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The Chronology of Themistocles' Career

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The Classical Review / Volume 6 / Issue 08 / October 1892, pp 333 - 334

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00186421, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00186421

How to cite this article:

J. Arthur R. Munro (1892). The Chronology of Themistocles' Career. The Classical Review, 6, pp 333-334 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00186421

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The Classical Review

OCTOBER 1892.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THEMISTOCLES' CAREER.

THE 'Αθηναίων πολιτεία has brought out more clearly than before certain peculiarities in the different accounts of the life of Themistocles which have never, so far as I am aware, been sufficiently noticed. There appear to have been two distinct systems of chronology, separated by an interval of ten years, and our authorities differ according as they follow the one or the other, or sometimes the one sometimes the other. I denote the two systems by the letters *A* and *B*, and take the points at issue in order. Other matters, e.g. Themistocles' στρατηγία and the rebuilding of the walls, are not in dispute.

A . B

(1) Themistocles' archonship .	493	483
(2) His ostracism	471	461
(3) His flight from Argos . .	467	[457]
(4) His death	459	449

(1) Themistocles' archonship.

A. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (vi. 34) gives Themistocles as the name of the *archon eponymus* of 493. This Themistocles must be identical with the great Themistocles, for (a) Thucydides' expression (i. 93, cf. vi. 54 and Paus. I. i. 2) ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἀρχῆς, ἧς κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν Ἀθηναίοις ἦρξε seems to imply that the latter was *archon eponymus*, (b) the Scholiast's note says πρὸ τῶν Μηδικῶν ἦρξε Θεμιστοκλῆς ἐνιαυτὸν ἓνα, (c) when we find ('Αθ. πολ. 22) that the archons were at that date elected, not appointed by lot, the identification becomes almost certain, (d) if Themistocles died in 459 (*infra*) at the age of 65 (Plut. *Them.* 31), the year 493 was the first in which he was eligible¹ for the archonship, and we may be sure that so

ambitious a young man would take this first step in a political career at the earliest opportunity.

B. Plutarch (*Them.* 31, *Kim.* 18) sets the death of Themistocles in 449. He was then 65 years old. Therefore he cannot have been archon in 493, but the year 483 has the same claim as has just been advanced for 493. Cf. also Plut. *Them.* 3, where in 490 Themistocles is νέος ἔτι and has not yet abandoned his fast life for politics, and Hdt. vii. 143, where in 480 he is spoken of as ἐς πρώτους νεωστὶ παριών.

The author of the Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία makes Nicodemus archon in 484, in opposition to Dionysius who places him in 483. Probably he conceives of Themistocles as the archon of 483.

The Scholiast on Aeschines in *Timarch.* 23, commenting on the words ἐπὶ Νικοφύμῳ ἀρχόντος, says οὗτος ἦρξε πρὸ Θεμιστοκλέους. He has evidently a hazy recollection of Nicodemus.

(2) Themistocles' ostracism. }

(3) His flight from Argos. }

A. Thucydides (i. 137) tells us that Themistocles, when he went up to Susa, found Artaxerxes νεωστὶ βασιλεύοντα. The accession of Artaxerxes falls about mid-summer 465. Later writers represent Themistocles as introduced to Xerxes by Artabanus or others (Plut. *Them.* 27, Diod. xi. 56, etc.). Their mistake is best explained if we suppose that Themistocles reached Asia during the lifetime of Xerxes, and Susa during the brief period of Artabanus' influence (v. Clinton *F.H.* II. *ann.* 465, Busolt *G.G.* II. p. 390 note 2). At least the confusion is the more easily accounted for, the nearer we put his arrival in Asia to

¹ We are justified in assuming that the limit of age is applicable to his time.

the year 465.¹ His accusation on the charge of complicity with the treason of Pausanias, and his flight from Argos, must have been a couple of years earlier (*v. Busolt*), *i.e.* about 467.

Themistocles was evidently some years at Argos (*Thuc.* i. 135). *Diodorus* (xi. 54) recounts his fall under the year 471. *Cicero* (*de amic.* xii. 42) dates the banishment of Themistocles twenty years after that of Coriolanus, *i.e.* in 471. This date harmonizes well enough with other facts and notices (*v. Busolt* § 15, esp. p. 369 note 7).

