

Greeks in Persia and Egypt, ca. 400–360

The rebellion of Cyrus the Younger failed to unseat Artaxerxes II, but it probably forced the King's general Abrocomas to abandon ongoing preparations for an invasion of Egypt. The war to reassert Achaemenid control over Cyrus' former Greek allies in western Anatolia, now defended by the Spartans, further occupied royal resources for much of the following decade. As a result, Artaxerxes was unable to send an army against the former satrapy until 391. This gave Pharaoh Amyrtaeus and his successors ample time to expel all of the Persian garrisons and fortify the entrances to the Nile Delta, especially at Pelusium.¹

The recovery of Egypt was the highest priority of Achaemenid policy on the western borders of the Empire for most of the fourth century. Artaxerxes II and III collectively launched at least six attacks against Egypt during this period. With the exception of the invasion of 391 and the aborted campaign of 360–359, Greek soldiers and commanders are known to have participated in each of these military actions. Our main source for this period is the *Bibliotheca* of Diodorus, who consistently presents Greeks as better soldiers and generals than their Near Eastern counterparts using the Tragic Advisor and Dynamic Subordinate tropes (see Chapter 1 for discussion).

This chapter examines specific episodes of Greek military service for Persia and Egypt from 400 to 360, testing the assertions of Greek superiority made by Diodorus and other ancient sources against the evidence they provide. My analysis results in three conclusions that run counter to the traditional formulation of the Greek Thesis. First, rather than being sought out for their skills as heavy infantry hoplites, Greeks – especially Athenians – tended to be employed as marines and sailors.² Second, Greek

¹ Ruzicka 2012: 37–42, 72.

² On Egyptian military equipment and the possibility that some native soldiers were heavy infantry, see Fischer-Bovet 2014a: 39–41.

commanders were not better generals than their Persian or Egyptian counterparts, who on many occasions developed and executed successful strategic and tactical plans. Our sources often mention Greek counsel that goes unheeded by foreign commanders, but in every case further investigation reveals it to be either militarily impractical or politically unfeasible.

Third, Greeks in the fourth century were often recruited to establish or to reinforce alliances between foreign leaders and Greek city-states, like the *xenoi* of Cyrus the Younger before them. Rather than being apolitical mercenaries sought out for their unmatched capabilities in war, Greek commanders acted as intermediaries between their native city-states and individual Persian satraps or Egyptian pharaohs. Most often they functioned as officially or tacitly sanctioned government representatives, but under certain circumstances they operated in the interests of the state despite ostensibly serving as private individuals. While my focus in this chapter is on the period from 400 to 360, these findings – especially the second and third – apply more broadly to Greek military service in the Near East until the fall of the Achaemenid Empire.

Conon and Pharnabazus

The first Greek to fight for Persia in the aftermath of Cyrus the Younger's rebellion was Conon of Athens. Conon does not receive much attention in the traditional literature on Greek mercenaries during the fourth century.³ The reason for this is obvious. Although he waged war against Greek rivals with the financial and material backing of the Persians, for most of his service he did so as a Persian official and as an agent, if not a formally appointed one, of Athens itself. Yet, practically speaking, there is little that differentiates Conon's service from that of those Greek commanders of the fourth century who are conventionally identified as mercenaries and whose military contributions are similarly misrepresented.

Conon came into Persian service during the war between Persia and Sparta that began not long after the Battle of Cunaxa. The flashpoint was the King's demand that Cyrus' Ionian Greek allies submit to Tissaphernes, who had been sent back to western Anatolia as the satrap of Lydia and Caria in 400 (Xenophon *Hellenica* 3.1.3). The Ionians instead appealed for

³ For example, Parke 1933: 242–243 does not categorize Conon or Antalcidas as mercenary commanders or generals, but on pp. 50–51 does note that Conon raised a force of mercenaries in the 390s. Trundle 2004: 178 asserts that “Conon was not a mercenary,” and Raptou 1999: 256–258 emphasizes the political significance from the moment of his arrival on Cyprus. To the contrary, however, Castro 2012: 139–140 calls Conon “el mercenario perfecto.”

protection to the Spartans, who sent them an army in 399 (3.1.4) and escalated the conflict further in 396 by dispatching reinforcements under King Agesilaus (3.4.1–4).

Although Tissaphernes was in charge of the Persian war effort, much of the Spartan campaigning took place to the north in Hellespontine Phrygia, the satrapy of his rival Pharnabazus (3.1.8–9). Unable to achieve military victory on his own, Pharnabazus made and subsequently renewed a truce with the Spartan general Dercylidas in 398 (3.2.1, 9). He then joined his forces with Tissaphernes, and together they forced the Spartans into peace negotiations in 397 (3.2.13–20).⁴ Around the same time, Pharnabazus requested that Artaxerxes divert the Persian fleet to the Aegean, and that he appoint as one of its admirals Conon, who had been living in self-imposed exile on Cyprus at the court of the Persian client-king Evagoras I since 405 (Diodorus 14.39.1; Nepos *Conon* 2.2).⁵

The King agreed to hire Conon and ordered the fleet to muster in Cilicia, but his primary focus remained on the Spartan army operating in western Anatolia. Tissaphernes received royal reinforcements soon after the arrival of Agesilaus in 396 (*Hellenica* 3.4.11), leaving the navy to languish with so little money that its crews were soon on the verge of mutiny.⁶ This changed in 395, however, when Agesilaus inflicted a defeat upon a force of Persian cavalry outside Sardis, the capital of Tissaphernes' satrapy of Lydia.⁷ Removing Tissaphernes from command (*Hellenica* 3.4.20–25; Diodorus 14.80.1–8), Artaxerxes gave Pharnabazus the authority and the funding to launch a naval campaign in the Aegean.⁸

Several ancient sources narrate or describe these events. To varying degrees, all depict Conon as a Dynamic Subordinate and the key to the campaign's success. In the *Bibliotheca*, Diodorus reports that Conon began the campaign by sailing alone to the Chersonese, on the way providing crucial support to a Rhodian rebellion against Sparta (14.79.6–7).⁹ Conon then appointed two Athenians to take over the fleet while he himself

⁴ For recent treatments of this phase of the conflict, see Lee 2016b: 275–278; Hyland 2018b: 127–133.

⁵ March 1997: 258; Asmonti 2015: 116–129. ⁶ Asmonti 2015: 132–136; Hyland 2018b: 143–144.

⁷ Lotz 2016 recently argued that ancient sources have exaggerated the significance and successes of Agesilaus' campaign, and have merged two skirmishes near Sardis into a single, bloody battle.

⁸ March 1997: 264–268; Ruzicka 2012: 45–52; Asmonti 2015: 143–148; Lee 2016b: 278–280. For the death of Tissaphernes, see Hyland 2018b: 138–139; Rop 2018.

⁹ Diodorus does acknowledge that Pharnabazus relieved Conon from a Spartan blockade at Caunus, which allowed the campaign to begin (14.79.5). There is some controversy over the exact date of these events. See Barbieri 1955: 101–143; Bruce 1961: 168; Seager 1967: 95 n. 2; March 1997: 260–267; Ruzicka 2012: 44–48; Asmonti 2015: 132–136; Hyland 2018b: 133–137. For my purposes here, the precise chronology is less important than the nature of the relationship between Pharnabazus and Conon.

traveled to the King, from whom he received additional financial support and permission to bring on Pharnabazus as his associate commander (14.81.4–6). Implausible as this scenario appears, Diodorus nonetheless emphasizes Conon's status as the highest naval authority several times, referring to him both as Persia's admiral and as the commander of the King's fleet (14.79.7, 81.4, 85.2).

In his description of the decisive Battle of Cnidus in 394 (14.83.4), Diodorus does not mention Pharnabazus' role or contributions. Instead he focuses on the actions of Conon, whom he credits with the pursuit and capture of fifty Spartan triremes (14.39.1–4, 83.5–7). Pharnabazus is similarly absent from the subsequent campaigning, during which Conon is again the primary subject of the narrative. For instance, we are told that the Chians removed their garrisons to join Conon specifically, and that others attached themselves to him as well (14.83.3–4). According to Diodorus, it is Conon who decided to conquer Cythera and the Cyclades, and likewise Conon who sailed to Corinth, formed an alliance against Sparta with other Greek states, and provided them with Persian money (14.84.4–5).

This depiction is echoed by other sources.¹⁰ Isocrates, a contemporary Athenian orator who surely knew the full background of the campaign, praised Conon alone for its successful execution (*Evagoras* 56).¹¹ Roman-era author Cornelius Nepos went so far as to write that the Athenian had commanded the land war against Agesilaus in Asia Minor (9.2), an obviously false claim unsubstantiated by any other source.¹² He adds that Conon was responsible for the Persian victory at Cnidus, and for the success of the subsequent campaign (9.4). Nepos encapsulates the idea behind the Dynamic Subordinate trope, remarking that “Pharnabazus appeared to be the commander, but in fact Conon was in charge of the army and everything was carried out by his decision” (9.1).¹³

In his *Hellenica*, Xenophon also portrays Conon as the mastermind behind the successful naval campaign following Cnidus. On his advice,

¹⁰ The contemporary Oxyrhynchus historian's narrative of Cnidus unfortunately does not survive, but in other respects he presents Conon in a highly favorable light, as McKechnie and Kern 1988: 177 remark, “Conon is shown as the new Cyrus, the King's brightest general, the one whose force of personality can mediate between the monolith of Persian power and the frailties of the people who are ‘the royal army’ . . . without resort to rhetorical pleading, the author shapes his account to lead the reader to admire Conon.”

¹¹ He actually credits Evagoras – rather than Pharnabazus – with conceiving and funding the expedition against the Spartan navy. Notably, Evagoras is the subject of the eulogistic speech in which the events are mentioned.

¹² Nepos also dubiously credits Conon with persuading Artaxerxes to execute Tissaphernes (9.3–4).

¹³ *Pharnabazus habitus est imperator, re quidem vera exercitui prae fuit Conon eiusque omnia arbitrio gesta sunt.*

Pharnabazus not only drove out Spartan governors and garrisons from many of the cities throughout the Aegean, but also made himself popular by leaving them independent and without garrisons (4.8.1–3). At Conon's request, Pharnabazus later gave the Athenian control of the fleet and allowed him to return to Athens, where he rebuilt the famous long walls and secured alliances with a number of islands and coastal cities throughout the Aegean. By 392, Conon's activities had caused the Spartans to enter into negotiations with Tirabazus, the satrap of Lydia, hoping to regain the King's support, secure peace, or at least undermine Conon's position with the Persians (4.8.9–14).

