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Artabazos and the Rhodians. Marriage Alliance and Satrapal Politics in the Late Achaemenid Aegean

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Grecs et non-Grecs de l'empire perse au monde hellénistique

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Artabazos and the Rhodians

Marriage Alliance and Satrapal Politics in the Late Achaemenid Aegean

ABSTRACT–. This essay explores the partnership between the Persian satrap Artabazos and his Rhodian brothers-in-law, including the initial context for Artabazos' marriage to the sister of Mentor and Memnon, and the brothers' successive marriages to Artabazos' daughter Barsine. After Artabazos' exile and restoration, Alexander's invasion of the Persian Empire presented a new opportunity to enhance the family's status through Memnon's appointment to command of the Aegean fleet. Following Memnon's death, the execution of Charidemos at the court of Darius III supported Artabazos' ambitions by removing an old family enemy and securing the Aegean command for Artabazos' son Pharnabazos.

KEYWORDS–. Artabazos, Memnon, Darius III, satrap, marriage alliance

RÉSUMÉ–. Cette étude explore l'alliance entre le satrape perse Artabaze et ses beaux-frères rhodiens, y compris le contexte initial du mariage d'Artabaze avec la sœur de Mentor et de Memnon, et les mariages successifs des frères à la fille d'Artabaze, Barsinè. Après l'exil d'Artabaze, puis sa restauration, l'invasion de l'empire perse par Alexandre présente une nouvelle opportunité pour améliorer le statut familial grâce à la nomination de Memnon comme commandant de la flotte égéenne. Après la mort de Memnon, l'exécution de Charidèmos soutient les ambitions d'Artabaze en supprimant un vieil ennemi familial et en assurant le commandement égéen à Pharnabaze, le fils d'Artabaze.

MOTS-CLÉS–. Artabaze, Memnon, Darius III, satrape, mariage-politique

The familial alliance between the satrap Artabazos and the Rhodian mercenary captains Mentor and Memnon is perhaps the best-known example of the Iranian nobility's intermarriage and political partnership with non-Persians in the Achaemenid borderlands. Beginning with Artabazos' marriage to the Rhodians' anonymous sister in the 360s BC, the relationship resulted in numerous offspring and survived Artabazos' political eclipse and exile with Memnon in Macedonia; after their pardon and return to the empire in the late 340s, it expanded through the successive unions of Artabazos' daughter Barsine with Mentor and Memnon. During the Macedonian invasion, the family played a critical role in the attempted defense of the Persian Empire's Aegean frontier zone, until battlefield disasters and the fall of Darius III brought first Barsine and later her father into Alexander's orbit.

Memnon, of course, is the most famous member of this hybrid Persian-Greek household due to his role in resistance to Alexander, and recent studies have shed new light on his earlier career in the context of local administration in the late Achaemenid Troad.¹ But the origins of the connection

(1) See KHOLOD 2018; ELLIS-EVANS 2018; ROP 2019, p. 197-206.

with Artabazos that established Memnon's position, and the satrap's perspective on the marriage alliance, have remained obscure. While discussions of the Anatolian satrapal revolts in the mid-fourth century naturally touch on Artabazos' political activities, rebellion, and exile,² they have not yet offered a satisfactory explanation for his familial strategies, including the mysterious decision by a king's grandson to "marry down." It remains unclear what the young satrap expected to gain through the initial relationship with the family of his Rhodian in-laws, and why the marriage lasted as long as it did, compounded by Barsine's marriages to Mentor and Memnon, instead of giving way in time to a new match with a woman better suited to Artabazos' rank and stature. How did the complex partnership that transformed the Rhodian brothers into borderland elites serve the interests of Artabazos and his household?

This essay seeks to explore the multigenerational alliance between Artabazos' family and the Rhodians from a Persian socio-political context. It proposes that the unique complexities of Artabazos' delayed inheritance, which constricted his access to familial economic resources and opportunities for marriage with other great imperial households, created the initial attraction of the Rhodian marriage, and that this alliance acquired new value after Artabazos' exile because Mentor retained the sole administrative connection to the family's former territories in northwest Anatolia. Finally, when Alexander came, Memnon's acquisition of an Aegean naval command created the opportunity for a greater revival of Artabazos' status, through a planned reconquest meant to repeat the crowning achievement of the satrap's father Pharnabazos and his Athenian partner Konon. After Memnon's death, this potential continued through the appointment of Artabazos' son Pharnabazos to the Aegean command, secured by the death of an old family enemy at Darius' court, before the disaster of Issus threw their family's women and children into Macedonian captivity and overturned their plans for military recovery.

I. THE HOUSEHOLD OF PHARNABAZOS AND ARTABAZOS' INHERITANCE

The origins of Artabazos' Rhodian marriage are connected with his delayed inheritance of satrapal estates long associated with his family, but put out of reach by the political upheaval of the 360s. The son of the satrap Pharnabazos and the royal princess Apama, Artabazos received political authority from his grandfather Artaxerxes II, in the shape of a satrapal appointment that marked the fifth generation of family governance in the region of Hellespontine Phrygia and its palace center of Daskyleion. The satrapal title compounded a household legacy of estates and associated personnel and revenues across northwest Anatolia, accumulated since the reign of Xerxes.³ But Artabazos inherited the leadership of Pharnabazos' household without physical access to the Anatolian territorial assets that made up a crucial part of his family income, because Ariobarzanes, the leading administrator in Daskyleion for more than two decades, rebelled against the king and managed to hold off efforts at reconquest by other Persian officials between 367 and 363.

It is necessary to consider Artabazos' initial dilemma in light of the institutional dynamics of Achaemenid elite households.⁴ Persian noble families derived crucial revenues from royal land grants, some connected with satrapal assignments to particular regions but others dispersed across other parts of the empire, which allowed the maintenance of dependent household staff and work forces that might number in the hundreds if not thousands. Over each generation, the leaders

(2) See especially WEISKOPF 1989, p. 54-63; DEBORD 1999, p. 346-350, 393-396.

