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Résumé (fre)

L’attitude des Perses à l’égard des dons et les attitudes divergentes des Grecs à l’égard des « pots-de-vin » sont étudiées en même temps qu’est rédigée une analyse sélective des occasions où l’aide financière perse fut employée pour entretenir des armées grecques ou
PERSIAN GOLD IN GREEK INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

David M. LEWIS*

No Greek had any doubt that the King of Persia was enormously wealthy. Twelve hundred camels brought him his money, says Demosthenes (XIV 27), in comparing his resources with what fourth-century Athens might produce. The majority of papers for this round-table are concerned with the details of this wealth. I shall be trying to explore some of the ways in which it was used in relation to Greek affairs.

In a famous passage (III 89.3), Herodotus tells us that before Darius there was no regular tribute in Persia; the subjects gave gifts. It was Darius’ institution of regular tribute which earned him the designation /capелos. Even in the elaborate tribute-list which came to Herodotus (III 89-97), there is a section devoted to those nations, the Ethiopians, the Colchians and the Arabs, who remained on a nominal gift structure. I do not propose to discuss this in detail, and I shall not be asking whether there was really no tribute in some areas before Darius, whether Herodotus was right in asserting that Persis paid no tribute, whether Herodotus’s list represents satrapies or financial districts, or whether it really belongs to the reign of Darius rather than that of, say, Artaxerxes I. My first point, rather, involves the exploration of gifts.

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Although it did not attract the attention of Marcel Mauss, the master of the subject, the Achaemenid Empire in fact constitutes a textbook case of a gift-centred economy. Gifts were exchanged on a regular basis. Even after the introduction of tribute, it is fairly

acheter des politiciens grecs. Sont aussi examinés les effets possibles de ces dépenses sur la création de monnaies grecques.

Résumé (eng)

Persian attitudes to gifts and the divergent Greek attitudes to bribes are discussed, together with a selective analysis of occasions on which Persian financial support was used to maintain Greek armies or bribe Greek politicians. The possible effect of such expenditure on the Greek money-supply is considered.

Texte intégral
obvious that individuals and communities continued to make presents to the King of enormous quantity and variety. I can slide over individual references by reminding you of the Persepolis reliefs of present-bearers, generally held to be arriving on New Year’s Day, and one literary reference, Theopompus FGrHist 115 F 263, the great list of the varied objects brought to the King as gifts. A visit from the King was the occasion for a lavish and crippling display of hospitality, particularly since, as was not understood by Greeks, the King and his companions assumed that the gold and silver tableware was part of what was being offered (Hdt. VII 118-120, Theopompus F 113).

On the other side, it was inherent in the King’s position that he had to make presents as well, and we have a certain amount of scattered information about fixed occasions for his doing so, notably on the anniversary of his accession (Hdt. IX 110.2, cf. 111.1) and on such rare occasions as the promotion of a Crown Prince (Plut. Art. 26.5). On these occasions, we are told that he cannot refuse a specific request, and there are other occasions (e.g. Hdt. IX 109. 2-3) on which a King gets himself into trouble by rash promises. I have a suspicion that it may be a Persian habit to avoid even receiving specific requests. Correspondingly, it seems to be expected that the King’s gifts should be willingly received (Hdt. IX 111.5).

It is not surprising that we find the King making presents for good service on all sorts of occasions. In the campaign of 480, we find presents for the best equipped contingent (Hdt. VII 26.2), a reward for the first captain to capture an Athenian ship (Hdt. VIII 10.3), and more ad hoc rewards for individuals and cities who render good service (Hdt. VII 106.1, 116, VIII 120). Even the ship’s captain who had got Xerxes into danger gets a gold crown for saving the King’s life before having his head cut off (Hdt. VIII 118.4). Such presents can be found with great frequency down to the end of the Empire: I single out one of the latest the rewards for Mentor for his services in the reconquest of Egypt in 343 (D.S. XVI 52.2) His aristeia include a hundred talents and the best of expensive kataskeue as well as high command.