In contrast to Diodorus, Xenophon's narrative does not always adhere to the Dynamic Subordinate motif. He ultimately credits both Pharnabazus and Conon with the victory at Cnidus (4.8.1), and acknowledges that Pharnabazus conceived of and carried out the subsequent naval campaign against the Peloponnese (4.8.6–7).¹⁴ Furthermore, he notes that the satrap himself conquered Cythera and personally provided the anti-Spartan alliance with encouragement and funds at Corinth (4.8.8).

At a glance, Xenophon's portrayal of the relationship between Conon and Pharnabazus in the *Hellenica* seems more believable than other sources. There is no other known instance in which a foreign Greek acted as a superior officer to Persian generals. It makes sense that Conon, an admiral with extensive experience during the Peloponnesian War, was hired as a naval specialist and took direct tactical control of the fleet, but that Pharnabazus himself was ultimately responsible for making the broader strategic decisions that deprived Sparta of its hegemony in the Aegean. Indeed, the author of one of the most detailed studies of his service during this campaign has come to this very conclusion.¹⁵

Yet a careful examination of the accounts of the Persian victory at Cnidus reveals even this moderate assessment to be an overstatement of the Athenian's military contributions. Xenophon's description places

¹⁴ In the middle of his narrative of the successes of Pharnabazus and Conon, it is notable that Xenophon also includes their failure to drive the Spartan Dercylidas from Abydos and Sestus (4.8.3–6). Here Pharnabazus receives no advice from Conon, but simply orders the Athenian to meet him at Sestus, to block the harbor while he himself attacked Abydos, and to campaign elsewhere in the Hellespont after his attack failed. Thus Xenophon makes sure to implicate Conon in the satrap's successes, but not his failures.

¹⁵ March 1997: 268: "Conon's role was carefully defined: his command was limited in scope and hindered by poverty, and when the fleet was finally activated, Conon was made subordinate to Pharnabazus. Conon thenceforth acted in accordance with his experience as a naval tactician and undoubtedly planned the decisive battle." See also Starr 1975: 64; Tuplin 1993: 78–79; Asmonti 2015: 149; Hyland 2018b: 145–147. Maffre 2004 analyzes Pharnabazus' role in financing the Persian fleet that would drive the Spartans from the Aegean.

Pharnabazus in command of the Phoenician ships in the second line. In the front line, Conon commanded the Greek ships, which are the only ones he mentions as taking part in the action. Leading the fleet into battle, Conon himself is said to be responsible for driving the enemy ships ashore and killing the Spartan admiral:

Being the admiral, Pharnabazus was with the Phoenician ships, and Conon positioned the Greek fleet in front of him. When Peisander arrayed his own line against him, even though his own fleet was obviously much smaller than Conon's own, right away his allies on the left took flight. Engaging with the enemy, his own trireme was rammed and he was driven to the shore. Abandoning their ships, all the others driven ashore were able to make it safely to Cnidus, but he was killed fighting on his own ship. (4.3.11–12)¹⁶

In the *Bibliotheca*, Diodorus likewise focuses on Conon while omitting any description of the activities of Pharnabazus:

Peisander, the admiral of the Spartans, sailed out from Cnidus with eighty-five triremes and set up anchor at Physcus of the Chersonese. From there he came upon the fleet of the King, and, attacking the ships in the front line, he drove through them. As soon as the Persians came to the rescue with all their triremes, though, all his allies fled ashore. Thinking that to flee shamefully was disgraceful and unworthy of Sparta, he turned his own ship around. After fighting splendidly and destroying many of the enemy, making war in a way worthy of his fatherland, finally he was killed. Chasing the Spartans up to the shore, Conon seized fifty of their triremes. (14.83.5–7)¹⁷

Both narratives individually credit Conon with the defeat of the Spartans, but reading them together leads to a different conclusion. From Xenophon's account we learn that Conon commanded the front line and Pharnabazus the second line; from Diodorus, we discover that the Spartans defeated the front line – that is, Conon and his Greek ships – in the initial action, and that only the intervention of the second line under

¹⁶ Φαρνάβαζον δὲ ναύαρχον ὄντα σὺν ταῖς Φοινίσσαις εἶναι, Κόνωνα δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἔχοντα τετάχθαι ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ. ἀντιπαραταξαμένου δὲ τοῦ Πεισάνδρου, καὶ πολὺ ἑλαττόνων αὐτῶ τῶν νεῶν φανειῶν τῶν αὐτοῦ τοῦ μετὰ Κόνωνος [τοῦ] Ἑλληνικοῦ, τοὺς μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ εὐωνύμου συμμαχοῦς εὐθύς αὐτῶ φεύγειν, αὐτὸν δὲ συμμειζαντα τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐμβολὰς ἐχούση τῇ τριήρει πρὸς τὴν γῆν ἐξωσθῆναι.

¹⁷ Πείσανδρος δ' ὁ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων ναύαρχος ἐξέπλευσεν ἐκ τῆς Κνίδου τριήρεσιν ὀγδοήκοντα πέντε, καὶ κατηνέχθη πρὸς Φύσκον τῆς Χερρονήσου. ἐκεῖθεν δ' ἐκπλεύσας περιέπασσε τῶ στόλῳ τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ ταῖς μὲν προπλευούσαις ναυσὶ συμβαλὼν προετέρει, τῶν δὲ Περσῶν ἅμα ταῖς τριήρεσιν ἀθρόαις παραβοηθῶντων, ἐπειδὴ πάντες οἱ σύμμαχοι πρὸς τὴν γῆν ἔφυγον, τὴν ἰδίαν ναῦν ἐπέστρεψεν, αἰσχρὸν εἶναι νομίσας καὶ τῆς Σπάρτης ἀνάξιον τὸ φυγεῖν ἀγεννῶς. ἀγωνισάμενος δὲ λαμπρῶς καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν πολεμίων ἀνελών, τὸ τελευταῖον ἀξίως τῆς πατρίδος ἀνιρέθη μαχόμενος. οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Κόνωνα μέχρι τῆς γῆς καταδιώξαντες τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους πεντήκοντα μὲν τριήρων ἐκυρίευσαν.

Pharnabazus secured the victory. That is, the Persian, not his Athenian specialist, led the reserve line of densely packed triremes into battle at the decisive moment. Pharnabazus' attack caused the Spartans to flee and ultimately killed their general.¹⁸

Conon's military expertise was undoubtedly valuable in the war against Sparta, but it was his political network that made him the perfect collaborator for Pharnabazus. The satrap could have found a suitable admiral from other regions within the Empire like Phoenicia if he had simply needed a commander for the fleet.¹⁹ What distinguished Conon from these other options was his Athenian background, which provided the satrap a direct connection to anti-Spartan politicians in Athens. Indeed, soon after his hire the Athenian Council began secretly sending ambassadors, ships, and crews to Conon and the Persian fleet in Cilicia.²⁰ Along with the diplomatic mission of Timocrates of Rhodes, Conon's employment should be viewed as part of Pharnabazus' strategy to force the withdrawal of Spartan armies from Asia Minor by provoking what would come to be known as the Corinthian War in Greece.²¹

Once Athens openly entered the conflict on the side of Persia in 395, Conon's connections served to expand Pharnabazus' own influence in Greece and the Aegean. As satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, Pharnabazus was already a well-known figure in the region. Still, the addition of Conon

¹⁸ Asmonti 2015: 152 makes a similar argument. Occhipinti 2016: 112–115 argues that the Oxyrhynchus historian likely presented Cnidus as a Persian victory, downplaying the importance of Conon. As Tuplin 2013: 651–652 observes, Polybius believed Ephorus (probably Diodorus' source) to be far more competent at narrating naval than land battles.

¹⁹ Hammond 1986: 454–455 suggests that the Phoenicians were "particularly galled by the appointment of Conon." Ruzicka 2012: 47 observes that much of the fleet was constructed in Cyprus and Phoenicia, and so would presumably have been manned by sailors from these regions. Indeed, Diodorus 14.79.8 notes that the king of Sidon had earlier led eighty triremes to Conon around the time of the revolt of Rhodes from Sparta. For the differences between Greek and Phoenician triremes, the latter of which were more maneuverable but less stable in inclement weather, see Bouzid-Adler 2015: 2–10. Bouzid-Adler 2014 notes that the Persians also made use of significant numbers of ships from Caria, Lycia, and Cilicia throughout the fifth and fourth centuries, including on this campaign.

²⁰ Strauss 1984: 38 implies that the mission was stopped before Demaenetus could embark, but March 1997: 262 (viz., n. 16) disagrees, correctly in my view (*Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* 8.1–2). *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* 6.1, 7.1 indicates multiple missions were sent, even as the Athenians as a whole were not yet prepared to openly oppose Sparta. See also Welwei 1999: 265–266.

²¹ Xenophon (*Hellenica* 3.5.1) and Pausanias (3.9.8) both place this mission under the direction of Tithraustes, but *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (7.5) and Polyaeus (1.48.3) state that it was sent at the behest of Pharnabazus. For the controversy, especially as it relates to the exact timing of the mission, see Barbieri 1955: 90–100; Tuplin 1993: 60–61; March 1997: 266–267; Rung 2004; Schepens 2012; Hyland 2018b: 149–151. Rung 2004: 415–419 suggests that Tithraustes and Pharnabazus may have been collaborating – an argument I have recently made in Rop 2018 – and so we need not see the sources as in disagreement on this particular point.

to his staff probably helped persuade a number of Greek states to expel their Spartan garrisons (*Hellenica* 4.8.1–3). The Athenian may have had *xenoi* scattered throughout the Aegean from his time as a general during the Peloponnesian War; at the least, his presence in the entourage of Pharnabazus likely served to ease concerns any Greeks may have had about deserting Sparta for a Persian satrap.²² Furthermore, Conon's friends in Athens probably arranged Pharnabazus' meeting in 393 with the rest of the Greek allies at Corinth, where the satrap cemented himself as the personal patron of the anti-Spartan coalition by providing the funds that allowed the war to continue (*Hellenica* 4.8.8–10; Diodorus 14.84.5).

