

# Between Loyalty and Rebellion: The Ambiguous Role of Orontes in the Satrapal Revolts\*

## Sadakat ve İsyan Arasında: Satrap Ayaklanmalarında Orontes'in Muğlak Rolü

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### Abstract

*This study examines the significance of Orontes, satrap of Armenia, in the political and military upheavals of the 4th century BCE, emphasizing his involvement in the Satrapal Revolts. Orontes initially played a pivotal role in the Persian campaign against Evagoras of Cyprus; however, he subsequently became entangled in internal power struggles, particularly with Tiribazos, whom he accused of conspiring against the Persian king. This accusation initially granted Orontes a heightened authority, yet his influence proved short-lived as his strategy was unveiled, resulting in his removal from Armenia. The article offers a critical analysis of his transition from the position of satrap of Armenia to a disputed role in Mysia, wherein his involvement in the revolts remains unclear. The final act of Orontes -betraying the other satraps in exchange for royal rewards- raises questions about his actual political ambitions. By analysing inconsistencies present in historical accounts and evaluating Orontes' fluctuating alliances, this study provides a nuanced perspective on the limitations inherent in satrapal power, and the broader implications of the Satrapal Revolts for the stability of the Persian Kingdom. Through a reassessment of his career, this article contributes to the understanding of power dynamics and political survival strategies within the Persian administration.*

**Key Words:** Armenia, Orontes, Satrap, Revolt, Persians.

### Öz

*Bu çalışma, MÖ 4. yüzyıldaki siyasi ve askeri çalkantılar içinde Armenia Satrabı Orontes'in rolünü, özellikle de Satrap İsyanlarındaki yerini incelemektedir. Orontes, başlangıçta Kıbrıs kralı Evagoras'a karşı yürütülen Pers seferinde önemli bir rol oynamış, ancak daha sonra en çok Tiribazos ile yaşadığı iç iktidar mücadeleleriyle öne çıkmıştır. Orontes, Tiribazos'u Pers kralına karşı komplo kurmakla suçlamış ve bu iddia, ona kısa süreliğine daha fazla yetki kazandırmıştır. Ancak, planlarının açığa çıkmasıyla birlikte gücü kısa sürede sarsılmış ve Armenia'daki satraplık görevinden uzaklaştırılmıştır. Bu makale, Orontes'in Armenia Satraplığı'ndan Mysia'daki tartışmalı konumuna geçişini ele alarak, isyanlardaki rolüne dair belirsizlikleri irdelemektedir. Orontes'in son hamlesi -diğer isyancıları Pers kralına teslim ederek ödülleri kazanması- onun gerçek siyasi hedefleriyle ilgili soru işaretleri doğurmaktadır. Tarihsel anlatılardaki tutarsızlıkları analiz ederek ve Orontes'in değişen ittifaklarını değerlendirerek, bu çalışma satrapların güçlerinin sınırları ve Satrap İsyanlarının Pers Krallığı'nın istikrarı üzerindeki geniş çaplı etkileri hak-*

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kında derinlemesine bir perspektif sunmaktadır. Orontes'in kariyerine dair yeniden bir değerlendirme yaparak, Pers yönetimi içindeki güç dinamikleri ve siyasi hayatta kalma stratejilerine dair önemli katkılar sağlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Armenia, Orontes, Satrap, İsyen, Persler.

## Introduction

Cyrus the Younger, the satrap of Sardis, aimed to overthrow his elder brother, the Persian king Artaxerxes II, but his campaign ended in failure. He lost his life in the Battle of Cunaxa in 401 BCE.<sup>1</sup> In recognition of his significant contributions during the battle, the Persian king granted Tissaphernes, a prominent Persian noble, the lands of Ionia and Lydia, which had previously been under the control of Cyrus the Younger, and assigned him the task of maintaining order in Asia Minor. Upon assuming control of these regions, Tissaphernes immediately demanded submission from the Ionian cities. Fearing Tissaphernes, these cities sought assistance from the Spartans. The Spartans responded positively to this request and dispatched Thibron as harmostes (ἀρμοστής).<sup>2</sup> In response, the Persians attempted to neutralize the Spartans by supporting the Athenians in Hellas.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, it appears that Tiribazos, the deputy satrap of Armenia, was sent to the Aegean coast in 392/391 BCE by order of the Persian king to lead the war against the Spartans.<sup>4</sup>

Tiribazos, however, secretly negotiated with the Spartans, the enemies of the Persians, without the king's approval. His financial support to the Spartans despite the Persians backing the Athenians, his arrest of the Athenian General Conon on the grounds of disobedience to the king, and his subsequent journey to Susa to report these events significantly altered the course of affairs. As expected, the king, displeased with Tiribazos' independent actions, ordered his arrest and replaced him in 391 BCE with Struthas, who was sent to the Aegean coast.<sup>5</sup> It also appears that the governorship of Lydia was trans-

1 Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Trans. Carleton L. Brownson, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1998, p. 55, pp. 65-137; Xenophon, *Hellenica, Volume I: Books 1-4*, Trans. Carleton L. Brownson, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1918, p. 175; Plutarch, *Lives, Volume XI: Artaxerxes*, (trans. Bernadotte Perrin), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1926, pp. 139-143.

