

NOTE ON THE EXILES OF THE ALKMEONIDAI

Prior to the discovery of the now famous archon-list fragment¹⁾ (containing the names of Hippias, Kleisthenes and Miltiades for the years 526/25, 525/24 and 524/23, respectively) there was not, so far as I can see, any doubt that the Alkmeonidai may not have stayed away from Athens throughout the third phase of the tyranny of Peisistratos *and* the entire period of the reign of his sons, i.e. from Pallene to the return of that clan in 511/10. It seemed sufficient to quote Hdt.² – widely scattered – three statements on that subject (1, 64; 5, 62; 6, 123); further confirmation was seen in Thuk. 6, 59, 4²⁾ and, since 1891, in Aristot. *Ἀθ. πολ.* 19, 3.

This assessment of the evidence still seems, despite the generally accepted interpretation of the archon-list fragment, to prevail in even more recent publications³⁾. Apart from negative evidence in our literary sources, however (to wit the complete absence of the archon Kleisthenes of 525/24) there is very little to be found in these sources which would suggest that it would have been the vulgate in antiquity that the Alkmeonidai were in exile from Pallene through 511/10.

The following is what our sources confirm:

(1) An Alkmeonid exile after the battle of Pallene, of unspecified duration (Hdt. 1, 64; Isokr. 16, 25; Plut. *Sol.* 30, 6; cf. Schol. Demosth. 21, 144 [*ad* 561, 16 Reiske]).

(2) An Alkmeonid exile under the Peisistratidai, ending only with the expulsion of Hippias (Hdt. 5, 62; 6, 123; Thuk. 6, 59, 4; Isokr. 15, 232; 16, 26; Demosth. 21, 144; Aristot. *Ἀθ. πολ.* 19, 3; Schol. Aristeid. *Παναθην.* 120, 6 [3, 118 Dind]; Schol. Demosth. 21, 144 [*ad* 561, 16 Reiske]; Schol. Demosth.

1) B.D. Meritt, *Hesp* 8, 1939, 59ff.; *SEG* X, no. 352; C.W.J. Eliot and M.F. McGregor, *Phoenix* 15, 1960, 27ff.; D.W. Bradeen, *Hesp* 32, 1963, 187ff.; pl. 58f.

2) On the meaning of Thuk. 6, 59, 4 cf. C.W. Fornara, *Philol* 111, 1967, 294f.; K.J. Dover, in Gomme-Andrewes-Dover *Hist. Comm. Thuc.* 4, 336; 487; Kinzl, *RbM* 116, 1973, 91ff.

3) The most curious instance being the article by P.J. Bicknell, *Hist* 19, 1970, 129f., who attempts to resolve the alleged problem by eliminating the exile of Megakles.

21, 144 [*ad* 561, 17 Reiske], published in the second volume of the Didot-edition of the *Oratores Attici*, Paris 1858; Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 7, 9b, cf. Philochoros *FGrHist* 328 F 115⁴).

(3) The archonship of Kleisthenes, datable by Dion. Hal. *Ῥωμα. ἀρχ.* 7, 3, 1 to 525/24 (*SEG* X, no. 352).

The problem is rooted in the negative evidence of the *literary* sources, with respect to the archonship of Kleisthenes, or in fact with respect to any activities of Alkmeonidai in Athens between the battle of Pallene and the expulsion of Hippias, and in the resulting alleged contradictory evidence of the inscription.

I do not propose to enter into a discussion of what may have motivated Hdt. to pass over the archonship of Kleisthenes in silence. The fact is undeniable and cannot be explained, nor explained away. There is one point, however, which perhaps deserves to be made: Hdt. never records the name of any archon – with the notable sole exception of the archonship of Kalliades in 480/79, at the climax of events⁵). There is moreover nothing which compels us to believe that the year 525/24, in which Kleisthenes held the office of *ἀρχων ἐπώνυμος*, was otherwise of significance for Athens or for Kleisthenes⁶).

The negative evidence in Hdt. should therefore not be exploited; nor must it be coupled with yet another piece of negative evidence provided by Aristotle, who fails to report on the exile of Megakles in the wake of the operetta-style defeat at Pallene (he could have done so *Ἀθ. πολ.* 15)⁷); nothing can be gained from the silence of Aristotle, who, incidentally, despite his enumerating some two dozen archons, remains equally reticent when it comes to the archonship of Kleisthenes.

Felix Jacoby in his commentary on Philochoros 328 F 115 (the contents of which text are closely linked to the problem in question) already contributed the important observation that [Philochoros] (like all other authors from Herodotos onwards) quite correctly always talks of the “Peisistratids”, i. e. the sons

4) Kinzl ‘Philochoros *FGrHist* 328 F 115 and Ephoros: observations on Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 7, 9b’ *Hermes* 102, 1974, 179ff.

5) Hdt. 8, 51; cf. Jacoby, *Klio* 9, 1909, 117 = *Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtschreibung* 57; M. White, *Phoenix* 23, 1969, 44.