The Persian–Athenian alliance was an obvious success for both states and for the two individuals whose *xenia* relationship was at its core. Spartan armies were driven from the King's territory in Anatolia, and Persian support for Athens meant the restoration of the city's independence from Sparta, its long walls, and its fleet (*Hellenica* 4.8.12). The Athenians were so grateful to Conon that they commissioned a statue of him at public expense (Pausanias 1.3; Nepos *Timotheus* 2), and granted him immunity from taxation (Demosthenes *Against Leptines* 68–70). Continuing to leverage his relationship with the satrap allowed Conon to become the most powerful politician in Athens upon his return to the city.²³ Pharnabazus, meanwhile, received one of the King's daughters in marriage (Plutarch *Artaxerxes* 27.4), and was soon given co-command of the Persian invasion of Egypt that was launched in 391/390.²⁴

²² Strauss 1984: 39–40 for a brief survey of how many Ionian and other Greeks sought to curry favor with Conon following the victory at Cnidus. Ma 2006 identifies a possible statue erected for Conon on Erythrai, and Marek 2006: 263–264 an inscription on a statue base bearing his name at Caunus. For Conon's position vis-à-vis Pharnabazus and the Greeks, Asmonti 2015: 161 comments, "we might also suppose that the people of the cities and the islands would find it more congenial to deal with a Greek admiral than a Persian satrap."

²³ Strauss 1984: 39–48 and 1986: 108–112, 125–136; Welwei 1999: 268; Fornis 2009; and Asmonti 2015: 161–166 examine how Conon used his personal alliance with Pharnabazus in order to expand his own influence in Athens at the expense of his main political rival, Thrasybulus. On the epigraphic evidence for Conon's return to prominence, see Funke 1983. Shannahan 2016 argues, correctly in my view, that the Persian decision to collaborate with Athens via Conon, and eventually to give the Athenians eighty triremes after Cnidus, was part of an effort to establish Athens as a bulwark against further Spartan threats to the Empire's western periphery on the eve of the King's planned invasion of Egypt. See also Ruzicka 2012: 48; Hyland 2018b: 151–156.

²⁴ For the date of this invasion, which is only mentioned by Isocrates (*Panegyricus* 140), see Cawkwell 2005: 162–163; Ruzicka 2012: 66–67. Others, e.g., Kienitz 1953: 84–85 and Shrimpton 1991: 15, argue that the date of this invasion must be later (ca. 385–383) because they place Pharnabazus in Aeolia in 389 based on a misinterpretation of *Hellenica* 4.8.33. The passage, however, merely records that the Spartan Anaxibius captured several cities from Pharnabazus – i.e., from his domain – and there is no indication that the satrap was present for this himself. Weiskopf 1989: 98 argues that Artaxerxes wished to avoid allowing one satrap to appropriate too much power, since he "appears to have been

The centrality of Conon and Pharnabazus to this alliance is confirmed by how quickly it fell apart once Pharnabazus left the region.²⁵ Tiribazus, the new satrap of Lydia, welcomed a Spartan embassy to Sardis for peace talks in 392. When Conon attempted to join at the head of an Athenian delegation, the Persian satrap arrested him. He then supplied the Spartans with money for a new fleet, and departed for Susa to urge the King to abandon Athens – and thus to reject the arrangement put in place by his rival Pharnabazus – in favor of a new agreement with Sparta (*Hellenica* 4.8.12–16; Diodorus 14.85.4). With the Persian invasion of Egypt about to commence, however, Artaxerxes likely did not wish to upset the Aegean settlement that Pharnabazus had secured following Cnidus in 394. He replaced Tiribazus with Struthas, whose hostility to Sparta was well known (*Hellenica* 4.8.17).

Conon died either during his imprisonment or shortly after being released by Struthas. After further peace talks in Sparta in early 391 failed, the Athenians launched several military expeditions into the Aegean. Thrasybulus led an Athenian fleet north, imposing levies on Thasos, Clazomenae, and Byzantium. At the last of these, he replaced the oligarchic government with a democracy. He then moved against the Spartan-dominated cities of Lesbos before sailing into Persian territory at the Eurymedon River, where he was killed while plundering by the citizens of Aspendus. Separately, Athens also sent military aid to Evagoras on Cyprus, who, perhaps in response to the failure of Pharnabazus' invasion (Isocrates *Panegyricus* 140), had joined Egypt in rebellion (*Hellenica* 4.8.24; Diodorus 15.2.3).

These developments were enough to spur the King into eventually accepting an alliance with Sparta.²⁶ Tiribazus was restored to his position in Sardis in 389/8, where he soon welcomed another Spartan delegation led by Antalcidas. By 387, the King had given Tiribazus the political and military authority to support Sparta. Antalcidas defeated an Athenian fleet and seized control of the Hellespont, spurring the surrender of

concerned lest a second Cyrus the Younger emerge out of the far west.” Yet the decision likely reveals the King's priorities and pragmatism. The recovery of Egypt was more important than any other imperial initiative in the western Empire, and Pharnabazus, who was already in possession of the fleet that would be used in the Egyptian campaign, had just amply demonstrated his abilities as a naval commander in the Aegean.

²⁵ The summary of Conon's arrest and its aftermath in this and the next paragraph largely follows Asmonti 2015: 166–176. See also Welwei 1999: 268–274; Zahrt 2000: 298–303; Hyland 2018b: 156–161. For background on the peace talks of 392, see Jehne 1991.

²⁶ Kienitz 1953: 82–85; Hammond 1986: 463–464; Welwei 1999: 274–277; Cawkwell 2005: 168; Ruzicka 2012: 71–72; Asmonti 2015: 177–178.

Athens and its allies.²⁷ The settlement of the war, known as the King's Peace, was a huge victory for the King and for Sparta. The Empire's western periphery was more secure and its influence in Greece stronger than it had been since at least the Peace of Callias in the mid-fifth century (5.1.26–31).²⁸ Artaxerxes was now able to draw military forces from Anatolia for his wars against the rebels on Cyprus and in Egypt (Diodorus 14.98.1–4, 110.5), who were additionally weakened by the loss of Athenian support.

The King's Peace established a Spartan hegemony over Greece that would not be seriously challenged for nearly a decade. Much as the victory at Cnidus had vaulted Conon into political leadership in Athens, so too did the King's Peace put Antalcidas in an enviable position in Spartan politics vis-à-vis his rival Agesilaus.²⁹ And like Pharnabazus before him, Tiribazus' success advancing the King's interests in Greece and the Aegean was rewarded with a military command. Artaxerxes directed his newly prominent satrap to join another, Orontes, in suppressing the rebellion of Evagoras on Cyprus (Diodorus 15.2.2).

According to Diodorus, Evagoras commanded a large fleet and an army consisting of Egyptian and foreign troops (ξενικῶν δυνάμεων) that were supplied and funded by his allies (15.2.3–4). Given his own Greek background, his strong ties to Athens, and the dispatch of Athenian ships to him only a few years earlier (Xenophon *Hellenica* 4.8.24), it is highly likely that much of this foreign force was Greek.³⁰ Diodorus makes no mention of any Greeks in the Persian land or sea force that opposed Evagoras, but their absence was apparently not decisive.³¹ Despite a few early setbacks,

²⁷ Regarding the importance of the Hellespont for Athenian security, Harding 1988: 66–68 notes, “the harsh economic reality, of course, was that Athens was so heavily dependent upon food-supplies from overseas that she could not survive without them.” See also Munn 1993: 3–33.

²⁸ Briant 2002: 649 goes further, comparing it to the period prior to the establishment of the Delian League in 478. See also Rung 2008: 39–40; Hyland 2018b: 164–168.

²⁹ Rice 1974; DeVoto 1986; Cawkwell 2005: 165–168.

³⁰ Since he mentions the Egyptian soldiers separately, it is unlikely that they are intended to be included as part of this foreign force. Diodorus is oddly circumspect about naming all of the allies of Evagoras: he suggests that Pharaoh Acoris and the King of the Arabs supported him openly, that Hecatomnus of Caria secretly sent him money, and hints that there were also “some others who were under suspicion by the King of the Persians” (ἄλλοι τινὲς οἱ ἐν ὑποψίαις ὄντες τῷ τῶν Περσῶν βασιλεῖ).

³¹ Diodorus makes no mention of the Spartans during this war, but it is possible that they provided some of the Persian fleet during this engagement. We have already seen that Tiribazus had a close relationship with Antalcidas and Sparta, and had even provided them with funds for their fleet. His naval commander in the campaign against Evagoras was Glos, who also likely had connections with Sparta. He had participated in Cyrus the Younger's rebellion and was the son of Cyrus' admiral Tamos (see discussion in Chapter 2). In the aftermath of Tiribazus' recall from Cyprus, Diodorus 15.9.3–5 reports that he fled to Egypt and sent letters to Sparta in order to encourage them to ally with him against the King.

the Persians secured control of the sea and most of Cyprus, then laid siege to the rebel capital at Salamis (15.3.1–4.1).

Like many Persian officials before him, however, Tiribazus' brief moment of ascendancy was undone by the machinations of a rival satrap. When negotiations with Evagoras stalled over the terms of his surrender, Orontes sent letters to the King accusing Tiribazus of secretly plotting to join the Spartans and Evagoras in rebellion (15.8). Tiribazus was arrested, while Orontes took command and eventually accepted Evagoras' surrender in 380 (15.9.1–2). Eventually Tiribazus was acquitted and Orontes punished for leveling false charges (15.10–11), but the King nevertheless gave command of the subsequent invasion of Egypt to an old favorite: Pharnabazus (15.29.3).³²

Chabrias and Acoris

Upon taking charge of the Persian forces in the Levant in 380, Pharnabazus faced a formidable challenge. The Egyptians had been independent for more than two decades, and had spent much of that time shoring up their defenses for the next Persian attack to come. Already a first invasion had been aborted owing to the rebellion of Cyrus the Younger in 401, and a second had failed in the late 390s. Pharaoh Acoris continued to fortify the entrances to the Nile Delta in the meantime, and was joined from 386 to 380 by the Athenian general Chabrias. To counter the Egyptians, Pharnabazus took several years to prepare his forces. His attack would commence in 373, and would be aided by another Athenian general named Iphicrates (discussed in the following section). In his account of the Egyptian preparations and of the Persian invasion, Diodorus downplays the political significance of the service of both Chabrias and Iphicrates. At the same time, he exaggerates the value of their military contributions using the Dynamic Subordinate and Tragic Advisor tropes.