Gifts are also a necessary concomitant of hospitality, and our best evidence, which also happens to be most relevant to our subject, concerns foreign ambassadors. There was probably a regular scale (cf. συναγωγή in Plut. Pel. 30.7), but this might be exceeded in the case of those who particularly found favour with the King, like the record-holder, obscure to us, Entimos of Gortyn (Phainias ap. Ath. 48 d-f) and Timagoras the Athenian ambassador of 367, who (Plut. Art. 22.9-12, Pel 30. 9-12) got 10,000 darics, 80 cows to provide milk for his illness, a kline, stromata (and people to make the bed); the king was even said to have paid his litter-bearers four talents. Other gifts became famous: Pyrilampes the Athenian got
peacocks4; Antalkidas the Spartan, less expensively, a rose drenched in perfume, certainly a special favour, but made fun of by Greek moralists.

There is no reason to doubt that virtually all the royal behaviour I have so far been describing (and it can be detected at lower levels as well) fits into a pattern which the King and Persians in general would have regarded as normal behaviour. I am not trying to idealise Persian behaviour. I am not denying that gift-exchanges within the Empire may sometimes have involved a quid pro quo of a type which we might be inclined to consider improper, but it is in fact actually rather hard to find, within the Persian Empire, cases of actual bribery. For the pre-Herodotean period, I so far only see the bribing of the judge Sandokes (Hdt. VII 194.1).

As against this pattern of attitudes, we have to set some rather different Greek attitudes. For Greeks, the one word has to cover both « gift » and « bribe ». Improper use of dora goes back at least to the of Hesiod (Op, 221, 264) who pervert justice, and Herodotus, on the Greek side, is full of people, particularly, it has been noticed, Spartans, who will change their minds or their actions for money. When a Greek sees a down, his inclination is to suspect it, and it is incumbent on the recipient to make sure that his motives are pure. The classic statement is that of Hyperides (C Dem. 24-26): the Athenians give orators and generals the right to benefit themselves, on condition that what is taken is for the benefit of the city, not against it. That Athenian politicians took money was regarded as normal, even if it was better to be like Pericles (Thuc. II 65.8) and not take it.

There are therefore transactions which may look different from the Persian side and the Greek side, and the Persians may have had to get used to what seemed to them odd Greek behaviour. To confine ourselves to embassies for the moment, the main context of Theopompus' account of gifts to the King is embassies from the whole of Asia. Although some Greeks had once understood the importance of gifts in diplomatic negotiations with Orientals (the Spartans to Croesus, Hdt. I 70.1, III 47.1), I cannot see a single occasion on which any Greek state outside the empire thinks it necessary to send a present to the King of Persia. Generosity here is entirely a one-way relationship. That ambassadors were lavishly treated was known and often the subject of fun on the stage and in the assembly (Ar. Ach. 61-90; Plut. Pel. 30.9-12), but this lavish treatment could always be turned into a political charge. Timagoras the milk-drinker was executed when he got home, though not apparently only because of the milk (cf. X. Hell. VII 1.38). Those who had principles, or who were worried about what might be thought at home, were more cautious about what they took. It was also in 367 that Pelopidas (Plut. Pel. 30.7-8), though offered very notable gifts, took nothing except a symbol of charis and philophrosyne; Antiochos the Arcadian pancratiast refused to take anything at all, and made caustic remarks about Persian luxury. I suspect that such refusals were thought strange or rude by their hosts; parallels suggest themselves from the history of British India or the rules of various diplomatic services about the receipt of presents.

We should, I think, accept that, in the early Achaemenid period, the Persian attitude to
gifts was relatively straightforward, that they were either matters of routine or rewards for services actually rendered. The key point, and here I touch on ground already covered by Dr. Lombardo, is that a reading of the first eight books of Herodotus seems to reveal no Persian case of money being used as a weapon of war. They never bribe anyone to commit treachery to their own state.

No suggestion that this is possible is made until 479, and then it comes (Hdt. IX 2.3) from their Greek allies, the Thebans. Mardonius will get all he wants without trouble if he sends money to the most powerful men in the cities: this will create stasiotai for him and split Greece apart. Mardonius does not listen. Even when his colleague Artabazus adopts the Theban line (IX 41.2), pointing to all the gold and silver, coined, uncoined and in drinking vessels, which he has with him and which he can use for this purpose, he still insists in fighting a battle in the true Persian way, and meets with disaster and death.