(3) DEBORD 1999, p. 96-104; cf. KING 2021, p. 138.

(4) For estates as the foundation of Achaemenid elite family dynamics, see HENKELMAN 2018; TUPLIN 2020, p. 46-61. KING 2021 offers the most recent and wide-ranging institutional study of Persian satrapal households.

of these households cultivated their estates and manpower and pursued royal favor in the hope of further expanding these resources and passing them on to their heirs, despite the danger of disruption and reallocation if royal favor should ever be lost. In the best-case scenario, a successful household would pass down wealth from one generation to the next with the king's approval, but the death of an aristocratic patriarch could threaten the continuity of the family's resources if his offspring quarreled over leadership and the apportionment of their patrimony. The turmoil within Pharnabazos' household provides the best example of such a situation and its consequences.

Artabazos' mother Apama, while highest in status, was the last of Pharnabazos' wives in chronological terms, and the satrap had older sons from multiple unions. In Persian elite families, despite Herodotus' generalization about the prevalence of polygamy (1.135), it was usual for a noble to marry only one formal wife at a time, while keeping multiple concubines who might bear him additional children, members of the extended household but unequal to the children of the formal wife in matters of inheritance.⁵ Later remarriages generated the potential for conflict between new heirs and legitimate children from earlier spouses, not to mention the concubines' sons.

Pharnabazos' first known wife, Parapita (Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.39-40), gave birth sometime after 412 to a son who was still regarded as a youth in 394, at the famous meeting between the satrap and Agesilaos. Parapita appears to have died sometime before 399 and the satrap did not remarry for several years, as indicated by Xenophon's report that Mania, the aspiring dynast of the Troad, sought Pharnabazos' favor by offering gifts to his concubines rather than seeking to win over his wife (*Hell.* 3.1.10). In 395, the local noble Spithridates took up arms against Pharnabazos for proposing to take his daughter as a concubine, rather than a wife, due to his ambition to marry the king's daughter instead (Xen. *Ages.* 3.3); the satrap's lack of a formal spouse at this period explains Spithridates' belief that such a marriage was possible, and his anger at its rejection. Xenophon omits the names of the brothers whom he accuses of expelling Parapita's son from the satrapy and driving him into exile beyond the Aegean, sometime after the Persian-Spartan conflict. A common solution is to assume that one of them was Ariobarzanes, who governed at Daskyleion after Pharnabazos' departure from the region, and may have been the satrap's offspring by an unattested earlier wife or concubine.⁶ Nevertheless, Pharnabazos may not have recognized any offspring of his earlier unions as primary heir to his household, given his hopes for a status-enhancing remarriage. Xenophon's comment on the non-marriage to Spithridates' daughter suggests that Pharnabazos pursued a royal match for several years (*Ages.* 3.3), and Artaxerxes II finally bestowed Apama on the satrap after his Aegean naval victories against the Spartans in 394-393 (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.28; Plut. *Artox.* 27.4). Once Apama gave birth to Artabazos, sometime between 391 and 387, it made sense for Pharnabazos to reserve the household inheritance for his new child until he came of age. In the meantime, Parapita's son left for Greece, while Ariobarzanes oversaw the family resources in northwest Anatolia.⁷

Artabazos grew up at a significant physical distance from the resources he was meant to inherit because Pharnabazos spent the last two decades of his career in frequent, if not permanent absence from his ancestral territories. Such absentee management was not uncommon, as satraps served as titular heads of administration in the geographic areas to which they were assigned, but also traveled to visit court, undertake military commands, or inspect their estates in other regions. As evidence from the Persepolis Fortification and Arshama archives indicates, a satrapal title was not strictly limited by regional jurisdiction and one could retain this status even in situations of travel

(5) See LENFANT 2019, p. 21-22.

(6) WEISKOPF 1989, p. 27 n. 34, takes Ariobarzanes as Pharnabazos' son; cf. KING 2021, 136-137. DEBORD 1999, p. 98-103, while not ruling out this possibility, also considers an alternative identification as Pharnabazos' younger brother.

(7) For Artabazos' birthdate, see HECKEL 2006, p. 54, 296 n. 133.

and extended distance from the satrapy.⁸ Like his older contemporary Arshama, Pharnabazos spent much of his later career as an absentee satrap, going up to court for the marriage to Apama and earning assignments as a royal general against Egypt in the late 390s as well as the 373 campaign. But this had the side effect of keeping his intended heir Artabazos from acquiring personal connections in Hellespontine Phrygia, in contrast with Ariobarzanes.

Michael Weiskopf has argued for viewing Ariobarzanes as the new satrap rather than a mere “placeholder,”⁹ but in light of the Achaemenid evidence for the long-term activities of satraps outside their territorial jurisdictions, there is no need to assume that Pharnabazos gave up his original title. Rather, he could have retained the office and status of satrap, associated with his authority in the Daskyleion region, even while supervising military preparations in the Levant, campaigning in Egypt, or residing at court. It may be better to consider Ariobarzanes’ formal administrative position as that of a satrapal deputy, comparable with the official Ziššawiš in the Persepolis Fortification Archive, who supported Parnaka in the management of the province, while occupying a lower place on the ration scale.¹⁰ In practice, Ariobarzanes carried out these administrative duties for so long that he would have seemed equal to a formal satrap in the eyes of Greek historians who did not always parse subtle differences in rank. Until his quarrels with neighboring administrators led to his denunciation as a rebel, he appears to have wielded effective local power as the king’s representative in northwest Anatolia, probably depending on local resources and personnel that technically belonged to Pharnabazos’ household but naturally served the governor who was present in person.¹¹

