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Autor_in: Bernadotte Perrin
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Plut. Kim. 16-17.2

Text Übersetzung:
(Bernadotte Perrin)

16. It is true indeed that he was from the first a philo-Laconian. He actually named one of his twin sons Lacedaemonius, and the other Eleius,— the sons whom a woman of Cleitor bare him, as Stesimbrotus relates, wherefore Pericles often reproached them with their maternal lineage. But Diodorus the Topographer says that these, as well as the third of Cimon's sons, Thessalus, were born of Isodice, the daughter of Euryptolemus, the son of Megacles. [2] And he was looked upon with favour by the Lacedaemonians, who soon were at enmity with Themistocles, and therefore preferred that Cimon, young as he was, should have the more weight and power in Athens. The Athenians were glad to see this at first, since they reaped no slight advantage from the good will which the Spartans showed him. While their empire was first growing, and they were busy making alliances, they were not displeased that honor and favour should be shown to Cimon. [3] He was the foremost Hellenic statesman, dealing gently with the allies and acceptably with the Lacedaemonians. But afterwards, when they became more powerful, and saw that Cimon was strongly attached to the Spartans, they were displeased thereat. For on every occasion he was prone to exalt Lacedaemon to the Athenians, especially when he had occasion to chide or incite them. Then, as Stesimbrotus tells us, he would say, 'But the Lacedaemonians are not of such a sort.' [4] In this way he awakened the envy and hatred of his fellow-citizens. At any rate, the strongest charge against him arose as follows. When Archidamus, the son of Zeuxidamus, was in the fourth year of his reign at Sparta,¹ a greater earthquake than any before reported rent the land of the Lacedaemonians into many chasms, shook Taygetus so that sundry peaks were torn away, and demolished the entire city with the exception of five houses. The rest were thrown down by the earthquake. [5] It is said that while the young men and youths were exercising together in the interior of the colonnade, just a little before the earthquake, a hare made its appearance, and the youths, all anointed as they were, in sport dashed out and gave chase to it, but the young men remained behind, on whom the gymnasium fell, and all perished together. Their tomb, even down to the present day, they call Seismatias. [6] Archidamus at once comprehended from the danger at hand that which was sure to follow, and as he saw the citizens trying to save the choicest valuables out of their houses, ordered the trumpet to give the signal of an enemy's attack, in order that they might flock to him at once under arms. This was all that saved Sparta at that crisis. For the Helots hurriedly gathered from all the country round about with intent to despatch the surviving Spartans. [7] But finding them arrayed in arms, they withdrew to their cities and waged open war, persuading many Perioeci also so to do. The Messenians besides joined in this attack upon the Spartans. Accordingly, the Lacedaemonians sent Pericleidas to Athens with request for aid, and Aristophanes introduces him into a comedy as 'sitting at the altars, pale of face, in purple cloak, soliciting an army.' [8] But Ephialtes opposed the project, and besought the Athenians not to succour nor restore a city which was their rival, but to let haughty Sparta lie to be trodden under foot of men. Whereupon, as Critias says, Cimon made his country's increase of less account than Sparta's interest, and persuaded the people to go forth to her aid with many hoplites. And Ion actually mentions the phrase by which, more than by anything else, Cimon prevailed upon the Athenians, exhorting them 'not to suffer Hellas to be crippled, nor their city to be robbed of its yoke-fellow.'

17. After he had given aid to the Lacedaemonians, he was going back home with his forces through the Isthmus of Corinth, when Lachartus upbraided him for having introduced his army before he had conferred with the citizens. ‘People who knock at doors,’ said he, ‘do not go in before the owner bids them’; to which Cimon replied, ‘And yet you Corinthians, O Lachartus, did not so much as knock at the gates of Cleonae and Megara, but hewed them down and forced your way in under arms, demanding that everything be opened up to the stronger.’ Such was his boldness of speech to the Corinthian in an emergency, and he passed on through with his forces. [2] Once more the Lacedaemonians summoned the Athenians to come to their aid against the Messenians and Helots in Ithome, and the Athenians went, but their dashing boldness awakened fear, and they were singled out from all the allies and sent off as dangerous conspirators. They came back home in a rage, and at once took open measures of hostility against the Laconizers, and above all against Cimon. Laying hold of a trifling pretext, they ostracised him for ten years. That was the period decreed in all cases of ostracism.