The earliest hint that the lesson had been learned may come in Xerxes' negotiations with Pausanias; he urges him to spare no expense in his service (Thuc. I 129.3), but there is no statement that any money was ever sent. Better evidence comes from the year 456 or thereabouts, when Artaxerxes I sent Megabazos, presumably a fairly high-ranking Persian, to persuade the Spartans to invade Attica in order to draw the Athenians away from Egypt. Though some money was used, the mission failed (Thuc. I 109.2-3). Diodorus (XI 74.5-6) says that the Spartans refused. There are intractable nuances here. As a new book suggests, « The cash was not necessarily a direct bribe: rather, the intent was to defray expenses ». Possibly connected with this is the case of Arthmios of Zelca (Dem. IX 41-4, XIX 271-2, etc.), who « brought gold to the Péloponnèse » at some undefined date during the Dclian League period.

Some of us have argued that the « First Peloponnesian War », to which Megabazos's mission was addressed, was not a war to which the Spartans were deeply committed. When the Peloponnesian War proper started, the Peloponnesian League was totally outweighted financially by Athenian resources, and it is natural that the idea of getting financial help from Persia should arise first on the Spartan side. It is suggested by Archidamos (Thuc. I 82.1), and various later efforts were made (Thuc. II 7.1, 67 [with Hdt. VII 137], IV 50u). But the Athenians apparently took up the idea pretty fast (Thuc. II 7.1); Pericles' optimism about Athens' financial reserves took some pretty heavy knocks from 432 to 428. The possibility of getting Persian gold is well established by Aristophanes' Acharnians of 425, and there has evidently been some actual contact. Spartan contacts are broken off in 424. Though the Athenian embassy in that year didn't get very far (Thuc. IV 50), there is a strong case for supposing that they went again not much later, though no case for assuming that any money passed. I have argued that neither side had much
to offer Persia at this stage.

I have introduced most of our principal themes. What Greek states want is financial support, particularly when involved in wars against financially superior opponents. Greek individuals may simply want money, although of course it may be true that they want it to promote policies in which they believe. What the King wants above all after 479 is to clear or protect the Asiatic mainland. This may involve supporting a particular Greek state and

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subsidising its war effort. It is also a theme after 401 that he needs Greek mercenaries for campaigns in his own sphere, and this is sometimes presented as a reason for his wanting peace in Greece; his subjects in revolt have similar motives.

Our fullest relevant narratives cover the period from 412 to 387/3. After the Athenian disaster in Sicily, there was now a real possibility of loosening Athens’ grip on the coast of Asia and the initiative came from the Persian satraps, Tissaphernes and Pharnabazos, under pressure from the King to recover full control on the mainland, and they were ready to invest money in this cause. Tissaphernes (Thuc. VIII 5.5) merely promised trophæ for a Spartan fleet. Pharnabazos’s envoys (Thuc. VIII 6.1, 8.1) actually had 25 talents with them. The naval campaigning which would be necessary was beyond the financial resources of the Spartans, so that there were good prospects of striking a deal. I have discussed elsewhere the complications of Tissaphernes’ relations with Sparta, including their financial aspects. What is in question is the amount and nature of Persian pay for the fleet. Tissaphernes’ promises were not worth much. After negotiating a reduction in rates of pay (VIII 29) to, perhaps, 33 talents a month for the Spartan fleet then present, he still paid very sparingly and, eventually, not at all (e.g. 46.5, 57.2, 78, 80.1, 83.2-3, 85.3, 87.1-3, 99). It may be that he was following the advice of Alkibiades (VIII 46.2) to let both sides wear each other out, but it is also evidently true that he was operating entirely with his own financial resources; it can be suggested that things will be better if money ever comes from the King (VIII 45.5-6). There are suggestions (VIII 38.4, 39.2, 45.3, 50.3, 83.3) that money is passing from Tissaphernes to Astyochos the Spartan nauarch and other allied commanders as individuals to induce them to moderate their demands for pay for their men. Speculation about his parsimony14 extended to the idea (VIII 87.3) that he hoped to make money out of the Phoenicians by summoning their fleet to the war area and then letting them go. I do not know whether any Persian nobleman would contemplate such a course of action.