Pharnabazos is last mentioned in connection with his unsuccessful Egyptian expedition in 373 (Diod. 15.41-43), and Artabazos first appears in the sources after returning to western Anatolia roughly a decade later (Diod. 15.91.2). It may be that the king honored Artabazos with the status of satrap, as well as confirming his inheritance of Pharnabazos’ household assets, immediately after his father’s death. But Artabazos would not have been in residence anywhere near Daskyleion; although no source mentions details of his upbringing, he probably divided his youth between court and Pharnabazos’ extra-satrapal residences, perhaps in Cilicia where the old satrap had issued coinage at Tarsus, or near the Phoenician harbor of Akko, the staging ground for the Egyptian expedition of 373.¹² Artabazos would have inherited such possessions and their revenues, but the rest of his father’s estates remained in the hands of Ariobarzanes. Nevertheless, it does not appear that he took concrete steps to contest control of Daskyleion before Ariobarzanes’ betrayal and death in 363.¹³

Like his father, Artabazos may have exercised satrapal standing without necessarily needing to travel to his regional base, but separation from ancestral lands limited his financial resources compared with those of other satraps. This constraint had strategic consequences, limiting Artabazos’ capacity to hire and maintain military forces that might join in the other Anatolian satraps’ efforts to dislodge the rebel and release his full patrimony. This could explain his lack of

(8) See HENKELMAN 2010, p. 712-713; TUPLIN 2020, p. 39-45; KING 2021, p. 145-149.

(9) WEISKOPF 1989, p. 28.

(10) On deputy satraps and their place in the larger administrative system, see HENKELMAN 2020, p. 212-213; for the career of Ziššawiš in particular, see GARRISON 2017, p. 333-385. It is possible, although not certain, that the official Artavant who corresponds with Arshama from Egypt during the satrap’s absence also falls into this category; see TUPLIN 2020, p. 44-45.

(11) For local rivalries and denunciations as catalysts for Ariobarzanes’ designation as a rebel, see WEISKOPF 1989, p. 41-44; compare BRIANT 2002, p. 660-661, on the origins of Datames’ revolt.

(12) For Pharnabazos’ activities in this period, see RUZICKA 2012, p. 101-121; for his Cilician coin series, see MÜSELER 2018, p. 96-102.

(13) See WEISKOPF 1989, p. 54-55; DEBORD 1999, p. 346; BRIANT 2002, p. 662.

involvement while Autophradates, the satrap of Sardis, and Mausolus, the Hekatomnid dynast of Caria, launched expeditions against Ariobarzanes (Xen. *Ages.* 2.26-27). Only after Ariobarzanes' downfall was the young Artabazos able to travel to Daskyleion and reclaim the full assemblage of paternal estates and revenues. This household restoration would have increased his practical ability to engage in military activities, and may have enabled the recruitment of the troops that he led in the king's name against Datames, the rebellious satrap in Cappadocia (Diod. 15.91.2-5).¹⁴

II. THE RHODIAN MARRIAGE ALLIANCE

Artabazos' marriage to his Rhodian wife, with whom he is said to have had twenty-one children by the end of the 340s (Diod. 16.52.4), must have taken place around the time of his return to Daskyleion if not somewhat earlier.¹⁵ The earliest reference to the marriage focuses on its impact on Mentor and Memnon, without elaborating on the origins of the arrangement. It occurs in a speech of Demosthenes, maligning the Rhodians' temporary associate Charidemus, which describes the two brothers as "the in-laws (*kēdestai*) of Artabazos, young men, enjoying unexpected good fortune through their in-law relationship (*kēdeia*) to Artabazos" (23.154). As for Artabazos' anonymous bride, a glimpse of the social elevation that came with marriage to a satrap appears in a colorful anecdote preserved in Athenaeus (6.256c-d), which decries a group of Cypriot women known as the "flatterers" for their abject service to powerful ladies; some of them, "sent for to the wives of Artabazos and Mentor," are supposed to have earned the nickname of "ladders" by offering their bodies to tread on whenever these illustrious women climbed in or out of their high carriages.

If Artabazos' marriage greatly raised the station of his new wife and in-laws, we must ask why he pursued it in the first place. Many Achaemenid elite marriages were pre-arranged by parents, as most clearly illustrated in Xenophon's account of the negotiations that Agesilaos mediated between Spithridates and Otys of Paphlagonia (*Hell.* 4.1.2-15); but we can safely assume that Pharnabazos would not have chosen such an unequal match for his child in advance, given his court connections and prominence. It seems most likely that Artabazos contracted the union himself after Pharnabazos' death, negotiating the arrangement either with Mentor and Memnon as their sister's guardians, or with their anonymous father if he was still alive.

Pierre Debord contextualizes Artabazos' Rhodian marriage against a wider backdrop of unions between the Iranian nobility and subject or client elites, a feature of the Achaemenid empire that is attested as early as the sixth century, although more prominent in our sources from the fourth. But the examples he discusses involve situations of political alliance-building between Persians and powerful client rulers, such as the case of Spithridates and Otys, or the Hekatomnid dynast Pixodarus whose daughter wed the Persian Orontobates, permitting the latter to step into the line of satrapal succession at Halicarnassus. Similarly, in an earlier instance, the Achaemenid Boubares, an imperial official in Thrace, married the daughter of the Macedonian king in order to solidify the loyalty of a valuable client realm in the empire's Aegean borderlands.¹⁶ Another case

(14) The date of this campaign remains controversial, although WEISKOPF 1989, p. 58-61, makes a strong argument for its occurrence c. 362 after Artabazos' establishment in his province; HECKEL 2006, 54, suggests a date of 359. BRIANT 2002, p. 662, prefers to place it somewhat earlier, during Artabazos' travel to Daskyleion. RUZICKA 2012, p. 129-130, prefers a much earlier date c. 367, combining Artabazos' campaign with the expedition of the Sardis satrap Autophradates described by Cornelius Nepos (*Dat.* 7-8), and assuming that Artabazos accompanied Autophradates in a joint command; in this case, it might have been necessary for a direct supply of royal funds to support the troops assigned to him, given the limits of his familial resources.