2 Xenophon, *Hellenica*, p. 177; Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, p. 175; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume VI: Books 14-15.19*, (trans. Charles H. Oldfather), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1954, p. 89.

3 Xenophon, *ibid.*, pp. 359-361.

4 Xenophon, *ibid.*, p. 363; Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 247; Michael J. Osborne, "Orontes", *Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, XXII, 1973, p. 524.

5 Xenophon, *ibid.*, p. 365; Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 271-273. It is likely that at this date, Ionia was separated from the Satrapy of Lydia; Struthas governed solely the Satrapy of Ionia (coastal regions). See Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 524; Hilmar Klinkott, "The Satrapies of the Persian Empire in Asia Minor: Lydia, Caria, Lycia, Phrygia, and Cappadocia", *The Oxford History of The Ancient Near East, The Age of Persia*, Eds. Karen Radner, Nadine Moeller, Dan Potts, Volume V, Oxford University Press, New York 2023, p. 602.

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ferred to Autophradates around this time. Upon reaching the Aegean coast, Struthas, favouring the Athenians quickly clashed with the Spartans, delivering a significant defeat to Thibron.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, the Spartans, concerned about Rhodes pursuing a pro-Athenian policy, dispatched Ekdikos and Diphridas to the Aegean coast as nauarchos. In this context, Diphridas, while en route to Sardis in 390/389 BCE, managed to capture Tigranes,<sup>7</sup> the son-in-law of Struthas, along with his wife, and later released them in exchange for a substantial ransom.<sup>8</sup>

### **Orontes (ca. 401–348 BCE) and His Actions**

To strengthen his rule, the Persian king Artaxerxes II launched several initiatives across Asia Minor. In 387 BCE, the king signed a treaty with the Greeks known as the Peace of Antalcidas.<sup>9</sup> As a result of this agreement, many cities in Asia Minor lost their autonomy, and Persian dominance over land and sea was reinforced.<sup>10</sup> With the western borders of his kingdom secured through the Peace of Antalcidas, Artaxerxes II redirected his focus to Egypt. However, the Persian king was unable to achieve a decisive victory in the wars between 385–383 BCE. The support provided by Evagoras, the king of Cyprus, to Egypt prevented Artaxerxes II from accomplishing his objectives. When Evagoras used Phoenicia as a strategic base against the Persian king, Artaxerxes II adjusted his plans and focused on eliminating the threat posed by Evagoras.<sup>11</sup>

6 Xenophon, *ibid.*, p. 367.

7 The reason for the presence of Tigranes (Τιγράνης ὁ βασιλέως ὕπαρχος) near Sardis with his wife remains unknown. Cf. Demosthenes, *Orations, Volume I: Orations 1-17 and 20, On the Navy-Boards, For the Liberty of the Rhodians*, (trans. James H. Vince), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1930, p. 417.

8 See, Xenophon, *ibid.*, pp. 367-369.

9 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 297-299; Xenophon, *Hellenica, Volume II: Books 5-7*, Trans. Carleton L. Brownson, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1921, p. 21. Antalcidas, a Spartan and son of Leon, served the king's interests by persuading the Lacedaemonians to surrender, striving to ensure that all Greek cities in Asia and nearby islands were given over to the king (Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, p. 177; Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 337). Antalcidas, an opponent of Spartan king Agesilaus, continued peace negotiations under all circumstances, believing that war would only increase Agesilaus's prestige, granting him fame and power. See Plutarch, *Lives, Volume V: Agesilaus and Pompey*, (trans. Bernadotte Perrin), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1917, p. 63.

10 The Peace of Antalcidas stipulated that the Greek cities in Asia and Cyprus were handed over to the Persians. If any party opposed the peace terms, the Persians would ensure compliance. This treaty enabled Persian intervention in Hellas and represented their most significant triumph in the west until that time. See Xenophon, *ibid.*, p. 21; Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, p. 177; Plutarch, *Agesilaus*, pp. 63-65.

11 Isocrates, *Evagoras*, (trans. La Rue Van Hook), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1945, pp. 37-39.

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According to ancient sources, Orontes, the satrap of Armenia<sup>12</sup> and the son-in-law of the Persian king, also served as a general in the war against Evagoras. Diodorus describes these events as follows:

“...This year Artaxerxes, the king of the Persians, made war upon Evagoras, the king of Cyprus. He busied himself for a long time with the preparations for the war and gathered a large armament, both naval and land; his land force consisted of three hundred thousand men including cavalry, and he equipped more than three hundred triremes. As commanders he chose for the land force his brother-in-law Orontes, and for the naval Tiribazos, a man who was held in high favour among the Persians...”<sup>13</sup>

If we can rely on Diodorus’s account, the selection of Orontes, the satrap of Armenia, as the general of a vast land army of three hundred thousand men suggests that he held a significant position within the Persian Kingdom.<sup>14</sup> During this period, Ariobarzanes was assigned as the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia; the satraps of Phrygia and Cappadocia were preoccupied with local affairs, and Orontes rose into prominence through his exceptional abilities.<sup>15</sup>