B. The 'Αθηναίων πολιτεία (25) represents Themistocles as still at Athens ἐπὶ Κόνωνος ἀρχοντος, 462 B.C. The writer probably placed his ostracism in 461, for he is not mentioned again except in a retrospect, and his fall would naturally follow on the assassination of Ephialtes (*cf.* 26).

A possible trace of the same chronology may be detected in *Diodorus'* story of a charge of προδοσία brought against Themistocles before his ostracism, on which he was acquitted (xi. 54). The accusation can hardly correspond to 'Aristotle's' ξέμelle κρίνεσθαι Μηδισμοῦ, for the trial before the Areopagus hangs together with the attack on that council, of which there is no trace in *Diodorus*. But it may represent the accusation of 467, which on the other system drove Themistocles from Argos. The *B* version may have run—467 first accusation and acquittal, 461 ostracism, 457 (?) second accusation and flight, and *Diodorus* have taken his chronology from *A*, his facts from *B*.

Another trace may be found in *Plutarch's* reason for following *Thucydides* and *Charon* of *Lampsacus*, who bring Themistocles to Susa after the accession of Artaxerxes, rather than *Ephorus* and others, who bring him into the presence of Xerxes. τοῖς χρονικοῖς, he says (*Them.* 27), δοκεῖ μάλλον ὁ Θουκυδίδης συμφέρεσθαι, καίπερ οὐδ' αὐτοῖς ἀτρέμα συνταττομένοις. To bring Themistocles and Xerxes together at Susa is of course inconsistent with either version, but it is more likely that *Plutarch* is protesting against what he regards as an error of ten years, than that he has detected a mistake of a few months, especially as his other notes of time (except when borrowed from *Stesimbrotus*) agree with the *B* system. The καίπερ οὐδ' αὐτοῖς ἀτρέμα συνταττομένοις shows that he differs from *Thucydides*, and confirms the previous interpretation of νεωστὶ βασιλεύοντα.

¹ It is noteworthy that the Athenian envoys, *Thuc.* iv. 50, on arriving at Ephesus find Artaxerxes νεωστὶ τεθνηκότα. The expression is exactly parallel to νεωστὶ βασιλεύοντα, and the interval cannot be more than four months.

These indications point to the alternative 461 for 471, and seem to hint at the alternative 457 for 467.

(4) Themistocles' death.

A. *Thucydides* (i. 138) ascribes the death of Themistocles to sickness, but also mentions another account, according to which he took poison despairing of fulfilling his promises to Artaxerxes. While preferring the former explanation he does not seem to consider the latter impossible. The circumstances of the time of Themistocles' death must therefore have been such as to make it plausible. The same conclusion follows from the fact that a very similar story was popularly accepted only thirty-five years after the event (*Aristoph.* *Eq.* 83-4). Historical considerations (*v. Busolt* p. 480 note 2) show that Themistocles, were he in Asia, must have been called on to fulfil his engagements in the year 459, when the Athenians sent an armament to support the revolt of Inaros, and no sooner. 459 must therefore be the date of Themistocles' death.

B. *Plutarch*, both in his *Themistocles* (31) and in his *Kimon* (18) connects the death of Themistocles with *Kimon's* expedition in 449.

I will not attempt to explain how there came to be two systems of chronology, but four facts seem to bear upon the question—(a) it was known or granted that Themistocles died at the age of 65, (b) it was known or (probably rightly) assumed that he was archon *suo anno*, (c) the two Persian invasions were just ten years apart, (d) the two Egyptian expeditions were also ten years apart.

Against the *A* chronology we may note so far *Herodotus'* statement that Themistocles was in 480 ἐς πρώτους νεωστὶ παριών. But these words may perhaps refer only to his undisputed προστασία after the ostracism of Aristeides. On the other hand the very attractiveness of the *B* version is against it, for the temptations to such a reconstruction would be stronger. Neither is the *B* system the better for the statement of the 'Αθηναίων πολιτεία, that after 487 the archons were appointed by lot. Lastly the date 484 assigned to the archonship of Nicodemus in opposition to so trustworthy and impartial an authority as *Dionysius* almost suggests that Nicodemus has been thrust back a year to make room for Themistocles. But the question of the relative value of the two chronologies is closely connected with the complicated problem of Themistocles' decree about the fleet, which had better be reserved for separate consideration.

J. ARTHUR R. MUNRO.