(15) For the approximate date of the marriage, see BRUNT 1975, p. 25.

(16) See DEBORD 1999, p. 28, 297 n. 160.

of mixed marriage is that of Mazaeus, the fourth-century satrap of Cilicia and the Levant who later gave Babylon to Alexander, had children whose Babylonian personal names point to their mother's Mesopotamian background; but this may actually involve a union between two families of Achaemenid administrators, as a recent study has proposed identification of Mazaeus' in-laws with the family of Belšunu I and II, the Babylonian-born satraps of the trans-Euphrates region under Darius II and Artaxerxes II.¹⁷

The case of Artabazos' marriage differs in the level of social inequality between the two parties, as the family of his Rhodian bride do not seem to have possessed the sort of local status or territorial authority that characterizes the non-Persian family in other elite marriage alliances. Although they probably possessed a network of wealthy guest-friends, such as their father's *xenos* Aristonymos of Methymna (Polyaen. 5.44.3), and eventually gained sufficient resources to support mercenary forces, this later development seems to have occurred only after their settlement in the Troad with Artabazos' patronage.¹⁸ They did not control land in the Troad before the marriage, nor do they ever appear to have played a role in the democratic government of their native Rhodes; while Memnon's coinage at Lampsakos adopted the Rhodian iconography of a rose and the sun-god Helios, suggesting a continuing pride in the family's city of origin, accounts of Mentor's or Memnon's subsequent careers say nothing about active Rhodian connections, and we might consider the possibility of estrangement or exile.¹⁹ Artabazos' new in-laws appear to have been displaced individuals pursuing advancement through Achaemenid noble patronage, and it is hard not to see the match as a step down in Persian social terms; as Weiskopf puts it, "It seems surprising that Artabazos married below his station."²⁰

We are entitled to wonder how Artabazos first encountered the Rhodians at all, given his lack of prior residence in western Anatolia or the Aegean. A possible explanation is that they had joined his father's service during Pharnabazos' activities in the eastern Mediterranean. A family *xenia* might have originated as early as the Persian-Spartan naval conflict of the 390s, and the Persian fleet's support for the establishment of the Rhodian democracy in 395.²¹ Mentor and Memnon were probably born in the decade after these events, since they are still viewed as youthful in Demosthenes' speech around 360, and their father could have been associated with Konon's fleet or Timokrates, the Rhodian agent of Pharnabazos who visited the overseas poleis on the eve of the Corinthian War.²² It is also possible that the Rhodian brothers served among the Greek mercenaries commanded by Konon's protégé Iphikrates in Pharnabazos' Egyptian expedition of 373.

Guest-friendship, if it brought the families together, would justify Artabazos' trust in his in-laws, but it does not fully explain the marriage from the Persian political perspective. What did the grandson of an Achaemenid king believe that he stood to gain from a formal union, rather than an arrangement of concubinage, with a Rhodian woman who did not come from a noble family? It may be that Pharnabazos' failure to arrange a suitable match for Artabazos before his death placed the new satrap in a position of relative difficulty, as he could boast of his father's title and mother's status but lacked access to a large portion of the family estates while Ariobarzanes held out in Daskyleion. After his father's death, the temporary uncertainty surrounding Artabazos' access to

(17) KING 2021, p. 252-253.

(18) WEISKOPF 1989, p. 63; ELLIS-EVANS 2018, p. 38.

(19) For the numismatic imagery and Memnon's identification as the issuer, see ASHTON, KINNS 2002, 14-15; ELLIS-EVANS 2018, p. 37.

(20) WEISKOPF 1989, p. 56; cf. BRIANT 2002, p. 699-700, viewing this "remarkable" marriage in the context of the Daskyleion satraps' multi-generational receptivity to "Greek influences."

(21) For a summary of political upheavals in fourth-century Rhodes, see BERTHOLD 1980.

(22) For an estimated birthdate in the 380s, see MCCOY 1989, p. 422, following KAHRSTEDT 1932.

familial wealth may have undermined his appeal as a potential match for the daughters of other great aristocratic households. The circumstances of his struggle to reclaim patrimony would have also curtailed his trust in Iranian peers with particular connections to western Anatolia, where his fellow satraps were looking to encroach on his territory; in particular, Autophradates, the satrap of Sardis, was a dangerous neighbor who would arrest and briefly detain Artabazos under obscure circumstances around 360 (Dem. 23.154-155). Inexperienced and lacking heirs to secure the future of a family dynasty riven by internal struggles, Artabazos was vulnerable to contenders for regional power. Under the circumstances, the pursuit of a hasty formal marriage was essential for acquiring legitimate children who could symbolize the certainty of his family's future. Given his father's precedent, he might have considered the potential availability of higher-status brides in the more distant future, but for the time being, the Rhodian wife offered a solution to his immediate problems.

Artabazos' initial marriage-alliance, therefore, was most likely a marriage of convenience that exploited the trustworthiness of familial guest-friends, and continued his father's tradition of political employment of Greek agents in various military and diplomatic contexts. Jeffrey Rop has recently argued that Artabazos pursued the marriage due to an active search for Greek friends who might lend military support to his establishment of satrapal authority in the wake of Ariobarzanes' revolt.²³ Mentor and Memnon were newcomers to the world of Aegean warlords, and there were roving Athenians, such as Timotheus, Charidemos, or Chares, with better access to military forces, but Artabazos had reason to keep the Athenians at arm's length. His father had patronized Athens through Konon and solicited its gratitude in the form of Iphikrates' mercenaries, but tensions surfaced in the quarrel that led to Iphikrates' departure from the Egyptian expedition (Diod. 16.43.5-6). Konon's son Timotheus was also a family guest-friend, and briefly replaced Iphikrates as commander of Pharnabazos' mercenaries ([Ps.-]Dem. 49.25), but more recently led Athenian troops in support of the hated Ariobarzanes (Dem. 15.9).²⁴ Although Artabazos remained willing to hire Athenian generals such as Chares if this offered temporary advantage, Mentor's and Memnon's Rhodian origin lent them an independence that made them more reliable as new members of the satrapal household.²⁵