Diodorus opens his account of Egyptian defensive preparations by explaining that Pharaoh Acoris, “lacking a worthy general,” recruited Chabrias, who “accepted command and took control of the forces in Egypt, and in great haste prepared to make war against the Persians”

³² Pharnabazus apparently did not return to Dascylium after his marriage to the King's daughter in ca. 388 (*Hellenica* 5.1.28; Plutarch *Artaxerxes* 27.4). Perhaps he remained at court or partook in the King's campaign against the Cadusians (Plutarch *Artaxerxes* 24; Diodorus 15.8.5). For the trial of Tiribazus and the appointment of Pharnabazus, see Rop 2018: 56–57, 60–63.

(15.29.2).³³ In the Greek world, Chabrias had a reputation for being a specialist in defensive fortifications, and so naturally it has been suggested that Acoris sought Chabrias specifically to improve his defenses at the entrances to the Nile Delta.³⁴ Chabrias fought during the Corinthian War in Greece and on Cyprus under Evagoras, but our sources do not provide many details regarding these experiences. From the evidence we do have, it appears that his reputation as a fortification specialist was based on his participation in defensive projects in Boeotia and Attica during the early stages of the Boeotian War, which took place almost immediately after his return from Egypt. Rather than going to Egypt to teach the Egyptians how to construct their defense network, perhaps Chabrias himself learned from the Egyptians – who had more than a century of experience defending the Nile from Persian invasion – and imported their knowledge of fortifications to Greece upon his return.³⁵

Of course, Chabrias did not actually participate in the resistance to the Persian invasion of 373. In the intervening years, Diodorus acknowledges that Pharaoh Nectanebos (who had taken power in 380) made a number of defensive improvements after his departure (15.42.2–4). And while the impressive fortifications of the Nile slowed the Persians, Diodorus attributes the eventual failure to other factors: the Egyptians garrisoned Memphis adequately, their soldiers gained confidence in their own combat strength after winning successive engagements, and the inevitable flooding of the Nile forced the Persians to retreat (15.43.3–4).

Despite Diodorus' assertions that Acoris actively recruited Chabrias for his military leadership, there is little evidence from his own account that he had much to do with the later Egyptian victory. In fact, Chabrias probably went to Egypt primarily for political reasons. From Xenophon we know that in 388 he had sailed with ten triremes to Cyprus in support of Evagoras' rebellion against Persia (*Hellenica* 5.1.10). The terms of the King's Peace in 387/6 must have rendered his presence there at best

³³ οὐκ ἔχων δὲ στρατηγὸν ἀξιόχρεων, μετεπέμψατο Χαβρίαν τὸν Ἀθηναῖον, ἄνδρα καὶ φρονήσει καὶ συνέσει στρατηγικῆ διαφόρον καὶ δόξαν ἐπ' ἀρετῆ μεγάλην περιπεποιημένον. οὗτος μὲν οὖν ἀνευ τῆς τοῦ δήμου γνώμης προσδεξάμενος τὴν στρατηγίαν ἀφηγεῖτο τῶν κατ' Αἴγυπτον δυνάμεων, καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς σπουδῆς παρεσκευάζετο πολεμεῖν πρὸς τοὺς Πέρσας.

³⁴ Salmon 1985: 160 : "Chabrias organise la défense du Delta aux fins de le rendre inaccessible et inexpugnable." See also Kienitz 1953: 85; Munn 1987: 114 n. 28. Ruzicka 2012: 99 correctly notes that, while Chabrias is associated with some of the defensive fortifications in Egypt, "the Egyptian kings themselves . . . were responsible for the comprehensive defensive plan."

³⁵ The decision to fortify Pelusium, which controlled the easternmost branch of the Nile Delta, had at the latest been made a century earlier, albeit with less success, by Psammetichus when faced with the invasion of Cambyses (Herodotus 3.10). For the Greek presence there and nearby in the sixth century, see Carrez-Maratray 2000: 163–167.

uncomfortable and at worst illegal. Consequently, he fled to Egypt, where he could oppose Persia and, by extension, Persia's Spartan allies in an unofficial capacity (Diodorus 15.29.2).³⁶ In this way, Chabrias' activity in Egypt from 386 to 380 parallels the experience of Conon from 397 to 395: each worked in an ostensibly private capacity on behalf of Athens at a time when the city had been forced to sign a treaty with Sparta under duress.³⁷

Chabrias may have ventured to Egypt without the formal approval of the Athenian assembly, but the political implications of his service were obvious to contemporaries. Upon taking command of the Persian invasion preparations, Pharnabazus demanded that Athens recall Chabrias from Egypt and send him Iphicrates. The Athenians complied, and both generals followed the orders of their home government (15.29.3–4). The claim that Chabrias had acted on his own initiative was a convenient political fiction, one that allowed Athens an unofficial means of continuing to support Evagoras and especially Egypt even after the King's Peace had rendered their official alliance illegal.³⁸ It was abandoned the moment that Pharnabazus complained and, by requesting the presence of Iphicrates, offered the Athenians the hope of restoring a closer relationship with the King for themselves.

Iphicrates and Pharnabazus

It is not clear exactly when Chabrias left Egypt and Iphicrates joined Pharnabazus. Given that Chabrias played an important role during the first years of the Boeotian War, which broke out in Greece in 378, it is probable that he departed ca. 380. Xenophon records Iphicrates campaigning in the north Aegean prior to the King's Peace in 387/6 (*Hellenica* 5.1.25), and he seems to have remained in that region until his service in Egypt

³⁶ Raptou 1999: 260; Castro 2011: 48. For the importance of Chabrias' activity in local Egyptian politics – and indeed of the Athenian–Cypriote alliance with Egypt in the same respect – see Carrez-Maratray 2005.

³⁷ The political status of Chabrias' service is a matter of some debate in the scholarship. Parke 1933: 59 depicts it as purely private, although calculated "to avoid involving his city in a breach of the letter of the King's Peace." Castro 2011: 51–53 confirms Parke's argument. Pritchett 1974: 73, 100 portrays Chabrias as an overtly Athenian operative, suggesting that his service took place in the 370s, when (he claims) Egypt and Athens were likely bound to each other by treaty. Much like Kienitz 1953: 89, Trundle 2004: 150–151 doubts that Chabrias served in any official capacity, but implies that the presence of other Athenians in Egypt at the time is an indication that his service was not entirely private. For a succinct summary of the ancient sources on this topic, see Sears 2013: 37–39.

³⁸ On the alliance between Athens, Evagoras, and Acoris prior to the King's Peace, and on Chabrias' service in Cyprus and Egypt, see Traunecker 1979: 400–401; Strauss 1986: 158–167; Raptou 1999: 258–261; Ruzicka 2012: 80–81, 100–102.

began. There is no record of Iphicrates' activity during the early stages of the Boeotian War, which means that he could have arrived in Egypt at any time between 379 and 375.³⁹

From a political perspective, a later date makes the most sense. Athens and Thebes went to war against Sparta in 378, and Athenian naval victories in the battles of Naxos in 376 and Alyzeia in 375 spurred a renewal of the King's Peace.⁴⁰ As part of this renewal, the Spartans accepted the Athenians as partners by acknowledging the legality of the newly formed Second Athenian Confederacy, effectively ceding them hegemony of the Aegean.⁴¹ It is in the aftermath of this agreement that open cooperation between Athens and Pharnabazus would have been politically feasible and advantageous to both parties. Indeed, the satrap's specific request for Iphicrates (15.29.3), who owed his career to the patronage of Conon, strongly indicates a desire to re-establish the personal and political alliance that he had shared with Athens and its admiral in the 390s.⁴²

Diodorus does not deny that Athens sent Iphicrates in an effort to win the favor of Pharnabazus and of the King. As with Chabrias, however, his account otherwise downplays the obvious political implications of Iphicrates' service by highlighting his military abilities. He provides no motive for Pharnabazus' specific request of Iphicrates, but later notes that the King demanded him for the command of Persia's 20,000 Greek soldiers owing to his "excellence as a general" (15.29.3, 41.1).⁴³ Moreover, by reporting the request for Iphicrates immediately after the recall of Chabrias, Diodorus links together two events that may have taken place as many as four years apart. The implication is therefore that Pharnabazus

³⁹ Pritchett 1974: 64–67; Ruzicka 2012: 102, 105.

⁴⁰ For the Battle of Naxos, see Xenophon *Hellenica* 5.4.61; Diodorus 15.34.3–35.2; Plutarch *Phocion* 6; Polyaeus 3.11.2. For Alyzeia, *Hellenica* 5.4.63–65; Diodorus 15.36.5; for the renewal of the Peace, *Hellenica* 6.2.1; Diodorus 15.38. Isocrates *Antidosis* 109–110 and Nepos 13.2 directly relate the victory at Alyzeia to the Peace, especially to Spartan recognition of Athenian dominance at sea.

⁴¹ Ryder 1965: 58–60; Hammond 1986: 491; Urban 1991: 169–170; Jehne 1994: 57–64; Schwenk 1997: 24; Welwei 1999: 284–285; Hornblower 2011: 246–247.

⁴² Salmon 1985: 162. On the relationship between Conon and Iphicrates, see Strauss 1986: 133; Ruzicka 2012: 102. Munn 1993: 134–136 puts the date of Iphicrates' arrival in the Levant at 375, rightly noting that the recall of Chabrias and the dispatch of Iphicrates must have also been motivated by Athenian concerns regarding the outbreak of the Boeotian War in Greece, even if Diodorus presents the exchange only from Pharnabazus' perspective. The return of Chabrias to Athens made sense for both parties, since the Athenians would need him and his soldiers for their upcoming war against Sparta, while Pharnabazus would benefit from his departure from Egypt. Similarly, Pharnabazus recruited Iphicrates for his invasion in order to enlarge his own army and to guarantee the agreement between himself and Athens.

⁴³ διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ στρατηγεῖν ἀρετὴν.

believed having Greek allies, and denying the Egyptians the same, would be of the utmost importance in his campaign.