As seen in the passage above, it is noteworthy that both Orontes and Tiribazos, the administrators of the Satrapy of Armenia, were simultaneously selected to lead the military campaign against the king of Cyprus. Orontes was the Persian king’s son-in-law, while Tiribazos was not only a close confidant of the king but also his son-in-law.<sup>16</sup> It is particularly interesting that Tiribazos, who had been disregarded due to his assistance to the Spartans, was now given command of the naval forces. This raises the question of how Tiribazos’s

12 The Satrapy of Armenia was divided into two administrative regions: Western and Eastern Armenia. See Xenophon, *Anabasis*, p. 289; Giusto Traina, “The Satrapies of the Persian Empire: Media and Armenia”, *The Oxford History of The Ancient Near East, The Age of Persia*, Eds. Karen Radner, Nadine Moeller, Dan Potts, Volume V, Oxford University Press, New York 2023, p. 574. See also İlhami Tekin Cinemre, “Antikçağ’ın Sonunda Armenia Bölgesi’nin Tarihi Coğrafyası”, *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, XXXIII/77, 2024, pp. 281-307; Alican DOĞAN, “Antik Kaynaklar Işığında Euphrates’in (Fırat) Doğusundaki Topraklarda İktisadi ve Zirai Hayat”, *Anadolu’nun Eski Çağlarında İktisadi ve Zirai Hayat*, Eds. Lütfi Gürkan Gökçek-Ercüment Yıldırım, Okay Pekşen, İstanbul 2018, pp. 851-863.

13 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 331.

14 Diodorus surprisingly refers to Orontes as the king’s brother-in-law (Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 331). In reality, Orontes was the son-in-law of the Persian king (See Xenophon, *Anabasis*, p. 179, 267; Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, p. 193). See also Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, (trans. Peter T. Daniels), Eisenbrauns, Indiana 2002, p. 136. In the Persian Kingdom, the period from 401 BC to 335 BC was marked by struggles between the kingdom and the satrapies. As a result of these struggles, Persian lost their lands and influence in many regions. See William Tarn, “Persia from Xerxes to Alexander”, *Cambridge Ancient History*, VI, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1933, p. 19.

15 Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 526.

16 Xenophon, *Anabasis*, p. 179, 327; Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 331.

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status improved so significantly. The answer to this question lies in the attitudes of the Greeks. The Greeks' support for Evagoras, the king of Cyprus, likely vindicated Tiribazos's previous actions, including his arrest of the Athenian general Conon and his support for the Spartans. Consequently, Tiribazos restored his former reputation in the eyes of the king and, for this reason, was likely appointed to command the naval forces.<sup>17</sup>

Diodorus emphasizes that, if his account is accurate, Tiribazos took full command initially, which caused Orontes, the satrap of Armenia, to resent Tiribazos's higher position. Diodorus suggests that this dynamic bred jealousy in Orontes.<sup>18</sup> However, it appears that the Persian king's orders temporarily subdued this rivalry, enabling them to act together against Evagoras.

During these events, Evagoras, who had secured support from Hecatomnus, the ruler of Caria, was decisively defeated off the coast of Citium (modern Larnaca) by Glos, the Persian naval commander and was subsequently blockaded in Salamis.<sup>19</sup> Seeking aid from the king of Egypt, Evagoras returned only to find that the Persians had besieged Salamis, leaving him with no alternative but to negotiate with them. Tiribazos presented the conditions for peace: Evagoras had to withdraw from all of the cities of Cyprus, pay annual tribute to the Persian king, and could retain his throne in Salamis only as a vassal of the Persian monarchy. In response, Evagoras stated that he would accept the treaty but would not obey the Persian king as a mere servant; rather, he would agree to peace only if he were recognized as an equal to the king. However, Tiribazos rejected Evagoras's demands, and as neither side was willing to make concessions, the negotiations reached an impasse. At this critical juncture, an event appears to have influenced the course of discussions between Tiribazos and Evagoras. It is reported that Orontes, the commander of the land forces, was unable to tolerate Tiribazos's successes and devised a plot against him. Orontes wrote a letter accusing Tiribazos of conspiring against Artaxerxes II and sent it to the Persian king. Subsequent developments suggest that Orontes' accusations achieved their intended effect. The king believed the charges detailed in the letter and, in 385 BCE, ordered Orontes to arrest and send Tiribazos to him.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it

17 Xenophon, *Hellenica*, V, p. 21.

18 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 345-347.

19 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 331, 333-335, 347-349; Osborne, *ibid.*, pp. 523-527.

20 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 345-347; Briant, *ibid.*, p. 321. Orontes invited Tiribazos to his house under the pretext of discussing an important issue and asked him to sit on a couch that had been strategically positioned over the entrance of a dungeon. As soon as Tiribazos sat on the couch, it collapsed along with him into the dungeon. He was then put in chains and sent to the Persian king. See Polyaeus, *Polyaenus's Strategems of War*, (trans. Richard Shepherd), Pall-Mall Publishers, London 1796, pp. 274-275; Tarn, *ibid.*, p. 20. For the accusations against

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can be inferred that Orontes was a satrap who did not hesitate to resort to any means when his personal interests were at stake.