Soon after his arrival at Daskyleion, Artabazos appointed his new brothers-in-law as governors over the Troad, recognizing its particular economic and strategic importance. The management of this region through Greek subordinates with networks of local influence was a long-standing family tradition, previously seen in Pharnabazos' delegation of authority to the Dardanian dynasts Zenis and Mania (Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.10-15), and Ariobarzanes' employment of Philiskos of Abydos, who governed for at least two decades before his assassination at Lampsakos around 364.²⁶ In Demosthenes' words, mastery of the Troad and its surroundings, including an outpost on the far side of the Propontis at Perinthos, made Philiskos the "greatest of the *hyparchs*" (23.142), and Artabazos surely expected the Rhodian brothers to follow in his footsteps by securing military forces to garrison the region's major population centers. While the satrap would get his cut, the appointment entailed substantial revenues for Mentor and Memnon through accompanying land

(23) ROP 2019, p. 141.

(24) For Timotheus, Pharnabazos, and Egypt, see RUZICKA 2012, p. 122-124.

(25) As noted above, the sources are silent on the brothers' relationship with the politics of the Rhodian democracy, and they may have been exiles; but for what it is worth, Rhodes had joined Athens' naval league in 378 but sympathized with Epaminondas' Aegean expedition of 364 before revolting outright in the Social War of 357 (see BERTHOLD 1980, p. 39-43).

(26) For the analogy to Zenis and Mania, see KHOLOD 2018, p. 180 n. 11. On Philiskos' role as Ariobarzanes' diplomatic liaison with Athens and other overseas *poleis*, see Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.27; Dem. 23.141.

grants, and Memnon displayed his financial authority through the minting of a coin series at Lampsakos over the following decade.²⁷

Unfortunately, Mentor and Memnon subcontracted military recruitment to a less trustworthy ally, the Athenian mercenary general Charidemus, shortly before Autophradates' treacherous arrest of Artabazos. Upon learning this news, Charidemus jumped to take advantage of Artabazos' weakness and seized the key cities of Ilion, Skepsis, and Kebren for himself (Dem 23.154). However, Autophradates released his prisoner soon afterwards, and presumably came to a satisfactory accommodation if it is true that troops from Lydia supported Artabazos' subsequent reconquest of the Troad (23.155). The satrap's offensive overwhelmed Charidemus' defenses, and Mentor and Memnon supposedly persuaded Artabazos to let Charidemus escape without further punishment, in order to avoid provoking an Athenian military response (23.157).²⁸ Building on this diplomatic instinct over the following years, the brothers seem to have tried to further stabilize the region by promoting the cities' common attachment to the cult of Athena Ilias, as argued in another issue of coinage connected with their administration in a recent study.²⁹ Their loyalty and revenue production thereafter benefited Artabazos considerably, and provided initial justification for the Rhodian marriage alliance.

Meanwhile, Artabazos' Rhodian wife had begun giving birth to a series of healthy children who represented a future generation for Artabazos' household as long as he survived his present challenges. Diodorus claims that they had twenty-one children, eleven boys and ten girls, by the late 340s, although some studies account for the total by postulating some as the offspring of concubines as well as Artabazos' wife.³⁰ The tremendous number of offspring fulfilled the highest ideals of Persian masculine display, as celebrated in Herodotus' ethnography (1.136.1), and contributed to Artabazos' image as a vigorous household patriarch.³¹ But the young satrap faced greater challenges in the subsequent decade, with the death of his royal grandfather and the emergence of new conflicts with Persian rivals, which would drive him into exile and recalibrate the dynamics of his strategic marriage.

III. EXILE, RESTORATION, AND THE MARRIAGE OF BARSINE AND MENTOR

The death of Artaxerxes II in 359 was a serious blow to Artabazos' station in imperial society, transferring him from a small circle of royal grandsons to a much larger class of extended Achaemenid family.³² This may help to explain his continuing vulnerability and the willingness of local colleagues to denounce and attack him during the early reign of Artaxerxes III, despite his increased access to the household resources that allowed him to campaign against Datames and hire the mercenary forces of Chares and Pammenes in the 350s. The resulting conflicts between Artabazos and the neighboring satraps have been explored in depth elsewhere, most recently in

(27) See KHOLOD 2018, p. 184-196, for a review of previous scholarship on the possible location of the Rhodians' estates, and a persuasive argument for association between these initial grants, Memnon's *chora* (Arr. 1.17.8) in the time of Alexander's invasion, and the territory of the central Troad. For Memnon's Lampsakene coinage, see ASHTON, KINNS 2002, p. 11-16; ELLIS-EVANS 2018, 36-37, 40-42.

(28) For further discussion, see WEISKOPF 1989, p. 62-63; HESKEL 1997, p. 119, 149-151; DEBORD 1999, p. 346-350. See also Ps-Arist. *Oec.* 2.1351b for a money-making stratagem attributed to Charidemus while preparing his mercenaries to resist attack on Aeolic cities by Artabazos.

(29) ELLIS-EVANS 2018, p. 51-59.

(30) BRUNT 1975, p. 25; MÜLLER 2020, p. 286 n. 27. HECKEL 2006, p. 55, 275, accepts Diodorus' account.

(31) For the Achaemenid cultivation of aristocratic birth rates, see BRIANT 1999, p. 109-110; BRIANT 2002, p. 353.

(32) Cf. RUZICKA 2012, 132.