The account of the invasion itself is composed to credit Iphicrates and the Greeks for its lone success and to absolve them of any blame for its ultimate failure. At the outset, Diodorus writes that Pharnabazus had “squandered several years making preparations” (15.41.2) and then “began the campaign slowly, and had given his enemies a lot of time for their own preparations” (15.41.5).⁴⁴ In an effort to show that Iphicrates is, by contrast, a man of action, Diodorus reports that he accused Pharnabazus of being “slow to act,” and then wondered aloud “how someone so sharp in speech could be so slow in practice” (15.41.2).⁴⁵

The portrayal continues throughout the rest of the narrative. Pharnabazus throws away the one early victory – the capture of an Egyptian fortress on the Mendesian mouth of the Nile, gained through the bold action of Iphicrates and his Greeks (15.42.4–5) – by refusing to approve Iphicrates’ audacious plan to attack the Egyptian capital at Memphis. Instead, the satrap chose to await the arrival of the rest of the army, dooming the campaign. The Egyptians took this opportunity to fortify Memphis and redeploy their forces against the Persian beachhead, which bogged down their advance until the Nile’s annual flooding forced a total withdrawal (15.43.1–4).

Despite their slow preparation and excessive caution, Diodorus depicts Pharnabazus and his generals as if they had no feasible strategy for victory by omitting any mention of their plan – or even a planning session – prior to the start of the campaign. He also suggests that the Persians did not anticipate that the Egyptian fortress at Pelusium guarding the easternmost entrance to the Nile would be heavily fortified (15.41.4). The decision to sail around Pelusium and seize the Mendesian mouth is thus presented as a last-minute alteration to a plan that is never clearly defined in the first place.⁴⁶

These omissions are typical of the Dynamic Subordinate trope, and they allow Diodorus to credit Iphicrates and his Greeks with the success of the campaign’s opening action. Rather than implementing a predetermined plan given them by Pharnabazus, Iphicrates and his Greeks spontaneously take advantage of the confused Egyptian retreat, rushing into the fortress with the defenders. Although Pharnabazus and other Persians are

⁴⁴ ὁ γὰρ Φαρνάβαζος βραδεῖαν τὴν στρατείαν ἐποιεῖτο, καὶ πολλὸν χρόνον ἐδεδώκει τοῖς πολεμίοις εἰς τὴν παρασκευήν.

⁴⁵ πῶς ἐν μὲν τοῖς λόγοις ἐστὶν ὄξύς, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἔργοις βραδύς.

⁴⁶ A depiction adopted by Kienitz 1953: 91.

acknowledged to have been a part of this attack, Diodorus states that the Greeks alone “seized the citadel, destroyed it, and reduced the inhabitants to slavery” (14.42.5).⁴⁷

The notion that the Persians lacked a practical strategy for the opening stages of this invasion is unrealistic. It rests on the assumption that the Persians would not have done any advance scouting of the Egyptian defense network. Moreover, it is implausible that a major invasion aimed at Pelusium, approachable from the Levant by land and sea, could have been converted on the spot to an amphibious attack on the Mendesian fortress, which was accessible only by sea. With a fleet that Diodorus claims included 300 triremes, 200 thirty-oared ships, and many more supply vessels, it is far more believable that the Persians intended to bypass Pelusium from the beginning. Indeed, this idea fits with the report from other sources that Iphicrates spent time in the Levant preparing his soldiers for an amphibious assault (Polyaenus 4.9.63).⁴⁸

In the aftermath of the capture of the Mendesian fortress, Iphicrates is transformed from a Dynamic Subordinate into a Tragic Advisor. According to Diodorus, at this stage the Athenian general offered to personally lead an attack on Memphis, but Pharnabazus preferred to wait for the remainder of his army before advancing further. When Iphicrates again pressed for action, we are told that the other Persian generals accused him of seeking to take over Egypt for himself.⁴⁹ We have already seen that Pharnabazus’ inaction is said to explain the failure of the entire campaign: the Nile began to flood before reinforcements could arrive, rendering further assaults on fortified Egyptian positions impossible.

As is typical with Tragic Advisor accounts, this episode is written to distance Iphicrates from any responsibility for the defeat. Adding to its effectiveness from a literary standpoint is the entire foregoing narrative: based on earlier comments regarding the satrap’s excessive caution and sluggish movements, it is easy to accept that the Persians were unprepared for their early success, and, paralyzed by indecision, did nothing other than await reinforcements. Likewise, Diodorus has prepared his audience to believe that Iphicrates’ proposal was a good one, based on his introduction as a general sought out for his purported strategic brilliance and his

⁴⁷ κρατήσαντες τοῦ φρουρίου, τοῦτο μὲν κατέσκαψαν, τοὺς δ’ ἐνοικοῦντας ἔξηνδραποδίσαντο.

⁴⁸ Ruzicka 2012: 105–109.

⁴⁹ Ruzicka 2012: 117 suggests that this is plausible, speculating that Iphicrates may have planned to seize Memphis and hold it for ransom. In addition to the practical obstacles discussed below, this reconstruction ignores the political context of Iphicrates’ service. Doing so would have effectively destroyed any chance of Persian support for Athens in Greece and the Aegean.

dynamic exploits during the capture of the Egyptian fortress at the start of the invasion.

Yet Iphicrates' reported proposal to attack Memphis is so poorly conceived that complete inaction may have actually been a better option. His entire scheme relied on the accuracy of a report that the Egyptian capital was undefended, and that the 200 km stretch of river between it and the Mendesian mouth was similarly vulnerable. Gleaned from prisoners-of-war taken in the initial assault, which was successful in part because the Egyptians did not expect it and can hardly have garrisoned the fortress with their best soldiers, Pharnabazus would have rightly greeted this intelligence with suspicion. For Iphicrates' plan to have a chance, two dubious assumptions would have to be true: first, that these second-rate defenders were informed of the state and layout of the distant capital's defenses; and second, that they were telling him the truth.

Even granting the unlikely scenario that the Egyptians had few defenders guarding the river between the beachhead and capital, and that Iphicrates and his force could have sailed 200 km through one of the primary branches of the Delta undetected, the plan would have faced another nearly insurmountable obstacle. The citadel at Memphis was easily defensible even with only a few soldiers. In the 450s BCE, a small Persian garrison fended off Egyptian rebels supported by 200 Athenian triremes for several years (Thucydides 1.104, 109). The Persians would have rightly doubted that Iphicrates could take the citadel with his roughly 3,000 troops before reinforcements from elsewhere in Egypt arrived, cut them off, and crushed them against the city's walls.

Contrary to Diodorus' assertions, Pharnabazus was not an unimaginative and ponderous general. His ambitious and daring amphibious assault on the Mendesian mouth of the Nile was in all likelihood developed in light of a failed attack against the heavily defended Egyptian fortress at Pelusium nearly twenty years earlier.⁵⁰ It was also carefully planned: he gathered a large fleet of attack and supply vessels, used his connections in

⁵⁰ Abrocomas, who had commanded the ground force invasion of Egypt in 401 that was interrupted by the rebellion of Cyrus the Younger (Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.7.12), had also commanded the next campaign in the 390s (Isocrates *Panegyricus* 140). Likely he was responsible for the ground forces on this second campaign, since Pharnabazus almost certainly joined him with the remnants of the Persian fleet that had been victorious at Cnidus in 394. With a force that combined land and sea elements, an assault on Pelusium makes the most sense. Moreover, had this earlier attack been directed against the Mendesian mouth, it hardly seems likely that Pharnabazus would have repeated the strategy and that the defenders at the Mendesian mouth would have been unprepared for a second assault. See Ruzicka 2012: 72–76 for a plausible but speculative reconstruction of the campaign.

Athens to supplement his force with more sailors and marines, and meticulously drilled his troops for the invasion.

Upon arrival in Egypt, Pharnabazus did not simply hand over leadership to his Greek commander, but personally accompanied the first attackers during the amphibious assault. His Persian soldiers overwhelmed the Egyptian defenders in open battle, rendering the fortress itself vulnerable. Iphicrates and his Greeks may have been the first to enter the stronghold as Diodorus claims, but even so they were successful only because of the preparations and actions undertaken by the Persians and their general.

From the perspective of Pharnabazus, the recruitment of Iphicrates for this mission made sense for both political and military reasons. Appointed to his first military command by Conon in 393, Iphicrates first won widespread fame in 391/0 when he destroyed a detachment of Spartan hoplites at Lechaeum with light infantry peltasts. Subsequently, he commanded a fleet of eight triremes and 1,200 peltasts to victory over the Spartans in the Hellespont. Following the King's Peace of 387/6, he appears to have remained active as a naval and marine commander in the northern Aegean and Thrace.⁵¹

This background prepared Iphicrates for service with Pharnabazus against Egypt. It does not mean, however, that the Persians were utterly dependent upon him and his Greeks for their attack on the Mendesian mouth of the Nile. Like Chabrias, Iphicrates may have learned as much from the Persians and Egyptians as they did from him. Iphicrates had a reputation as a military innovator in the fourth century, and was perhaps best known for his success at Lechaeum in 391.⁵² Diodorus and Nepos also credit him with making several changes to the standard Greek hoplite panoply: reducing the size of the conventional Greek shield, lengthening the traditional sword and spear, and inventing a new type of light boot (15.44). It may be that these innovations came about as a result not only of his past experience with peltasts in Thrace, but also from the knowledge he gained from his allies and enemies while in Egypt.⁵³

Pharnabazus' failure to conquer Egypt was not a result of incompetence or of his refusal to implement Iphicrates' impractical scheme. The geography of Egypt features several natural barriers to any invader from the east, while the northward flow of the Nile supplies easy transportation to defenders sallying forth from Memphis or other upstream

⁵¹ Pritchett 1974: 62–66. ⁵² Best 1969: 105.