The initial result of these events appeared to benefit Orontes, given that he gained command over all military forces in the region. Nevertheless, his advantageous situation was short-lived, as events quickly turned against him. The arrest of Tiribazos caused discontent among the soldiers, leading the troops assigned to besiege Salamis to exhibit disobedience and a lack of discipline. As a result, Evagoras had the opportunity to prepare for the war once again. Concerned by the unfolding situation, Orontes concluded that negotiating peace with Evagoras would be more advantageous than risking a loss of control. Evagoras, for his part, likely viewed reaching an agreement with Orontes as a safer choice than facing Tiribazos. Consequently, peace was established in 380 BCE under the conditions previously proposed by Tiribazos.<sup>21</sup>

Subsequent developments indicate that Orontes's rise to power was short-lived. Before long, Tiribazos managed to clear himself of the accusations levelled against him, and Orontes' plan was exposed. While the highest honours were granted to Tiribazos, Orontes, who had misled the Persian king, lost both his authority and his reputation.<sup>22</sup> Although the details of Orontes's

Tiribazos, see Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 347.

- 21 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 345-349; Isocrates, *ibid.*, p. 39. Although Orontes removed the term -namely, that he should not be considered equal to the king- which Evagoras objected to, this did not prevent the Persian king from seeing Evagoras as a loyal servant. The privilege granted to Evagoras to be considered an equal to the king was merely a verbal arrangement rather than a substantive recognition (Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 530).
- 22 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 351-355; Cf. Briant, *ibid.*, p. 308, 317. Stephen Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire 525-332 BCE*, Oxford University Press, New York 2012, p. 132. The unfounded accusations made by Orontes against Tiribazos led to a decrease in his authority and his relocation to a more distant region. After his act of treachery, Orontes, who had previously been the satrap of Armenia, was sent to Mysia, possibly under the authority of Lydia's satrap Autophradates, either as a subordinate satrap or a *hyparkhos*. On the other hand, Orontes's position as the son-in-law of Artaxerxes II may have prevented Tiribazos from seeking revenge against him (Ruzicka, *ibid.*, p. 132; Cf. Hilmar Klinkott, *Der Satrap ein Achaimenidischer Amtsträger und seine Handlungsspielräume*, Verlag Antike, Frankfurt 2005, p. 125). Orontes, having lost the favour of the Persian king, led a rebellion, as noted in an inscription found in Pergamon, dating to the first half of the second century AD. This inscription states that Orontes, the son of Artasyras and of Bactrian descent, rebelled against Artaxerxes. He took control of the Pergamenes, resettled them back to their previous city on the hilltop. However, before his death, he ultimately surrendered the city to Artaxerxes. See Wilhelm Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, Volume I, S. Hirzel, Leipzig 1903, no. 264, pp. 427-430; Matthias Barth-Josef Stauber, *Inscripfen Mysia & Troas [IMT]*, Leopold Wenger Institut, München 1993, «Kaïkos», no. 925; Max Fränkel, *Die Inscripten von Pergamon*, Volume II, nos. 251-1334, W. Spemann, Berlin 1890-1895, II. *Pergamon*, no. 613 (frg A. 4-9) Ὀρόντης δὲ Ἀρτασί[ρου], τὸ γέν[ος] Βάκτριος, ἀποστάς ἀπὸ Ἀρταξέ[ξου τοῦ Περσ]ῶν βασιλέως, ἐκράτησεν τῶν Περγα[μηνῶν καὶ με]τεώκισεν αὐτοὺς πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸν κο[λωνῶν εἰς] τὴν πα[λαι]ᾶν πόλιν· εἶτα Ὀρόντης [τὴν πόλιν ἐ]πιτρ[έψας Ἀρταξέ]ρξει ἀπέθανεν.

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punishment remain unclear, the lack of any records regarding his return to Armenia suggests that he might have lost his satrapal position. This theory is further supported by the fact that Orontes is scarcely mentioned in ancient sources following these events.<sup>23</sup>

While the Persian king was preoccupied with Evagoras and the king of Egypt, Datames, the satrap of Cappadocia, also initiated a rebellion. Datames successfully defeated the forces sent against him and gained control over the coastal region, including Sinope. His actions served as an example to other satraps, leading to a series of revolts by satraps and generals against the central Persian authority in 366 BCE.<sup>24</sup> To suppress Datames, it appears that three separate Persian armies were dispatched. According to reports, in one of these encounters, Datames crossed the Euphrates river and marched against the army personally led by the Persian king.<sup>25</sup> He subsequently confronted<sup>26</sup> a second army under the command of Artabazos and finally, perhaps in the second year of the revolt, engaged in battle against the forces of Autophradates, the satrap of Lydia.<sup>27</sup> The king and his generals' direct involvement in suppressing Datames' rebellion highlights the serious threat it posed to Persian authority. The attitude of the Armenians during Datames's rebellion is revealed in the account provided by Nepos:

“Although Autophradates realized the situation, he nevertheless determined to engage rather than retreat with so great a force or linger for so long a time in one spot. Of barbarians he had twenty thousand horse and a hundred thousand foot, of the troops that the Persians call Cardaces, besides three thousand slingers of the same nationality; and in addition, eight thousand Cappadocians, ten thousand Armenians, five thousand Paphlagonians, ten

23 Michael J. Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens, Volume II: Commentaries on the Decrees Granting Citizenship*, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Brussel 1982, p. 65.