Jeffrey Rop's persuasive revisionist study, and I will not comment on them at length.³³ Suffice it to say that despite initial victories by his Greek mercenary commanders, the conflict ended in his defeat and flight to the court of Philip of Macedonia with his wife and children, accompanied by Memnon and his family, sometime in or after 352 (Diod. 16.52.2). There they remained for the better part of the 340s. But Mentor separated from Artabazos' and Memnon's household and went into the service of Egypt for several years before shifting his services back to the Persian king by 345.³⁴ His contributions to Artaxerxes' successful invasion and reconquest of Egypt earned royal gratitude, as well as the influential patronage of the court favorite Bagoas (Diod. 16.50.6-7), and revived the fortunes of Artabazos' household by acquiring a royal pardon for the entire family (Diod. 16.52.3).³⁵

This rise in Mentor's status, which made him Artabazos' benefactor, laid the foundations for the expansion of the family alliance through Mentor's marriage with Artabazos' daughter Barsine.³⁶ Diodorus passes over this detail, but it is attested indirectly in Arrian's account of the mass wedding at Susa in 324, where Mentor's and Barsine's daughter married Nearkhos (7.4.6); Barsine's wedding must have occurred around 340 since she would have been born in the late 360s or 350s and unavailable for marriage before her family's exile.³⁷ Mentor probably had an earlier wife who was by now deceased, and his son Thymondas, who would command the Greek mercenaries at Issus, was a child of this first marriage, so he had no need to remarry for the purpose of producing heirs.³⁸ Previous studies have assumed the marriage to his niece was Mentor's decision, and Peter Brunt suggests that it originated in his attraction to Barsine's "conspicuous beauty," but it is more useful to think in terms of Artabazos' political motives for offering his daughter in this particular match.³⁹ The timing suggests a gesture of gratitude towards Artabazos' brother-in-law and now son-in-law for bringing him back out of exile. It is also doubtlessly significant that Mentor had been able to regain ownership of an administrative position and the Rhodian brothers' estates in the Troad, once granted by Artabazos but now secured again by permission of Artaxerxes III. Diodorus exaggerates Mentor's official place in the new regime, describing him as general of all the empire's western coastlands, in partnership with Bagoas who allegedly oversaw the "upper satrapies" and came to dominate the court as well (16.50.7-8); the late source drastically oversimplifies with respect to Bagoas, and evidence is lacking for any military or administrative jurisdiction of Mentor beyond the Troad and Aiolis.⁴⁰ But his holdings represented a restoration of familial resources which were

(33) ROP 2019, p. 119-147. For earlier discussions see DEBORD 1999, p. 394-395; BRIANT 2002, p. 681-682; RUZICKA 2012, p. 155-158.

(34) For Mentor's probable departure during or before Artabazos' revolt, see ELLIS-EVANS 2018, p. 39.

(35) On Artabazos' exile and the precedents for Persian elite fugitives in Greece, see BRIANT 2002, p. 682. For Mentor's Egyptian campaigning, see RUZICKA 2012, p. 171-173, 179, 196; ROP 2019, p. 154-164.

(36) For Barsine's parentage, see Plut. *Al.* 21.7; Plut. *Eum.* 1.3.

(37) See BRUNT 1975, p. 25-26; HECKEL 2006, p. 70.

(38) A famous Athenian decree of the early 320s (*IG II² 356* = Tod 1948 no. 199) honors a benefactor from the family of Artabazos' Rhodian in-laws; earlier readings assumed that the honoree was an otherwise unknown Memnon II but disagreed over his parentage, with candidates including Memnon (Tod 1948, p. 282-283; DEBORD 1999, p. 104), Artabazos (BRUNT 1975, p. 26), and Thymondas (HECKEL 2006, p. 162). More recently, though, several studies have followed a textual reinterpretation that makes the honoree Thymondas himself; see LAMBERT 2012, p. 404; RUNG 2016, p. 53-58; LAMBERT 2018, p. 152; MÜLLER 2020, p. 301-303. If he is taken out of consideration for the parentage of the honoree, Thymondas could have been born as late as 360-355.

(39) See BRUNT 1975, p. 27. MÜLLER 2021, p. 164, is on stronger ground in a brief note on the strategic importance of endogamy for strengthening family bonds.

(40) See DEBORD 1999, p. 184; BRIANT 2002, p. 688; CAWKWELL 2005, p. 204; KHOLOD 2018, p. 180-182; ROP 2019, p. 178-179; MÜLLER 2021, p. 163-164.

now the only ones in northwest Anatolia still connected with Artabazos' household, and might yet be expected to pass to the erstwhile satrap's new grandchildren.

Despite his pardon, Artabazos had most likely lost his other family estates, both in the Daskyleion region and elsewhere. There was no reason why the king should not have seized and reappropriated them during the family's decade-long exile, as he reassigned the satrapal title associated with Daskyleion to Arsites, who held office from at least the late 340s to the time of Alexander's invasion. Despite speculation that Arsites was somehow related to Artabazos' family, his tenure certainly meant the introduction of a new satrapal household in the region that once belonged to Artabazos.⁴¹ The latter's return did not mean that the king would compel a new satrap to give back reallocated estates that accompanied the grant of office. It is questionable whether Artabazos, while allowed to take up residence at court, would have regained the honorary status of a satrap at all, in contrast with his father's retention of the title while serving outside his home region at the king's pleasure. Rather, he oversaw a household lowered in rank, diminished in influence and revenues, and facing the future prospect of supporting the careers of ten sons on comparatively limited means. The returned exile's situation was hardly optimal, and it is no wonder that he sought to strengthen his alliance with the one member of his extended household who still possessed substantive income, administrative authority close to the family's former territories, and the influence to advocate for the granting of military assignments to Artabazos' sons (Diod. 16.52).⁴²

There was little prospect of a direct return to Daskyleion by Artabazos' household. As governor over the Troad, Mentor was subordinated to the new satrap Arsites, and after his premature death sometime in the 330s, Mentor's powers and lands seem to have passed to Memnon. Despite William McCoy's hypothesis that this family tension underpinned the strategic dispute between Memnon and Arsites at the Granicus, more recent studies have argued that the Rhodian brothers cooperated effectively with the satrap in early responses to Philip's Propontic aggression and initial Anatolian bridgehead.⁴³ But Mentor's position allowed Artabazos to continue the association with his former subordinates' lands by proxy, and the remarriage of Barsine to Memnon (Plut. *Al.* 21.7-9) after Mentor's death extended the familial relationship. The hope of a greater restoration would fall not only on Memnon but on the new Pharnabazos, Artabazos' oldest son, when the convergence of Macedonian invasion and a new king on the Achaemenid throne offered opportunities for increasing royal favor through military successes in the Aegean borderlands.