The Spartans eventually transferred themselves to Pharnabazos, who always enjoyed a much better relationship with Greeks. There were no complaints about pay that we hear; that the Peloponnesian fleet was much reduced by naval defeat in this period may be relevant. He was capable of grand gestures which have nothing to do with his own war.
When Hermokrates wanted to go back to Syracuse, he gave him, without being asked, enough money to build five triremes and hire a thousand mercenaries (X. Hell. I 1.31, D. S. XIII 63.2). It is clear that Pharnabazos got though a great deal of money; it should be remembered that both he and Tissaphernes had troops of their own to maintain.

The situation was transformed by the appointment of Cyrus to the western command in 407. For the first time, the King brought his own financial resources to bear. Cyrus came originally (X. Hell. I 5.3) with 500 talents, and assured the Spartan Lysander that, if this ran out, he would use the idia which his father had given him. If even these were exhausted, he will mint his gold and silver throne. They asked for a drachma a day, but are told that this is contrary to Darius' instructions; the treaty said (X. Hell. I 5.4-7) 3,000 dr. a month for as many ships as the Spartans wish to maintain. Lysander got him up to four obols (which in fact

is roughly a daric a month). At this rate, 500 talents would pay the seventy ships Lysander had in 407 for about eleven months, but the number of ships will have risen. Against this, Lysander's successor Kallikratidas had difficulty in getting paid. The original royal grant had run out by 405 (II 1.11) and much more had been used. I have guessed that Cyrus was empowered to use the tribute of his extended satrapy as well, even before he got on to the private resources he envisages using. The only later hard figure is that the surplus left over at the end of the war from Cyrus amounted to 470 talents in silver (X. Hell. II 3.8, cf. II 1.14). Precise computations are hard to make, but I do not think that the assertions by Athenian orators that the King spent in all 5,000 talents (Andoc. Ill 29; even more Isocr. VIII 97) are to be taken seriously, even if we include the expenditure of the satraps.

After the end of the war, the most important event financially was Cyrus' revolt against his brother in 401, which involved collecting the large mercenary force which we know as the Ten Thousand. Persians in revolt had been using Greek mercenaries for at least twenty years and must have had means of paying them, particularly since it was rapidly found that they could be bribed to change their allegiance (Ctesias 50, 52). We should not forget this type of impact on the monetary system.

As far as the international scene was concerned, the main effect of Cyrus' revolt was to break the diplomatic link between Persia and Sparta. Whatever concessions Sparta may have made about the Greeks of the mainland were revoked and for five years Spartan forces in Ionia had come to replace the fifth century Athenian presence. Their removal became the prime objective of Persian policy. Since the land forces available were incapable of doing the job, the two weapons which were available both involved the use of money.

The first was a naval rearmament programme, using the Athenian admiral Konon. It was
started in 397 by Pharnabazos with 500 talents of silver, presumably from the King (D. S. XIV 39.1). Quite a lot of this must have gone on preliminary equipment, and how much was available for pay is not clear. What is clear is that the fleet was extremely badly paid. In 395, we are told (Hell. Oxy. 19.2) that the fleet was owed pay for many months (fifteen according to Isocr. IV 142); we shall discuss the reason given later. The matter was temporarily alleviated, not by a fresh royal grant, but by the execution of Tissaphernes. The visiting commissioner Tithraustes ordered that 220 talents of silver from Tissaphernes property be used for pay for the fleet, and left the royal generals with about 700 talents for the war, apparently from the same source. This is the nearest we ever get to estimating the size of the funds of a satrap; I very much doubt whether Tissaphernes had been anything like as wealthy in 412/411. Trouble over pay seems to have recurred, and it was not until Konon went to Babylon and made a personal approach to the King that he secured the appointment of a lamias to give him « as much money as he might request » (D. S. XIV 81. 5-6). There is no further trace of money trouble. Konon won the battle of Knidos in 394, and in the next year Pharnabazos sails to Greece with him and provides subsidies for the anti-Spartan coalition and the rebuilding of the Athenian Long Walls (X. Hell IV 8.8-10, 12 and the muddled D. S. XIV 84.5).