24 Cornelius Nepos, *On Great Generals*, (trans. John C. Rolfe), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1929, p. 151-153; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume VII: Books 15.20-16.65*, (trans. Charles L. Sherman), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1952, p. 207. According to Diodorus (*ibid.*, p. 201), when Molon was archon in Athens and Lucius Genucius and Quintus Servilius were consuls in Rome, the coastal settlements and the satraps revolted against Artaxerxes II (See also Ruzicka, *ibid.*, p. 127). For Datames's rebellion, see Cornelius Nepos, *ibid.*, pp. 145-165. After leaving the king's service, Datames further expanded the borders of the Satrapy of Cappadocia (Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 539). For the satrap's revolts, see also Robert A. Moysey, "IG II<sup>2</sup> 207 and the Great Satraps' Revolt", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, LXIX, 1987, pp. 93-100; Michael Weiskopf, *The so-called "Great Satraps' Revolt", 366-360 B.C., Concerning Local Instability in the Achaemenid Far West*, *Historia Einzelschrift* 63, Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden 1989, p. 26 et seq.

25 Polyaeus, *ibid.*, p. 282.

26 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 207-209.

27 Cornelius Nepos, *ibid.*, pp. 157-159.

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thousand Phrygians, five thousand Lydians, about three thousand Aspendians and Pisidians, two thousand Cilicians, the same number of Captiani, and three thousand Greek mercenaries, along with an enormous number of light-armed troops.<sup>28</sup>

This passage indicates that during the conflict, Autophradates was accompanied by troops from Cappadocia, Phrygia, Paphlagonia, Lydia, Pisidia, and Cilicia. Notably, an additional ten thousand Armenian soldiers were also with him, suggesting that at the outset of the rebellion, Orontes, the satrap of Armenia, pursued a pro-Persian policy. Around 366 BCE, the Armenian region was likely under firm Persian control. Despite having a smaller force, Datames resisted this army, and after suffering heavy losses in battle, Autophradates, fearing that the situation might turn against the Persian king, was compelled to negotiate peace with Datames. This settlement effectively marked the end of Datames's rebellion.<sup>29</sup>

Taking advantage of the Persian king's struggles against the satraps, the Egyptian king Tachos declared war on the Persians. Consequently, Artaxerxes II found himself engaged in conflicts both with the Egyptian king and the rebellious satraps of Asia. With support from Egypt, all the coastal peoples of Asia formed alliances against the Persian king. Notably, among the most prominent rebellious satraps were Ariobarzanes, the satrap of Phrygia; Orontes,<sup>30</sup> formerly the satrap of Armenia but now surprisingly ruling the satrapy of Mysia; and Autophradates, the satrap of Lydia. Furthermore, it is known that Mausolus, the ruler of Caria, secretly supported them. It is reported that the Lycians, Pisidians, Pamphylians, Cilicians, Syrians, Phoenicians, and practically all coastal communities participated in this revolt. The large-scale nature of the revolt suggests that the revenue sources of the Persian king may have suffered a severe blow.<sup>31</sup>

28 Cornelius Nepos, *ibid.*, pp. 157-159.

29 Cornelius Nepos, *ibid.*, p. 159. The battles of Datames against Autophradates and Artabazos likely took place in 367/366 BC. Because, by 366/365 BC, Autophradates had moved to Western Asia (Ruzicka, *ibid.*, p. 131).

30 Orontes, who was the satrap of Armenia in 401 BC, later became the satrap of Mysia (Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 203-205; Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus, Volume II: Books 21-44*, (trans. John C. Yardley), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2024, p. 313). Hornblower asserts that Orontes was still the satrap of Armenia in 361 BC (Simon Hornblower, *Mausolus*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1982, p. 177).

31 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 201-205; Tarn, *ibid.*, p. 20. Taking advantage of the situation, Orontes began ruling Armenia almost as an independent king. He increased his power and accumulated a wealth of three thousand silver talents (David M. Lang, "Iran, Armenia and Georgia", *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Ed. Ehsan Yarshater, Volume XXX/1, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 506-507). Orontes, who had familial ties to the Persian kingdom, was one of the key leaders of the revolt. By minting gold coins, he likely envisioned himself seizing the Persian throne. (Tarn, *ibid.*, p. 21).

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If Diodorus's account, which names the leaders of the rebellion but avoids detailing the course of events, is accepted as accurate, the fate of Orontes, who was disgraced for his baseless accusations against Tiribazos, becomes clearer. After being stripped of his authority, Orontes was likely removed from his position as satrap of Armenia and subsequently sent westward. However, this presents a significant issue -namely, the question of when Orontes obtained the title of "satrap of Mysia". The possibility that the Persian king would reappoint<sup>32</sup> a disgraced satrap to another satrapy appears highly improbable. On the other hand, as noted below, the fact that the satrap of Lydia was also among the rebels suggests that Diodorus may have made a chronological error in his account.