6) Cf. J. K. Davies *Athenian propertied families*, Oxford 1971, 375: ‘Kleisthenes’ archonship of 525/24 cannot be used to infer that he was already head of the family, but only that he was the most prominent Alkmeonid not yet a member of the Arciopagos’.

7) Bicknell (n. 3).

of Peisistratos'. In the light of the evidence as presented above we cannot but extend Jacoby's remark and conclude that *all our literary sources, including Hdt., clearly distinguish between the reign of Peisistratos and that of his sons, the Peisistratidai*, whenever they deal with the fate of the Alkmeonidai in that period.

Nineteen of the twenty quotations entered in Powell's *Lexicon to Herodotus* s.v. *Πεισιστρατίδαι* unmistakably relate to the rule of the sons of Peisistratos. The only somewhat ambiguous passage is 6, 123⁸). In 6, 121 Hdt. wonders how the Alkmeonidai could possibly have been wont to accept that Athens pass under the yoke of the barbarians and *ὑπὸ Ἰππίαρι*. The Alkmeonidai were *μισοτύραννοι* to no less a degree than the Keryx Kallias (6, 123). Hdt., if he had stopped to think, would have realized that this does not agree with what he had uncovered about the admittedly ill-fated alliance between Megakles and Peisistratos (1, 60f.), but the purpose of 6, 121 ff. did not require him to flash back a whole generation. The reasoning here is quite simple. The Alkmeonidai had masterminded the expulsion of the Peisistratidai, and of Hippias in particular (Hdt. even includes a footnote for the more forgetful among the readers referring back to 5, 62 ff., where we find no word about the old tyrant – why then should the same Alkmeonidai ask the same Hippias to return graciously. Thus in 6, 123 too the patronymic *Πεισιστρατίδαι* exclusively relates to the sons of Peisistratos, and consequently *τοὺς τυράννους* represents but an anticipation of *οἱ Πεισιστρατίδαι*, reflecting the identical chronological notion. If Hdt. had meant to say that 'the Alkmeonidai were in exile for the entire time under Peisistratos (which incidentally Hdt. could not have believed, himself, see 1, 60f.) and the Peisistratidai', he simply failed to do so. To be sure, Hdt. is not a clumsy writer; our frequent difficulties in understanding him are of a different order.

This still leaves unresolved the puzzle posed by Hdt.' remark that the Alkmeonidai *ἔφηνον τὸν πάντα χρόνον τοὺς τυράννους*. If Hdt. contended that *all* Alkmeonidai were in exile *throughout* the tyranny of the Peisistratidai, then he most certainly was either misinformed himself, or he himself endeavoured to misinform his audience. Whichever is true – are we to believe that an episode as ephemeral as a three year banishment (514/13–511/10) could have been inflated into an exile

8) Cf. below (last paragraph).

lasting *τὸν πάντα χρόνον*? – at any rate, Hdt.' words simply imply that the exile of the Alkmeonidai before the expulsion of Hippias was of relatively long duration. Otherwise they remain meaningless.

Since the passage has to be viewed against the background of the dispute over the merits of the tyrannicides and the rôle of the Alkmeonidai, it seems possible for us to reach a much more natural understanding of the dubious phrase. The assassins of Hipparchos only enraged the remaining Peisistratidai, thus rendering a disservice to the Athenians; whereas the Alkmeonidai were actively campaigning against the tyranny from without, thus not inflicting further suffering upon the tyrannized Athenians. The Alkmeonidai were after all engaged *all the time* (while nothing beneficial emanated from internal resistance) in diplomatic and other offensive manœuvres against the tyrants.

Hdt. in these chapters plainly does not digress on matters of chronology. He concentrates on the rôle of the Alkmeonidai during the years of steadily deteriorating conditions in Peisistratid Athens – conditions which the tyrannicide did not serve to remedy. It is only in this context and against this background that Hdt. uses the phrase 'all the time', *τὸν πάντα χρόνον*. His audience presumably knew what he was trying to say⁹⁾.

We may accordingly sum up the results of this brief note as follows: except the somewhat ambiguous expression of Hdt., *οἵτινες* (sc. *οἱ Ἀλκμεωνίδαι*) *τε ἔφευγον τὸν πάντα χρόνον τοὺς τυράννους* (sc. *τοὺς Πεισιστρατίδας*) (6, 123), there is no evidence to be extracted from our literary sources to the effect that the Alkmeonidai were according to some ancient tradition in continuous exile from Pallene through 511/10, and there is no contradiction between the literary sources and the epigraphic document unearthed on May 5, 1936¹⁰⁾.

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9) An examination of the other 9 occurrences of the phrase *τὸν πάντα χρόνον* (Powell *Lex. Hdt.* s.v. *χρόνος*, I 2, p. 381) admittedly does not produce a striking parallel, which could hardly be expected anyway, considering the specific historical situation.

10) The chief contention of this note formed part of a paper delivered to the annual convention of the Classical Association of Canada, May, 1971, St. John's, Newfoundland.