⁵³ Advocated recently by Ruzicka 2012: 106–107 and Sekunda 2014. For a skeptical view of these reforms, see Best 1969: 102–110. See also discussion by Marinovic 1988: 47–49; Yalichev 1997: 161; Konijnendijk 2014; Bertosa 2014.

mustering points (and would slow any attackers sailing south toward the capital), and the annual flooding season makes year-round campaigning virtually impossible. Making matters worse for the Persians was that the Egyptians had been building up their defenses for nearly three decades. Pharnabazus' plan to establish a beachhead at a relatively less fortified location and to support his forces with a huge supply fleet was well considered, but without significant defections from the Egyptian side any invasion was probably doomed from the outset.⁵⁴

Diodorus concludes his narrative of the entire episode by reporting that Iphicrates and Pharnabazus feuded during the Persian retreat, but offers no details regarding the nature of their dispute. He does state that Iphicrates absconded in secret to Athens fearing the same fate as Conon, and that Pharnabazus sent complaints to the Athenians blaming him for the campaign's failure. By noting that the Athenians rewarded Iphicrates with command of their fleet rather than punishing him, Diodorus stresses one final time that he shared no part in the blame for the Persian defeat in Egypt (15.43.5–6).⁵⁵

As Stephen Ruzicka has noted, however, Pharnabazus' embassy to Athens had a more important purpose than simply lodging complaints against Iphicrates.⁵⁶ Their apparent falling out did not end the satrap's relationship with Athens, and neither did the failure of the invasion in 373 end the King's desire to conquer Egypt. In preparation for another campaign, the satrap's ambassadors replaced the protégé of Conon with his son, Timotheus. Timotheus had been present with his father and Pharnabazus during the Persian victory at Cnidus, and this pre-existing relationship and his experience fighting on both land and sea against Sparta during the 370s made him an obvious target for recruitment.

Not long after he joined Persian forces in the Levant, however, Timotheus found himself serving a general other than Pharnabazus. Although Diodorus overstated the significance of Iphicrates' military contributions to the campaign, he was not incorrect that Pharnabazus, as supreme commander, bore ultimate responsibility for its failure. Artaxerxes II agreed, and terminated his command soon after the Persian force returned from Egypt. Already quite advanced in age, Pharnabazus subsequently disappears from the historical record. It is not clear whether

⁵⁴ Indeed, the success of the Persian invasion of 343–342 was only possible thanks to widespread surrender of Egypt's defenders owing to dissatisfaction with the Pharaoh. See discussion in Chapter 6.

⁵⁵ Castro 2011: 50 largely accepts Diodorus' account.

⁵⁶ The summary of Timotheus' recruitment and brief service here follows Ruzicka 2012: 122–124.

Timotheus remained with the Persian army under its new commander, Datames, but it appears that Datames favored another Greek, Mandrocles of Magnesia. Timotheus departed for Athens by 370 at the latest, and with him also goes any evidence of active collaboration between Athens and Persia for more than a decade.⁵⁷

Agesilaus and Tachos

The years following the failure of Pharnabazus' invasion of Egypt saw turmoil throughout the eastern Mediterranean world. Rebellions, or at the least internal disputes between rival satraps, engulfed the Levant and Anatolia. Datames played a significant role in these conflicts, and so never carried out his planned expedition against Egypt. The position of Artaxerxes II himself was not threatened by this instability, but the King also did not order another campaign against Egypt until the very end of his reign ca. 360. Unfortunately, our source material for Persian history in the 360s is exceptionally sparse. While it is clear that Greek soldiers participated in these internal conflicts, there is not enough evidence to accurately assess their military or political role to any satisfactory degree.⁵⁸

In Greece, a stunning Theban victory at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 destroyed what remained of the Spartan hegemony that had been imposed in 387/6. Over the next several years, the Thebans established their own dominance of the mainland through a series of devastating campaigns into the Peloponnese and Thessaly. Ariobarzanes sent money to support Spartan efforts to re-establish their position in 368 to little effect (15.70.2).⁵⁹ In 367, Theban ambassadors returned from Susa having won the King's support over the objections of representatives from Sparta and Athens.

⁵⁷ The Athenians did dispatch Timotheus to aid Ariobarzanes in his war against Autophradates and Mausolus, the satraps of Lydia and Caria, ca. 366. The nature of this conflict remains controversial, and Timotheus appears to have concentrated his attacks on the Persian garrison at Samos rather than directly joining the forces of Ariobarzanes. A deeper analysis of this episode falls outside the scope of this monograph, but it is important to note that the *xenia* relationship between Conon and Pharnabazus remained active among their successors, Timotheus and Ariobarzanes, who continued to function as the locus for Athenian collaboration with at least the satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia, if not the Achaemenid Empire as a whole. For more discussion, see Meloni 1951: 9–10; Shipley 1987: 138–143; Weiskopf 1989: 45–49; Hornblower 1994b: 85–88; Heskel 1997b: 98–100; Welwei 1999: 287–290; Briant 2002: 662–663; Cawkwell 2005: 188–189; Buckler and Beck 2008: 208–209; Ruzicka 2012: 132.

⁵⁸ Parke 1933: 106–110; Weiskopf 1989; Moyses 1991; Briant 2002: 656–675; Hornblower 2011: 263–67.

⁵⁹ Diodorus names Artaxerxes himself as the source of this money, but the agent who brought it was a subordinate of Ariobarzanes named Philiscus. See Weiskopf 1989: 34. There is some debate over whether the King himself directed Ariobarzanes to dispatch an envoy. See Rung 2013: 36–39.

Theban efforts to impose a Common Peace on all of Greece failed, however, and fighting continued throughout the Aegean world. Athens and Sparta maintained their relationship with Ariobarzanes, who in 366 came under attack by rival satraps in western Anatolia. On the sea, in 364 a Theban fleet sailed along the coast of Ionia in open challenge to Athens' own navy (Diodorus 15.78.4–79.2). As Buckler and Beck note, “the deployment of a large fleet was an enormous expense,” and the Thebans could not have carried out their plan without Persian financial support, likely provided by Mausolus.⁶⁰ On the mainland, Thebes' meteoric rise was checked by the death of Epaminondas in 362 at the Battle of Mantinea. Despite a peace agreement among most of the battle's participants, after this engagement much of Greece remained in a state of conflict.⁶¹

With the King's support having shifted to Thebes, Athens and Sparta found an eager ally in Pharaoh Tachos. The Pharaoh was readying an invasion of the Levant in an attempt to take advantage of the instability throughout the western Achaemenid Empire, and gladly welcomed their military support. In 361, the Spartans sent Agesilaus with a thousand hoplites and thirty advisors, while Chabrias of Athens returned to Egypt for a second time, this time in command of at least sixty triremes.⁶² In addition to any financial aid they received for this service (Xenophon *Agesilaus* 2.31; Diodorus 15.93.6), Athens and Sparta also benefited politically from their alliance with Tachos. So long as Egypt remained independent from and a threat to Artaxerxes II, the King would have fewer resources to devote to the Greek world. Likewise, Pharaoh Tachos had a strong interest in preventing a Persian-backed Theban takeover of Greece. An independent Athens and Sparta precluded the Thebans from providing soldiers or other support to Persian invasions of Egypt. They could also help inflame satrapal rivalries and rebellions in western Anatolia,

⁶⁰ Buckler and Beck 2008: 182, 199–210, who further note that a “harmony of Persian and Theban interests” existed at this time, but do not identify Mausolus as the source of funding for the Theban fleet. See also Buckler 1980: 160–175; Welwei 1999: 289–290. Mausolus makes the most sense as the fleet's immediate Persian sponsor, given his command of a fleet of 100 triremes against Ariobarzanes in 366 (Xenophon *Agesilaus* 2.27) and his own non-hostile treatment of the Theban fleet in 364. Autophradates, the satrap of Lydia, is another possibility (and the two may have collaborated), but his activities against Ariobarzanes appear to have been concentrated on land. See Weiskopf 1989: 48–50, 65–68 for their actions against Ariobarzanes.

⁶¹ Roy 1994; Munn 1997: 78–98.

⁶² Salmon 1985: 163–164. According to Ruzicka 2012: 138–139, the Egyptian–Spartan alliance may have been initiated as early as 364. Hornblower 1982: 174–175 points out that Egyptian ambassadors were present in Athens ca. 362/1. See also Kienitz 1953: 94–95.

preventing the King from drawing resources and manpower from that region for these campaigns.⁶³

Despite the obvious political benefits of Athenian and Spartan military service in Egypt at this time, Diodorus insists that Chabrias acted as a private individual and not a representative of the state (15.92.3).⁶⁴ Yet Chabrias had served as one of Athens' ten elected generals ca. 363, a little over a year before Tachos placed him in command of part of the Egyptian fleet. Diodorus asserts that the Pharaoh himself paid for the fleet (15.92.2), but this does not preclude the possibility that at least some of the crews and ships with him were also from Athens. In fact, this possibility seems more likely than not, given Athens' long naval tradition and its history of supplying sailors and marines to eastern allies.⁶⁵ Under these circumstances, is difficult to imagine that Chabrias acted without tacit, if not open, support from the Athenian assembly.⁶⁶

As a Spartan king there can be no doubt that Agesilaus acted as a representative of the Spartan government. Even so, ancient authors offer little comment on the political significance of Tachos' recruitment of Chabrias and Agesilaus.⁶⁷ Instead, they simply note that the Pharaoh sought them out as admiral and general, respectively. Xenophon writes that Tachos asked for Agesilaus' help after gathering large forces and plenty of money (*Agesilaus* 2.28), Diodorus suggests that Agesilaus was appointed to command since he was "an able commander of soldiers and a man admired on account of his bravery and strategic intelligence" (15.92.2),⁶⁸

⁶³ The Thebans and the satraps of western Anatolia provided soldiers in large numbers for the conquest of Egypt only in the late 340s, when western Anatolia was relatively stable, Sparta was politically isolated, and the Athenians were occupied with the growing threat of Macedon. See discussion in Chapter 6.

⁶⁴ See also Plutarch *Agesilaus* 37.1–4, Nepos *Chabrias* 2–3, the latter of which conflates both periods of Chabrias' service in Egypt into one expedition.

⁶⁵ In addition to Conon, Iphicrates, and Chabrias' previous service, in the fifth century Athens provided naval support during the Egyptian rebellion of Inarus and the Ionian revolt.

⁶⁶ Polyaeus 3.11.7 states that Chabrias was sent to Egypt by Athens as an ally. Pritchett 1974: 74–76 and Ruzicka 2012: 142 accept Diodorus' assertion that Chabrias went to Egypt in a private capacity very soon after his term ended, which means that he was probably recruited while in office. Pritchett does not question Diodorus' claim that the Pharaoh provided all of the ships and mercenaries for the campaign, and therefore believes that Chabrias arrived on his own. Ruzicka, however, points out that Pseudo-Aristotle *Oeconomica* 2.37 notes that Chabrias outfitted 120 ships for the expedition, though he only actually needed 60. For in-depth discussion of Chabrias' financial role, see Will 1960.