Although Diodorus mentions Lydia's satrap, Autophradates, among the rebels, his involvement in suppressing Datames' revolt indicates that he did not initially support the revolt. Considering the events of 366/365 BCE, it is reported that after concluding his campaign in Cappadocia, Autophradates attempted to seize cities such as Assos, Atarneus, and Adramytteion, which were under the control of Ariobarzanes, the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, and aimed to bring the rebellious cities back under Persian control.<sup>33</sup> A similar situation may have occurred with Orontes. Although Orontes appears to have been the satrap of Mysia during this period, there is no definitive evidence that he was actively in revolt. He probably decided to closely observe the events in Asia Minor while remaining silent. Nevertheless, given that he was a satrap who had fallen from favour, the events below suggest that he may have had a desire for revenge.

Polyaenus's account of the conflict between Orontes and Autophradates presumably refers to the events of 362/361 BCE. According to this account, after engaging in battles with Persian generals in the region, Orontes,<sup>34</sup> the satrap of Mysia who had revolted against the king, was forced to retreat

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- 32 Instead of sentencing him to death, the king assigned him a subordinate satrapal position in the Mysia region, which was under Tiribazos's authority, as a means of stripping Orontes of his honour (Weiskopf, *ibid.*, p. 22). See also Hornblower, *Mausolus*, p. 176.
- 33 Aristotle, *Politics*, (trans. Harris Rackham), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1932, p. 117; Xenophon, *Scripta Minora*, Trans. Edgar C. Marchant-Glen W. Bowersock, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1925, p. 97; Ruzicka, *ibid.*, p. 32.
- 34 Briant, *ibid.*, p. 643. Hornblower, *ibid.*, p. 176. During his satrapy of Mysia (ca. 362 BC), Orontes revolted against the Persian king and minted gold, silver, and bronze coins in Lampsakos and Klazomenai. Some numismatists suggest that Orontes's bronze and silver coins may have been minted in Lampsakos or Iolla near Adramytteion. These coins bear the inscription "OPONTA" on the obverse, while the reverse features either the head of Zeus or Athena. In certain coin designs, Orontes is depicted wearing a tiara (Barclay V. Head, *Historia Numorum: A manual of Greek Numismatics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1911, p. 528, 597; Ernest Babelon, *Les Rois de Syrie, d'Arménie et de Commagène*, Rollin & Feuarent, Paris 1890, Plate IX, 12-15;

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to a fortified position on Mount Tmolus (modern Bozdağ). Besieged by his enemies, Orontes ordered the excavation of a deep trench and the reinforcement of security along all access routes to the camp. Moreover, under the cover of night, he led a cavalry force to seize control of the road to Sardis, where he found a substantial supply of provisions intended for the enemy camp. He also plundered a significant amount of goods and food from the inhabitants of Sardis. He then sent word to his army, instructing them to prepare for battle. According to reports, Orontes launched a surprise attack on the enemy from the rear with his cavalry and secured victory with minimal losses.<sup>35</sup>

It appears that the responsibility of eliminating the threat posed by Orontes in western Asia Minor fell to Autophradates, the satrap of Lydia. Polyaeus provides significant details regarding the course of the battle between Orontes and Autophradates. According to his account, Orontes, leading a force of ten thousand Greek hoplites, confronted Autophradates, who commanded an equally large cavalry force, at Cyme. Struggling under the cavalry assaults, Orontes ordered his troops to resist at all costs and managed to repel the enemy.<sup>36</sup> Despite this setback, Autophradates did not concede defeat. He successfully severed Orontes's communication with his allies, leaving Orontes isolated. To counter this, Orontes spread a rumour that a contingent of mercenaries was on its way to reinforce him. Additionally, during the night, he armed his strongest men with Greek military equipment and positioned them among the other Greek soldiers at dawn. Seeing a large number of troops in Greek armour, Autophradates mistakenly believed that Orontes had received external reinforcements. Consequently, he deemed the battle too risky under such unfavourable circumstances and chose to dismantle his camp and retreat.<sup>37</sup> It is evident that Autophradates was eager to suppress the revolts of both Datames and Orontes, and he had a sizable army at his disposal to achieve this goal. However, his inability to effectively

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Barclay V. Head, *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Ionia*, Longmans, Green & Co., London 1892, p. 326). For a silver *obolos* minted in Adramytteion that features Athena wearing an Attic helmet on the obverse and the inscription "Orontas" along with Pegasus on the reverse, see Josef Stauber, *Die Bucht von Adramytteion II*, Rudolf Habelt, Bonn 1996, p. 192, no. 7A. A gold coin found in Lampsakos lets us speculate that Orontes may have aspired to the Persian throne, but no conclusive evidence supports this claim (Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 541). For additional references on coins that belonged to Orontes, satrap of Mysia see Hyla A. Troxell, "Orontes, Satrap of Mysia", *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau*, LX, 1981, p. 39; also cf. Robert A. Moysey, "Observations on the Numismatic Evidence Relating to the Great Satrapal Revolt of 362/1 B.C.", *Revue des Études Anciennes*, XCI, 1989, pp. 123-125.

35 Polyaeus, *ibid.*, p. 275; Cf. Briant, *ibid.*, pp. 617-618.

36 Polyaeus, *ibid.*, pp. 275-276; Ruzicka, *ibid.*, p. 132.

37 Polyaeus, *ibid.*, p. 276; Demosthenes, *ibid.*, p. 401.

suppress these revolts, raises the question of whether he was genuinely dedicated to quelling them or simply pretending to follow the king's orders while secretly supporting the rebels.