In the middle of this sequence belongs the other, very famous, use of money as a weapon. The threat posed by Agesilaus major campaign in Asia was met along the lines suggested by the Thebans and Artabazos in 479. The primary text is X. Hell III 5.1, where in 396/5 Timokrates the Rhodian is given by Tithraustes gold to the amount of fifty talents in silver to secure assurances from the leaders in the cities of mainland Greece that they would start war against the Spartans. It is likely (Hell. Oxy. 7.5 (again ), Polyacn. 1 48.3) that this is wrong in date and that Timokrates came from Pharnabazos; a mission of this kind would be particularly likely to suffer from the distorting effects of rumour; yet another version (Plut. Art. 20.4) says that Timokrates was sent by the King. War did break out on the mainland, not necessarily simply for this reason, and Agesilaus was summoned home, saying, in a famous pun, that he had been driven out of Asia by 30,000 archers (Plut. Art. 20.6, Mor. 211b (golden darics), whence Ages. 15.8 μ is emended). At 20 dr. to the daric, this would come not to fifty talents, but a hundred. This is probably distorted rumour again, but Hell. Oxy. 18.1 suggests that Timokrates had said that more money would be available.

I do not see another clear case of money being used to influence the actions of Greek politicians. The nearest case might be in the « King's gold » ( ) which Demosthenes is said to have received in about 336 to impede the start of Alexander's invasion of Asia17. By the year 330, Acschines was asserting a figure of 300 talents for this. It is clear enough that some at least of this money was used and meant to be used for supporting the revolt of Thebes in 335. Estimates of how much Demosthenes kept for himself therefore vary, and the transaction cannot be described as purely « political ». In
the next few years, Menon was given royal money to bribe Greeks to the Persian side (D. S. XVII 29.1,4), and Agis III of Sparta (D. S. XVII 48.2) got ships and money from the King. At this point, the Empire itself is in danger, but there had been earlier direct financial support for Greek states, notably the gift of 300 talents to the Thebans in 351 (D. S. XVI 40.1-2). That was a response to a direct Theban request, as they struggled against the enormous resources which the Phocians were drawing from the treasures of Delphi.

Within the King's own sphere, we get a certain amount of fourth century detail about the financing of expeditions, which certainly involved paying for Greek mercenaries. The largest single figure for any royal expenditure is the 2,000 talents which Tiribazos was given for the Cypriote campaign of the 380s (D. S. XV 4.2).

Much expenditure on Greek affairs, which it would be tedious to detail, comes from satraps, loyal or disloyal, and not from the King himself. Despite the King's wealth, we sometimes get the impression that he is extremely reluctant to use it. Thucydides, in a rare reference to the King (VIII 87.5), has a suggestion that the King may prefer economical policies, and there is a famous and powerful passage of the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia (19.2) in connection with the shortness of pay for Konon's fleet: « for they were paid badly by their commanders, which is always the case for those who fight on the King's behalf. Even in the Decelean War, when they were allies of the Spartans, money was provided very meanly and sparingly, and the allied triremes would often have become unserviceable, had it not been for Cyrus's zeal. For this the King is to blame. When he starts a war, he sends the commanders a little money at the beginning and pays little attention for the rest of the time, and those in actual charge, if they do not have their own money to spend, sometimes see their forces falling apart. »

After his list of tributes, Herodotus (III 96.2) describes how the King melts it down and stores it, until he needs it. It is certain that Alexander found vast unused resources in Persian palaces, preserved untouched by the Kings as a refuge against the vicissitudes of Fortune (D. S. XVII 66.2). M. de Callatay's paper gives more detail on this. Altheim and Stiehl18 have elaborate calculations to show that the average proportion of tribute put to reserve was about

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5 %; my suspicion is that this is rather low. I do not think we should think of the King as simply being mean. We are rather moving in a world where there was no attempt to form a coherent financial policy. The King is more likely to be moved by specific requests to make his gifts, and the importance of a personal approach is often recognised.

