demise, of a descendant of the man who with Sparta's aid had struggled to prevent its birth, would have a dramatic propriety that I at least find it very difficult to gainsay.

NOTES

2. See his Lysiae Orationes XVI, London 1882, comment ad loc.
4. Kleomenes and Isagoras were xeni, Herodotos 5.70.1; for their political collaboration see Herodotos 5.70–74.
7. Kelly (op. cit. 99 note 4) rightly dismisses my previous suggestion that Herodotos was merely uncertain as to Isagoras' exact relationship with the Philads.
8. Note especially his lengthy and erudite digression on the Gephyraioi at 5.57–61.
9. In that case why, immediately after his profession of ignorance, did Herodotos go on to remark
(5.66.1): θόοντι δὲ ὃς συγγενὸς ἀυτῷ (Isagoras) Διὶ Ἐπαφρίο (in my view a highly probable correction of Καρία, note, for example, SEG 21. 541 [the religious calendar of the deme Erchia], col. V, lines 60–61)? Because, I conceive, he could not resist intimating that he knew more than he was prepared to say and at the same time providing a coy and cryptic clue for the more curious and perceptive among his audience.

10. It runs from 9.33.1 to 9.36.1.

11. Concerning the Aigeidai later writers (Ephoros, Aristotle, Polybios, and a scholiast to Pindar) are quite specific. For full references and discussion see H. Mitchell, Sparta, Cambridge 1952, 103–104 note 3.

12. See Theopompus, FGrH 106 F 171.

13. Tyrtaios: see Plato, Laws 629a and Plutarch, Moralia 230d; Alkman: see Plutarch, Moralia 600e.

14. Herodotos 5.72.2 is quite specific that only the Spartans of those who had surrendered were to be allowed to depart from Attika. Nevertheless Isagoras turns up with Kleomenes in the Peloponnes at 74.1. I suppose that Kleomenes could not have declared Isagoras a Spartan citizen immediately after their capitulation (!). In that case subsequent events would carry the implication that he enjoyed ‘dual nationality’, which does not seem likely.

15. See Herodotos 5.74.1.

16. See Herodotos 5.75.1.

17. Herodotos 5.90.

18. Hipparchos’ political status and relationship to the tyrant family — Ath. Pol. 22.4. By 496/5 he was strong enough to gain election to the eponymous archonship: Dionysios of Halikarnassos, Ant. Rom. 6.1.1. In 486/7 he was ostracised: Ath. Pol. 22.4.

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ΠΡΩΤΟΘΡΟΝΟΣ: A SUPPLEMENT

Readers of Corinna Matzukis’ valuable paper¹ might be glad to have two further examples of this word from Byzantine sources. Manuel Philes² has the expression φιλήμα πρωτοθρόνον of Peter and Paul; Mark is called πρωτοθρόνος byProcopius the Deacon.³

One additional factor to those plausibly suggested by Matzukis may have contributed to the Christian application of this term. Remembering its secular affiliations in the context of higher education, a connection can easily be made with the notion of the apostles as teachers and philosophers, a popular image in both Byzantine literature and art.⁴

NOTES


2. Epp. 184. 1.

3. Encomium in S. Marcum Apost. 12 (PG 100. 1197C).


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