Orontes, having been removed from Armenia by the Persian king, appears to have taken advantage of Artaxerxes's preoccupation with the rebellion of Datames. Likely with Datames's support, he seized control of Mysia and launched attacks on Lydia. Autophradates responded immediately to Orontes, who entered his domain. However, he failed to drive Orontes out of his territories. Following these developments, Autophradates -as highlighted by Diodorus- seemingly took his place among the rebels. He appears to have adapted to the changing political and administrative landscape by siding with the rebels.<sup>38</sup>

Orontes's status as the Persian king's son-in-law granted him considerable prestige in the satrapal revolts. Indeed, the rebellious forces along the coastal regions of Asia Minor chose him as their general. Taking command, Orontes secured the necessary funds to recruit mercenaries and reportedly financed an army of twenty thousand men for an entire year.<sup>39</sup> These developments suggest that Orontes may have played a pivotal role in the satrapal revolts. Pompeius Trogus (*prolog.* 10) refers to Orontes as the satrap of Armenia and states that he advanced as far as Syria before being halted by the Persian king.<sup>40</sup> According to Trogus, Orontes, leading an army, engaged in battle with the Persian king's forces, which included Armenian soldiers, and was ultimately defeated. Following this battle, Artaxerxes II apparently presented Orontes with an offer he could not refuse, prompting him to change his hostile attitude and embrace a pro-royalist policy.<sup>41</sup> Under the terms of this agreement, Orontes was promised substantial rewards and full control over the coastal satrapies in exchange for surrendering the rebels to the Persian king. Orontes's first act under this new arrangement was to arrest those who had financed the war against the king and hand them over to Artaxerxes

38 According to Osborne (*ibid.*, p. 540) Autophradates's defection was the final link in the chain of rebellions in western Asia Minor.

39 Demosthenes, *ibid.*, p. 401; Moysey, *ibid.*, p. 93-95. See also Stephen Ruzicka, *Politics of a Persian Dynasty, The Hecatomnids in the Fourth Century B.C.*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman 1992, p. 121.

40 Contrary to this account, Polyaeus states that Datames also advanced as far as Syria, occupying the king's territories. Cf. Polyaeus, *ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

41 Osborne argues that Orontes switched allegiance before engaging in any military action against the king (See, Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 543). However, considering Pompeius Trogus's account, one should question the claim that there was no war between Orontes and the Persian king. See, Justin, *ibid.*, p. 313; Briant, *ibid.*, p. 664.

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II. Subsequently, he also surrendered his troops and several cities to the king. As a result, the satrapal revolts largely came to an end with Orontes's defection. At this point, ancient sources fall silent regarding the ultimate fate of the rebellion's leadership. Diodorus's final remarks on the matter indicate that Orontes was richly rewarded and favoured by the Persian king as compensation for his betrayal.<sup>42</sup>

Ultimately, a significant portion of the Satrapal Revolts was quelled by 360/359 BCE.<sup>43</sup> Orontes likely relocated to the region of Mysia as part of the agreement he reached with the Persian king. This event suggests that his role as satrap had been officially recognised by the Persian king. Nevertheless, during the revolts, Orontes was presumably not acknowledged as a satrap by the king, making his position essentially nominal. At this stage, Orontes's formal recognition as a satrap might have led Diodorus to mistakenly believe that he had previously possessed the satrapy of Mysia.

Following the suppression of the Satrapal Revolts, Datames was assassinated, while Ariobarzanes was crucified.<sup>44</sup> Autophradates managed to retain his satrapy, the Phoenicians and coastal populations submitted to the king, but Paphlagonia, northern Cappadocia, and Pontus were lost. Many Greek cities suffered significant damage during the conflicts.<sup>45</sup>

The satrapal revolts of the 360s BCE not only destabilized Persian central authority but also foreshadowed major changes. After a 43-year reign, Artaxerxes II died, and he was succeeded by Artaxerxes III (359–338 BCE).<sup>46</sup> The struggle against the satraps continued in the early years of Artaxerxes III's rule, and in 356 BCE, the king ordered all satraps to disband their armies. It is suggested that only two individuals, Artabazos, who had succeeded Ariobarzanes as satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, and Orontes, refused to comply with this directive.<sup>47</sup> However, it must be noted that based on the available evidence, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether Orontes,<sup>48</sup> who was govern-

42 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 205.

43 Cf. Demosthenes, *Orations, Volume III: Orations 21-26, Against Aristocrates*, (trans. James H. Vince), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1935, p. 157.

44 Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 207-209; Cornelius Nepos, *ibid.*, pp. 159-161.

45 For developments, see Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, pp. 209-213; See also Plutarch, *Agessilaus*, pp. 107-109; Tarn, *ibid.*, p. 21.

46 For these developments, see Diodorus Siculus, *ibid.*, p. 213; Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, pp. 189-203; Memnon, *Herakleia Pontike Hakkında*, (trans. Murat Arslan), Ege Yayınları, İstanbul 2024, p. 35.