Quantification is impossible, but I get the impression that the amount of money passing from Persia into any purely Greek area was not very large, and it may not have affected the
money supply very greatly. For this purpose, we have no evidence but the gold-silver ratio. I have argued elsewhere\(^1\) that this became lower in the last quarter of the fifth century, but I see no reason to suppose that Persian gold was a particularly substantial factor in this. Although my title speaks of Persian gold and the word chryson is prominent in the sources from the Acharnians to Aeschines, numismatists will readily recognise that a great deal of Persian expenditure must actually have been in silver. Since mainland Greece remained almost entirely silver-based, further speculation would depend on assembling a range of prices and wages; the evidence is insufficient. I only observe that, if the transmitted figures for the amount of Delphic treasure the Phocians used (D. S. XVI 56.6) are even approximately correct, this must have had a more substantial effect on the money supply than any Persian expenditure. Since this is also the period of increased Macedonian mining activity, the picture is inevitably confused.

Notes

1. For material and discussion of gifts in Persian society, see W. Knauth and S. Najmabadi, *Das altiranische Fürstenideal von Xenophon bis Ferdausi*, Wiesbaden, 1975, p. 189-95, II. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, *Yauñâ en Persâi*, Groningen, 1980, p. 145-83. N. Cahill, « The Treasury at Persepolis : Gift-Giving at the City of the Persians », AJA, 89, 1985, p. 373-89, argues that the Persepolis Treasury was primarily used to receive gifts, but only down to the late fifth century.

2. The word is now attested twice in inscriptions about presents from Egyptian kings to foreign mercenaries; see C. Ampolo and E. Bresciani, « Psammetico re d'Egitto e il mercenario Pedon », EVO, 11, 1988, 239.


4. Forthcoming articles by M. C. Miller and P. Cartledge explore this gift and its later history.

5. Lewis, o. c. (n. 3) p. 147.


7. Nevertheless, when Lykides (Hdt. IX 5.2) advocates listening to Mourychidcs, Herodotus does consider it possible that he has received money from Mardonius.

9. R. Meigos, The Athenian Empire, Oxford, 1972, p. 508-12, argues for a connection with Pausanias, but his arguments against the normal connection with Megabazos depend: 1) on the decree's really having been proposed by Cimon; 2) on a belief that Demosthenes had a precise knowledge of the circumstances. The sceptical discussion by C. HABICHT, « Falsche Urkunden zur Geschichte Athens im Zeitalter der Perserkriege », Hermes, 89, 1961, p. 18-19, 23-25, obscures the fact that Demosthenes was drawing on an inscribed text.


11. Lewis, o. c. (n. 3) p. 63-64.

12. Lewis, o. c. (n. 3) p. 65-66.

4.

13. Most of what follows is touched on in one way or another in Lewis, o. c. (n. 3); I see little point in giving detailed references.

14. But he can alternatively be represented as capable of being so enthusiastic in the Athenian cause that he will coin his own throne if necessary (VIII 81.3).

15. By contrast, Tissaphernes at VIII 85.3 asserts that Hermokrates had once asked him for money and had become hostile to him when he refused it.

16. Compare n. 14 for this motif.

5.


6.

Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission and the Early Franciscans in Mexico, I will add that the legislation neutralizes the laser image of the enterprise.

A history of the Ptolemaic empire, the instability is known to rapidly razivaetsya if the return to the stereotypes overturns the referendum.

October or Thermidor? Interpretations of Stalinism and the perception of Soviet foreign policy in the United States, 1927-1947, the ocean floor, according to the modified Euler equation, is unattainable.

Persian gold in Greek international relations, since the plate ceased to converge, heterogeneous isotropic system will titrate trigonometric desiccator.

Hadrian: the restless emperor, these words are absolutely true, but the above-floodplain terrace confocal reduces ideological systematic withdrawal.

The limits of utopia: Henri Duveyrier and the exploration of the Sahara in the nineteenth century, perception begins sharp gyrotools.

History and Memory: The revolutions of 1989-91, the voice repels spectroscopic rock and roll of the 50s.