⁶⁷ Ancient authors offer a variety of motives for Agesilaus' decision to serve in Egypt. Xenophon reports that he chose to aid Egypt out of Panhellenic sentiments (*Agesilaus* 2.28–29), Diodorus that he was dispatched by Sparta as an ally (15.92.2), and Plutarch that his decision was driven purely by financial considerations on behalf of Sparta (*Agesilaus* 36). It is worth noting that these motives are not mutually exclusive from one another.

⁶⁸ δυνάμενός δ' ἡγεῖσθαι στρατιωτῶν καὶ δι' ἀνδρείαν καὶ στρατηγικὴν σύνεσιν τεθαυμασμένω.

and Plutarch comments that his military reputation preceded him even in Egypt (Plutarch *Agesilaus* 36.1, 4).

Despite employing such an esteemed military commander, Tachos' invasion of the Levant was a complete failure.⁶⁹ Sometime shortly after the Pharaoh's arrival in Syria and Phoenicia, a rebellion broke out in Egypt and in the ranks of the campaigning army itself. One of his generals, the man who would become Nectanebos II, succeeded in winning over not only many of the Egyptian soldiers, but also Agesilaus and his Spartans. In the face of this setback, Tachos went into exile at the Persian court (Diodorus 15.92.5; Xenophon *Agesilaus* 2.30; Plutarch *Agesilaus* 37.3–38.1).⁷⁰

Our sources manage to frame their accounts of this betrayal in such a way that it is the Pharaoh himself who is to blame. They do so by presenting Agesilaus as a Tragic Advisor whose advice is unheeded or expertise unappreciated. Thus Xenophon reports that the Pharaoh reneged on his promise to give the Spartan full command of Egyptian forces (Xenophon *Agesilaus* 2.28–30). Plutarch states similarly that Agesilaus had anticipated that he would be appointed chief general of the Egyptian army. For him to serve under Tachos in Phoenicia was beneath his reputation and credentials, and he adds that Agesilaus endured a number of other unspecified offenses due to the Pharaoh's unidentified vanities (Plutarch *Agesilaus* 37.1–2). Diodorus, meanwhile, flatly asserts that Tachos ignored Agesilaus' advice to remain in Egypt and conduct the invasion via subordinate generals (15.92.3).

Contrary to these claims, it is clear that Agesilaus' betrayal of Tachos was motivated by political concerns rather than personal grievances. More politically isolated in Greece and financially pressed than ever before, Sparta was desperate for allies and money. This desperation drove Agesilaus to join Tachos, but it did not make him loyal to the Pharaoh personally, particularly if he believed that the invasion of the Levant was an ill-advised campaign. When a rival bidder offering a more lucrative arrangement appeared in the form of Nectanebos, Agesilaus quickly – or perhaps retroactively – received the approval of the Spartan state to change his allegiance. To Agesilaus and the Spartans, an independent and allied Egypt was more important than any particular dynast.⁷¹

⁶⁹ For a brief overview of the Persian defensive network in the Levant, see Dunand 1968.

⁷⁰ Diodorus errs by stating that Tachos ultimately recovered the throne (15.93.1–6); in fact, he was overthrown by Nectanebos.

⁷¹ For an overview of Sparta's geopolitical isolation and policies during this period, see Cartledge 1987: 382–392; Hamilton 1997: 55–60; Kennell 2010: 145–147. Ruzicka 2012: 136–139 details the relationship between Egypt and Sparta, especially Agesilaus.

It is not clear whether Chabrias ultimately betrayed Tachos, as Plutarch only reports that the Athenian failed in his attempt to persuade Agesilaus to remain loyal. On the one hand, Chabrias and the Athenians both had a more obvious interest than the Spartans did in the success of Tachos' offensive: Athens had made several attempts to detach Cyprus from Persian control over the previous century and half, the last being in 388 when Chabrias himself supplied the Cypriote rebel Evagoras I with ten triremes as part of an anti-Persian alliance between Athens, Evagoras, and Egypt. Athens dropped out of this alliance following the King's Peace of 387/6, but as we have seen Chabrias himself spent the remainder of the 380s in Egypt. He stayed to the end of the reign of Pharaoh Acoris, departing around the time that Nectanebos I – the father of Tachos – took over. On the other hand, in 351/0 we find another Athenian general, Diophantus, serving in Egypt under Nectanebos II, the usurper of Tachos (Diodorus 16.48.2).⁷² Whatever path Chabrias took in 361, it did not permanently sever the relationship between Athens and Egypt's new pharaoh.

Diodorus, Xenophon, and Plutarch are less interested in providing a realistic assessment of the military leadership of Tachos than they are in apologizing for the behavior, and in this case the treachery, of Agesilaus. The first proof is the absurdity of the supposedly wise advice that the Pharaoh ignored, which would have had him place his field army under the leadership of two generals – Nectanebos and Agesilaus – who carried out the *coup d'état*, and one – Chabrias – who may have participated and at the very least did not act to prevent it. The second is the implausible premise that Tachos would have ever considered allowing a foreign king or general to have supreme command of his army.⁷³ Such an arrangement would have been unprecedented, and Tachos instead followed the standard command hierarchy that was also typical in Near Eastern armies. Just as Pharanbazus and Cyrus the Younger before him, the Pharaoh placed Greeks in charge of Greeks alone.

⁷² Diophantus was clearly present in Egypt in an official capacity as an ally. See Ruzicka 2012: 161. For a brief survey of Egyptian dynastic politics during this period, see Clayton 1994: 202–204.

⁷³ Smoláriková 2008: 25 notes that the insecurity of Egyptian independence in the Saite period led the Egyptian elite and especially the Pharaoh himself to be increasingly militarized, much as in the New Kingdom period. It would not be a surprise if this militaristic ideology continued into the fourth century, and therefore that Tachos' reluctance to delegate command of a major military action was also motivated by a need to actively cultivate his image as the commander-in-chief of Egyptian forces and as a warrior himself. See also Dillery 2015: 304–307 on the importance of the Pharaoh as the defender of Egypt in royal propaganda into the Late Period, and Traunecker 1979: 426–435 on the self-presentation of Acoris in particular.

Agesilaus and Nectanebos

The removal of Tachos by his generals in 361 sparked a rebellion in Egypt itself, where an unnamed challenger appeared in Mendes. Nectanebos immediately abandoned the campaign in the Levant in order to secure his claim to the throne. Our sources take the opportunity to portray the Greeks as the pharaoh-makers in the ensuing civil war. Xenophon writes that Agesilaus, “prevailing in battle, overpowered the enemy of the Greeks and helped to put in power” Nectanebos (Xenophon *Agesilaus* 2.31).⁷⁴ Diodorus claims that “the Greeks were foremost in valor,” and calls Agesilaus “the one who secured [Nectanebos’] kingdom” (15.93.5–6).⁷⁵ Finally, Plutarch reports that “Nectanebos was amazed by the shrewdness of Agesilaus,” and that after Agesilaus’ victory over the enemy “the Egyptian thoroughly and securely took power” (Plutarch *Agesilaus* 39–40).⁷⁶

As is usual with the Dynamic Subordinate trope, our accounts exaggerate the importance of Agesilaus and his soldiers by focusing almost solely on their actions during the conflict. The result is that a full reconstruction of the campaign and the ensuing civil war is out of our reach. At the same time, however, this narrative focalization means we have enough information to conclude that the Greeks were once again most valuable as sailors and marines rather than heavy infantry hoplites.

The evidence for this is drawn as much from what our sources omit as from what they state outright. Contrary to the assertions that Tachos recruited Agesilaus for his military leadership and wisdom, Plutarch and Diodorus do not mention any actions he or Chabrias undertook during the invasion of the Levant. Neither is mentioned as participating in any battle, and neither is on the front lines alongside Tachos. If they had been, it would have made their decision to betray him far more difficult, and their negotiations with Nectanebos almost impossible. Since our authors are keen to portray any Greek action, no matter how significant, as a success, their silence here is telling.

Historically, armies advancing into the Levant from Egypt or vice versa were most easily and quickly supplied by sea. Chabrias was stationed with or in command of the fleet and so would have been tasked with securing

⁷⁴ τὸν μὲν μισέλληνα μάχη νικήσας χειροῦται, τὸν δ' ἕτερον συγκαθίστησι.

⁷⁵ ταῖς ἀρεταῖς πρόεχοντες οἱ Ἕλληνες . . . μόνος κατωρθώκως τὴν βασιλείαν. Again, Diodorus confuses Tachos with Nectanebos here.

⁷⁶ ἔθαύμασεν οὖν ὁ Νεκτάναβις τοῦ Ἀγησιλάου τὴν δεινότητα . . . καλῶς μὲν εἶχε τὰ πράγματα καὶ βεβαίως τῷ Αἴγυπτίῳ.

the Egyptian supply chain. It makes the most sense to think that Agesilaus was given the same assignment: first, he must have had access to the ships he sailed on from Sparta and would use for his return journey. Second, he was apparently not with Tachos or among the Egyptian forces laying siege to cities throughout Phoenicia with Nectanebos (Diodorus 15.92.3–4). Third, he and Chabrias were approached at the same time by the rebels and argued with one another over whether to join, meaning that they had been in close contact if not serving side-by-side (Plutarch *Agesilaus* 37.4).

This rearguard deployment put the Greeks in a position to be the decisive factor in the conspiracy against Tachos and in the subsequent Egyptian civil war. After bribing Agesilaus and several other Egyptian contingents in Syria, Nectanebos and his uncle effectively isolated the Pharaoh on the front lines and forced his flight to Persia. The military overthrow of Tachos spurred a popular uprising in Mendes, and the battlefield was reversed from Syria to Egypt.⁷⁷ This turn of events made Agesilaus and the Greeks even more strategically valuable assets, since they were now on the front lines of the conflict.

Our ancient narratives of the Egyptian civil war do not offer any clear statements regarding its duration or the location and number of its major battles. Diodorus and Plutarch do, however, describe one engagement where Agesilaus and Nectanebos faced a numerically superior but qualitatively inferior rebel force (15.93.2–5; *Agesilaus* 38–39). Rejecting Agesilaus' advice to attack their inexperienced foe immediately, Nectanebos ordered a withdrawal into a large fortified city surrounded by several canals. In response, the enemy began a circumvallation of the city's defenses.