47 Tarn, *ibid.*, p. 22.

48 Two decrees found in the Athenian Acropolis, dated to 349/348 BC, include an honorary inscription for Orontes. These decrees reveal that Orontes, who controlled Mysia, engaged in trade relations with Athens. According to the inscription, Orontes was honoured with Athenian citizenship and a golden crown, and he was recognized as a benefactor of the

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ing the western territories of Asia Minor, including Mysia and Pergamon, was actively in rebellion at that time.<sup>49</sup>

In his speech from 354 BCE,<sup>50</sup> Demosthenes states that many Greeks had joined the king's service as mercenaries and had participated in wars against Egypt, Orontes, and other peoples. If Demosthenes was not making a broad generalization, this reference might suggest that Orontes was in open rebellion against the Persian king around 354 BCE.<sup>51</sup> However, it is also probable that this statement was meant as a general remark about earlier events.

The exact date of Orontes's death remains a subject of debate. While it is generally accepted that he died between the late 350s and early 340s BCE,<sup>52</sup> this information is not definitive. An inscription from Pergamon states that Orontes died after surrendering the city to the Persian king- Ὀρόντης [τὴν πόλιν ἐ]πιτρ[ένας Ἀρταξέ]ρξει ἀπέθανεν.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, as recorded in the Pergamon inscription, Orontes may have spent his final days in Pergamon and died there around 348 BCE.<sup>54</sup>

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Athenians. He sold grain to Athens in exchange for silver. Since the payment to Orontes was made from the military budget, the grain mentioned in the inscription was likely purchased for use in the military camps under the command of Athenian generals Khares, Kharidemos, and Phokion. For these inscriptions, see Johannes Kirchner, *Inscriptiones Graecae II et III: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores*, Parts I-III, Reimerrum, Berlin 1913-1940, *IG II<sup>2</sup>* no. 207, 295. For further discussion, see Moysey, *ibid.*, p. 95; Michael B. Walbank, "IG II<sup>2</sup> 207 Again", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, LXXIII, 1988, pp. 83-85; Robert Develin, "Once More about IG II<sup>2</sup> 207", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, LXXIII, 1988, pp. 77-81; Michael J. Osborne, "Athens and Orontes", *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, LXVI, 1971, pp. 310-321; Michael J. Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens, Volumes III and IV: The Testimonia for Grants of Citizenship*, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Brussel 1983, p. 58; Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens, Volume II*, pp. 72-79; Muzaffer Demir, "MÖ VI.-IV. Yüzyıllar Arasında Pers-Armenia İlişkileri ve Armenia Orontid Hanedanlığı", *Yeni Türkiye: Ermeni Özel Sayısı*, LX/1, 2014, p. 198.

49 Chahin asserts that Orontes, having allied with the Athenians, again began his activities against the king in 355 BC (Mack Chahin, *The Kingdom of Armenia*, Curzon Press, Surrey 2001, p. 187). Most likely, Orontes regained control of Armenia after 350 BC due to his renewed loyalty to the Persian king and spent the rest of his life there. See Anne E. Redgate, *The Armenians*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford 2000, p. 57.

50 Demosthenes, *On the Navy-boards*, p. 401. For the Athenian decree dated 349/348 BC, see also Kirchner, *ibid.*, *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 207.

51 Michael J. Osborne, "Orontes", p. 545.

52 Tarn, *ibid.*, p. 22; Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 519; Lang, *ibid.*, pp. 506-536; Troxell, *ibid.*, p. 37. According to Strabo, Orontes was a descendant of Hydarnes and had ties to the Persian throne solely by marrying the king's daughter. If the satrap revolts had succeeded, he might have eventually seized the Persian throne. Nonetheless, he prioritised his own and his people's interests over those of the Persian king (Strabo, *Geography, Volume V: Books 10-12*, (trans. Horace L. Jones), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1928, p. 337; Chahin, *ibid.*, p. 187).

53 Barth-Stauber, *ibid.*, no. 925; Dittenberger, *ibid.*, pp. 427-430; Osborne, *ibid.*, pp. 547-549.

54 Cf. Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens, Volume II*, pp. 66-67; Ruzicka, *Politics of a Persian Dynasty*, p. 121.

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## Conclusion

Orontes, who governed the satrapy of Armenia in 401 BCE, participated in the Cyprus campaign in 384 BCE and was likely removed from his position in Armenia following the events on the island. If historical accounts are to be trusted, he must have joined the rebels no earlier than 361 BCE. However, the unclear chronology and details of the rebellion make it difficult to fully understand Orontes' political and administrative policy. At this point, attempting to draw firm conclusions based solely on Diodorus's accounts -the primary source of information regarding the rebellion- would not be methodologically sound. Although there are narratives suggesting that Orontes organised the rebellion and took command of the army, there is no definitive evidence that he actually mobilised his forces against the Persian king. On the other hand, the revolts against Persian authority demonstrated the necessity of limiting the power of the satraps. In line with this, Orontes's authority was at least temporarily revoked. This situation suggests that, despite the satrapal revolts, Persian control over Armenia remained intact. It is also possible that, due to his familial ties, Orontes eventually regained his former position, perhaps even with expanded powers.

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