IV. MEMNON, PHARNABAZOS, AND CHARIDEMOS: THE CONTEST FOR THE AEGEAN COMMAND

Alexander's invasion of 334, and the collapse of Persian forces in western Anatolia after the rout at the Granicus, marked serious Achaemenid setbacks, but prior precedents associated with Artabazos' family offered a potential road to recovery. The Spartan invasion of 396-394 had routed a satrapal army at Sardis and ravaged the lands of Pharnabazos near Daskyleion, but Pharnabazos and the Athenian exile Konon had led the Aegean naval counteroffensive which fueled anti-Spartan

(41) For a possible kinship between Arsites and Artabazos, see DEBORD 1999, p. 104.

(42) See DEBORD 1999, p. 420, for Mentor as the link to the family's former territories. Some scholars have sought to identify Ariobarzanes, the satrap of Persis under Darius III, as the homonymous son of Artabazos who took part in the surrender to Alexander (Arr. 3.23.7), which if true would suggest a remarkable recovery of family authority (MÜLLER 2020, p. 293); but HECKEL 2006, p. 45, rightly rejects the identification since Ariobarzanes of Persis had already died defending the approaches to Persepolis (Curt. 5.4.34).

(43) See MCCOY 1989, p. 425-429. For the Rhodians as effective partners of Arsites, see ROP 2019, p. 204-205; MÜLLER 2021, p. 165.

upheaval in Greece and swept the invaders out of Anatolia.⁴⁴ Pharnabazos' naval victory paved the way for the end of the conflict and extension of imperial influence over the mainland Greeks, and confirmed his worthiness for marriage to a royal daughter as well as his subsequent commands against Egypt. Similarly, by the end of 334, it was clear that Aegean naval superiority offered Persia's best chance to retake the Aegean islands and disrupt the Macedonian offensive through the promotion of rebellion in Greece. It was no accident that Memnon should be assigned to this command, which reflected not only on his perceived ability but on the fact that the family of his Persian in-laws had successfully carried out the same assignment six decades before.⁴⁵

Artabazos was the best-placed individual to advocate with Darius III for Memnon's appointment to command. While his son Pharnabazos set sail with Memnon and the fleet, further linking the family's status with the progress of the naval campaign, Artabazos' residence at court offered opportunities to seek and cultivate further royal favor. Barsine and her young children also returned there, removing them from harm's way; while Diodorus suggests that they served as hostages to increase Darius' trust in Memnon (17.23.5), this may reflect an anachronistic assumption based on the artificial postulate of his Greek identity as a barrier to full trust by Persians, and it is more likely that his family traveled to stay under Artabazos' protection.

When Memnon died of sudden illness in summer 333, after initial successes in the Aegean islands, all was not lost, as the young Pharnabazos could now take charge of ongoing naval operations if Darius agreed to confirm his position (Arr. 2.1.3).⁴⁶ Despite the Greek sources' overemphasis on Memnon's Hellenic origin as the only hope for Persian victory over Macedonia, Alexander's hold on the Aegean was tenuous at best and the options for the new naval commander looked promising. If Pharnabazos should succeed in repeating his namesake's achievements, the benefits for Artabazos' household would have been enormous, and if they still hoped for a reconquest of the family lands near Daskyleion, it cannot have been lost on them that the interloper Arsites was now dead by suicide (Arr. 1.16.3). But Pharnabazos was not the only candidate for Memnon's vacant position.

Previous studies have overlooked the synchronism between Darius' confirmation of Pharnabazos to the Aegean naval command and an infamous melodrama reported separately by the Alexander historians, the execution of the Athenian exile Charidemos at Darius' court (Diod. 17.30.1-6; Curt. 3.2.10-19). Yet there is reason to assume a close connection between these two episodes. As often noted, the sources' accounts of Charidemos' death are unconvincing, falling into the stereotypical story pattern of a wise Greek warner whose sage advice is rejected by a hubristic barbarian overlord.⁴⁷ But Charidemos' execution itself need not be a fictional event, and is best understood in the context of a challenge for the Aegean command that Artabazos hoped to retain for his son. Curtius' implausible scenario makes Charidemos answer Darius' question about the prospects for his success by insulting the Persian army's supposed luxury and inferiority to Macedonian and Greek soldiers (3.2.11-16), a literary topos but hardly a rational approach for an actual exile in the context of a royal audience. Diodorus, on the other hand, suggests more clearly that Charidemos lobbied Darius for a military command. The scale of his demand—supreme authority over all Persian military forces in the coming campaign against Alexander, in place of the king (Diod. 17.30.2-5)—is perhaps an exaggeration. But Charidemos makes this request at the council of war

(44) See HYLAND 2018, p. 133-156, for a detailed recent study.

(45) See also ROP 2019, p. 204 n. 91, for the parallels between the strategic situations in the 390s and 330s.

(46) Although he seems to have shared initial authority with Autophradates, the namesake and presumable son of the former Sardis satrap, Arrian makes clear that Darius eventually granted Memnon's superior authority to Pharnabazos alone (2.2.1).