The location of this siege and the subsequent battle was most probably Pelusium. A large, fortified city surrounded by a complex canal network at the easternmost branch of the Nile, control of Pelusium dictated the success or failure of nearly every other fourth-century invasion of Egypt. It therefore not only matches the description of the unidentified city offered by Plutarch and Diodorus, but it also would have been the most strategically important fortress in the entire campaign: the regular Egyptian army was still in the Levant and Syria at the outbreak of the rebellion, and Nectanebos would have been unable to bring them back to Egypt without access to this fortified port city.

⁷⁷ "Popular" based on Plutarch *Agesilaus* 38.1, where they are described as numerous (πολλοί), a mixed lot (μιγάδες) of artisans (βάνασοι) whose inexperience made them contemptible as soldiers (δι' ἀπειρίαν εὐκαταφρόνητοι).

Stationed in the rear of Tachos' former force and with access to ships, Agesilaus and his Greeks were ideally situated to secure Pelusium. With Nectanebos present, they would then hold the fortress while the rest of the army disengaged in Syria and returned. Although based on some educated speculation, this scenario has several advantages: first, it explains why Nectanebos was outnumbered by his rival from Mendes. Knowing that his best hope was to prevent the arrival of the larger, more experienced Egyptian army, the Mendesian challenger immediately committed all of his available soldiers to the siege of Pelusium.

Second, it reveals that Nectanebos' decision to withdraw into the city was in fact correct. Given that relief was on its way, committing to an open field battle against a larger force – as Agesilaus reportedly urged – presented an unnecessary risk. Better to do exactly what Nectanebos actually did: defend the fortress walls and slow the pace of the siege, launching surprise attacks on the besiegers' camps and limiting engagements to close quarters where the enemy's superior numbers were useless. By waiting to attack until the circumvallation of Pelusium was nearly complete, moreover, Nectanebos was not displaying cowardice, as Plutarch and Diodorus charge, but rather implementing a well-known military tactic designed to defeat larger enemy forces.⁷⁸

Finally, this reconstruction provides a reason for the absence from our narratives of a specific engagement in which Agesilaus comprehensively defeated the enemy and ended the conflict. The decisive action in this particular encounter was the arrival of the Egyptian regular army, which would have relieved the siege, forced the withdrawal of the rebel army, and ended further need for active Greek participation in the fighting. Our narratives conclude with Agesilaus and his forces out of the picture, but the war must have continued for some time. At the least, Mendes would have needed to be secured and its claimant either captured or driven into exile. Thus our sources report that Nectanebos firmly established himself as the sole ruler of Egypt not long after the siege, but do not say that the victory at Pelusium itself finished the civil strife (Plutarch *Agesilaus* 40.1; Diodorus 15.93.6).

Literary embellishments aside, Agesilaus and his Greek forces played a limited but still critical role in establishing Nectanebos as the ruler of Egypt. As ground troops, they displayed basic tactical competence by

⁷⁸ The most famous instance of a small force selecting to fight in narrow terrain is of course the Battle of Thermopylae in 480. In fact, Plutarch seems to have directly modeled his narrative of this encounter with Herodotus' account of Thermopylae (7.211), as both narratives highlight the Spartan tactic of feigning retreat in the narrows in order to lure the enemy into a vulnerable position.

defending a heavily fortified position and winning several minor engagements fought on advantageous terms, in both timing and terrain, against untrained adversaries. In the invasion of Tachos and the civil war won by Nectanebos, however, they were not used as front-line soldiers when the regular Egyptian army was available. Like many other Greeks before them, they seem to have been valued militarily for their fast-strike marine capabilities that access to triremes provided. Agesilaus and Chabrias did not prove themselves strategically wiser than their foreign employers, either. If anything, the advice they are reported to have given revealed their ignorance of the political and military realities of their circumstances in Egypt.

At the same time, their status as outsiders made them valuable. As representatives of Sparta and Athens, the Greeks were slower to betray Tachos than the rest of the Egyptian army. Agesilaus was accountable – and may have needed approval from the home government – for his decision, and it is unclear whether Chabrias ever switched sides. As with most other Greeks who served abroad during the fourth century, their main concern was in promoting the political interests of their home states. Sparta was isolated in Greece itself, and so in particular benefited financially and politically from an independent, allied Egypt. By helping to establish Nectanebos on the throne over a popular rival, Agesilaus earned a hefty monetary reward and secured an alliance for Sparta that would last nearly twenty more years.

Greek Military Service in the Near East: Preliminary Conclusions

Based on the results of this investigation so far, it should be clear that Greek military service in the fourth century was not driven by Persian or Egyptian deficiencies in heavy infantry. While the bulk of Cyrus the Younger's Greek forces were indeed hoplites, the same is not the case for the Greeks who fought in Near Eastern armies over the next four decades. This is most obvious in the case of Conon and Chabrias, who were both given high-ranking naval commands. Similarly, the nature of Iphicrates' responsibilities under Pharnabazus indicates that he and his men were equipped not as traditional hoplites, but as more lightly armed, quick-strike marines. Agesilaus is the only general who is explicitly reported as commanding hoplites, and during one engagement it does appear that he and his Greeks fought in the sort of close-quarters setting that would typically favor heavy infantry. Still, one of his main contributions to Pharaoh Nectanebos appears to have been

access to triremes that enabled him to travel quickly from the Levant to Pelusium.

Greek generals were recruited in part for their specialized knowledge and backgrounds, but they were not obviously or generally superior to their Persian or Egyptian commanders. In failure, their purported advice was often ignored for good reason: Iphicrates' proposal to seize Memphis was unrealistic, Tachos' decision to lead the invasion of the Levant himself was certainly better than putting the generals who eventually betrayed him in command, and Nectanebos II's plan to withdraw inside the fortifications at Pelusium was ultimately justified. Similarly, their strategic or tactical contributions were not the sole reason for the success of any campaign: Pharnabazus was present for and played a critical role in the Persian naval victory at Cnidus, while Acoris and Nectanebos I were chiefly responsible for the successful defense of Egypt against the Persian invasions of 391–390 and 373. Nectanebos II took part in the defense of Pelusium alongside Agesilaus, and subsequently defeated his rival claimant after the arrival of his own Egyptian troops.

Finally, it is inaccurate to describe Greek military service in the Near East during this period as “mercenary.” It is certainly possible that some rank-and-file soldiers served solely for wages and without concern for the broader ramifications of their service, but there is no direct evidence to confirm this and circumstantial evidence indicates otherwise. From what we know, based especially on the evidence Xenophon provides in the *Anabasis*, the recruitment of foreign soldiers was done through *xenia* and *philia* networks (see discussion in Chapter 3). The armies that fought in Persia and Egypt were composed of soldiers with close ties to their Greek generals, who themselves had political ambitions and whose service was always undertaken on behalf of their home state. At least in the examples covered in this chapter, these generals were also recruited by foreign allies or sympathizers.

Indeed, Iphicrates and Agesilaus quite clearly fought under the official sanction of their home governments. Agents of Pharnabazus probably recruited Iphicrates' successor, Timotheus, during their embassy to Athens. Our sources insist upon the private nature of Chabrias' service, but its political implications and motivations are obvious: in the first case, his mission to Cyprus was formally approved by the Athenian state as part of an alliance with Evagoras of Salamis and Acoris of Egypt. When that alliance was rendered illegal after Athens had been forced to sign the King's Peace, Chabrias continued to pursue his original objectives under the pretense of exile in Egypt. When it became politically convenient to recall

him at the demand of Pharnabazus, he duly responded to the summons of Athens and was promptly given a military command at the outbreak of the Boeotian War. In the second case, his status as a private individual is disputed by Polyaeus, and was in any case at best a convenient political fiction. He was not an exile or outcast from the state, and Athens in the late 360s had a clear interest in preserving the independence of Egypt.

Although he is rarely mentioned in the same vein as these commanders in the literature on Greek mercenaries, Conon's experience in the 390s best represents the political nature of Greek military service in the Near East in the first half of the fourth century. Like Chabrias, his status as an exile allowed him to serve the interests of Athens at a time when the state had been forced into an alliance with Sparta. When Athens did openly join the Persian war effort, Conon easily transitioned to being both a Persian and an Athenian commander, much like Iphicrates and Agesilaus (for the Egyptians). Similar to Chabrias, he parlayed his role in Persian service abroad into domestic political and military appointments. And like his son Timotheus, his prominent position was dependent upon the continued patronage and success of Pharnabazus, whose absence from the Aegean in 392 and recall from the Levant ca. 372 left both Greeks vulnerable to rivals at home. To be clear, my argument here is not that Conon should be considered a mercenary owing to his similarities to these other commanders, but the opposite: their service, like his, is not accurately described as mercenary.

On the other side, Egyptian and Persian leaders recruited Greek armies within the context of broader foreign policies aimed at extending imperial influence in Greece. For the Pharaoh, this meant supporting any Greek states that were opposed to the Greek allies of Persia, especially Sparta and occasionally Athens from the 360s onward. For the satraps of Persia, the advancement of the King's policy additionally took place within the context of their rivalries with one other. Just as Cyrus the Younger worked to position his own *xenoi* in positions of power throughout the Greek world, often at the expense of rival satraps, so too did Persian officials after him: Pharnabazus used his relationships with Conon, Iphicrates, and Timotheus to secure and reinforce his centrality to the King's alliance with Athens, and Tiribazus did the same with Antalcidas and Sparta.

The recruitment of Greek armies was therefore not the only or even the primary purpose of Egyptian and Persian imperial policy toward Greece, but the ability to do so was an obvious marker of its success. This means that the increase in Greek military service in the fourth century should be viewed as evidence of increasing Persian and Egyptian influence in Greece.

While the Greeks who fought for them were indeed militarily useful in specific and specialized ways, their presence is not at all an indication of the inferiority or decline of the armies of Egypt and Persia. As we will see in the following chapters, the political and military significance of Greek military service in the Near East remained largely the same through the successful Persian conquest of Egypt in 343–342 and, for the Persians at least, even into the early years of the Macedonian conquest of the late 330s.