(47) See HECKEL 2006, p. 84; ROP 2019, p. 177, 187, 208-209; HECKEL 2020, p. 82-84.

convened by Darius in response to the news of Memnon's death (Diod. 17.30.1). This is exactly the point at which the other sources report the king's decision to confirm Pharnabazos and order the continuation of the naval campaign (Curt. 3.3.1; Arr. 2.2.1), and one might make sense of Charidemos' audience with Darius as a bid not so much to lead in the king's place as to displace Artabazos' son and secure the command of the Aegean fleet. Apart from his three decades of experience as a mercenary general, which certainly qualified him for naval authority, this would have been a natural post for the exiled Greek general given his political connections back home, and the hope that a new Konon might win over Athens to the cause of rebellion against Alexander. Pharnabazos had only limited experience by comparison, and may have seemed an easy target for the seasoned Athenian captain to push aside.

Perhaps Charidemos overstepped in his ambition, but why would an application for naval command have led to the charge of intended collusion with Alexander, which Diodorus associates with his illiberal speech and resulting death (17.30.4)? A potential answer involves the response of Artabazos and his household to this existential threat to their hopes of restitution in the Aegean and northwest Anatolia. On the surface, betrayal of the Persian cause to the Macedonians seems an implausible accusation, given Charidemos' well-documented hostility towards the enemy who had driven him into exile. Furthermore, it was out of keeping with Persian tradition to execute a royal subordinate based merely on a single offense. Darius I boasts in the Naqsh-e Rostam inscription of his unwillingness to decide a case until he has heard both sides of the story (DNb §2d), and Diodorus famously recounts the trial of the royal advisor Tiribazos which resulted in acquittal on the grounds that earlier services outbalanced any misdeeds (15.10-11). But in a case of betrayal, as famously depicted in Xenophon's account of the trial of Orontas by Cyrus the Younger (*Anab.* 1.6.4-10), the pardon of earlier offenses made severe punishment increasingly likely with their repetition.⁴⁸ Diodorus attributes the charge of intended treason against Charidemos to anonymous royal *philoï*, and which one of the king's friends was better placed to testify about Charidemos' prior history of betraying employers than Artabazos? His former history with the mercenary put him in a unique position to lay out the precedents for Charidemos' treason before Darius, and he had the most obvious motive to do so in order to retain command for his own son.⁴⁹ It is possible, as Diodorus suggests, that Charidemos' angry reaction to the charges disrespected the king and sealed his fate. But in Persian terms, the execution also suggests a judgment of guilt for his past misdeeds and capacity to repeat them. It displayed Darius' confidence in Artabazos, the victim of Charidemos' former crimes, and may have influenced his decision to entrust Artabazos' son with a supreme naval command. The king further honored the family by sending Mentor's son Thymondas to convey the news of Pharnabazos' appointment, bring back Greek mercenaries serving with the fleet to rejoin the royal army, and take charge of these troops as a contingent of the royal army that soon would march against Alexander (Curt. 3.3.1; Arr. 2.2.1). With the elimination of Charidemos, Thymondas thereby rose to the highest status among the remaining Greek mercenary generals in Darius' service.⁵⁰

(48) See ROP 2018, p. 60-63. BRIANT 2002, p. 325, notes the similar gesture of condemnation (seizing by the belt) which appears in both the story of Orontas' trial (*Anab.* 1.6.10) and Charidemos' execution (Diod. 17.30.4).

(49) ROP 2019, p. 205 n. 93, notes that Charidemos and Memnon were capable of cooperation against the Macedonians in recruiting mercenaries for Persia, despite their previous history; cf. MÜLLER 2020, p. 297-299. But Charidemos is not known to have challenged Memnon's appointment to the Aegean command, in contrast to his bid for the command desired by Pharnabazos after Memnon's death.

(50) Recent studies, notably ROP 2019, have critiqued the assumption of Greek mercenaries' centrality to Persian resistance; tactically they were only a component of a much larger force and not the only key to Persian success, but politically they had a particular value for the Persians due to the potential to challenge the Macedonians' Panhellenic pretensions and promote anti-Macedonian resistance in Ionia, the Aegean islands, and the Greek mainland.

From the perspective of Artabazos and his in-laws, the downfall of Charidemos therefore combined a moment of sweet revenge with a double opportunity for advancement through military authority. But the family had little time to enjoy its hard-won political advantage before the disaster of Issus, the capture of the household's women and children (Curt. 3.13.13-14), and the subsequent dispersal of the demoralized Persian fleet, which left Pharnabazos to fall into enemy hands on Chios (Curt. 4.5.17; Arr. 3.2.4).⁵¹ The sources have little more to say about the family until the further catastrophes of Gaugamela and Darius' assassination presented opportunities for a different sort of political revival, in service to a conqueror who needed a cadre of loyal Persians to present his legitimacy over a fallen empire.

CONCLUSION

Artabazos' prominent position in Alexander's court, and Barsine's role as Alexander's concubine, have been subject to much previous discussion and will not be examined here.⁵² But in closing, it is worthwhile to summarize the success of the marriage strategies that had helped Artabazos to rebuild and preserve his family's political standing on the eve of the Macedonian conquest.

The marriage alliance of Artabazos and the Rhodians reflects not only his inherited engagement with the Greek population of his ancestral borderlands, but a series of reactions to the significant political constraints that hemmed him in for the majority of his career. It would probably not have been Artabazos' first choice under more ideal circumstances, but initial separation from family estates and mistrust of Persian peers drove him to place his principal trust in his wife's family, a trust that they more than justified in acting as a lifeline when Persian politics threatened to destroy him. In the end, Artabazos survived exile and invasion and clawed his way back into proximity to power not so much through royal blood or the accumulated wealth of a great satrapal house, as through the opportunities created by marriage alliance, and the formation of an extended household that transcended any postulated divide between the Greek and Persian worlds.

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(51) Arrian reports Pharnabazos' subsequent escape (3.4.7), and he may have earned a pardon through his family's service to Alexander; after the conqueror's death, he briefly commanded troops for Eumenes (Plut. *Eum.* 7.1).

(52) See most recently MÜLLER 2020; HECKEL 2020, p. 168-70, 190.

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