

1st INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Ancient Greece and Ancient Iran
Cross-Cultural Encounters

ATHENS, 11-13 NOVEMBER 2006

Edited by Seyed Mohammad Reza Darbandi and Antigoni Zournatzi



National Hellenic
Research Foundation



Hellenic National
Commission for UNESCO



Cultural Center of the Embassy
of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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*The System Artaphernes-Mardonius
as an Example of Imperial Nostalgia*

TWO ACCOUNTS survive of the measures undertaken by Artaphernes, satrap at Sardis, to re-establish the normal workings of administration in his Ionian sectors. The first, and shorter, a fragment of Diodorus (10.25), indicates the satrap followed the advice of Greek wiseman Hecataeus, gave the Ionians back their laws, and set down tribute fixed on the ability to pay. It is the second, longer account, found in Herodotus 6.42-43, which creates difficulties due to its statements that the results of Artaphernes' assessment remained in place into Herodotus' time and that Mardonius established democracies in Ionia (although tyrants later reappear in the narrative). Some have attempted resolutions by means of grammar, others by means of mathematics.¹ I believe that major difficulties may be set aside by regarding Herodotus' account as an example of an imperial nostalgia. One can consider the words Herodotus speaks to be the result of his Ionian informants thinking about what they remembered about Achaemenid administration and comparing those recollections to what they had already experienced of Athenian rule.

My decision to view this passage as example of imperial nostalgia—a favorable recollection of previous imperial administrators summoned up by the misdeeds of present rulers—has been prompted by Pierre Briant's inquiries into Greek inscriptions mentioning Achaemenid administrators and by my own inquiries into the better-documented colonial empires of the past century. It has long been known from Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.60-3) that Greek cities held the practices of the Achaemenid (as opposed to the Greeks' present—in this case, Roman) administrators as models to be followed. Achaemenid participation in local civic life was not a recollection to be suppressed. Professor Briant has brought into clearer focus epigraphical evidence for such. At Sardis, on a wall detailing the important events and decisions affecting a precinct of Zeus, is preserved (with spelling error) the inscription which once occupied the statue base of a monument set up by the Achaemenid official Droaphernes.² From Magnesia comes the Roman-era stone bearing the so-called Gadatas-brief, the content of which derives from an earlier period and was assembled by someone with knowledge of Achaemenid history and chancery practices in general. The letter is precisely the type of document to be displayed to someone wondering how to treat the temple and its precinct.³

In the course of my own inquiries into empires of the past century, I have found numerous parallels to Herodotus' favorable account of the system Artaphernes-Mardonius. I begin with the pre-Heisei era Japanese empire. When Koreans were interviewed long after the passing of Japanese rule, they described the Japanese as:

[those] whose organization impressed me. They planned things. They came with blueprints. They built things that worked. The bridge they built in our village lasted through all the rains and flooding...One thing the Japanese

did at this time was to record the ownership of each farm property, because before, Koreans had no documentation of ownership. For generations, Koreans just said so-and-so's rice fields are next to so-and-so's...⁴

Imperial nostalgia comes into clearer focus in the case of the German colonial empire, dismantled by the Versailles papers, its inhabitants transferred to new lords as spear-won. In West Africa, in the city of Kribi in Cameroun, the local inhabitants annoyed their French overlords by saluting the statue of their former German warrior-administrator Hans Dominik. When the French took down the statue, the inhabitants saluted the still-inscribed statue base. When the French threw the statue base into the river, the inhabitants saluted the site of the monument.⁵ In German East Africa (Tanzania) we can trace the hardening of the inhabitants' perception of their new British masters. By the end of 1918 word had gone out among the Wasuaheli that: 'The Germans speak harshly, but they have good hearts. The British speak nicely, but they have hard hearts.'⁶ Finally, a remarkable parallel from German Samoa, today's West Samoa. Shortly after the Tripartite Treaty assigned Samoa to Germany in 1900, the first royal governor, Dr. Wilhelm Solf, summoned the Samoan notables and outlined the structure of provincial government. However, this pronouncement was followed by many years of work by a German-Samoan *Land- und Titelkommission* which set down land-ownership, rights to honorary titles, and alterations to the 1900 pronouncement. When Samoa passed as spear-won to the New Zealanders (occupiers adept in public drunkenness and incompetent in maintaining public health), the inhabitants began to wish for the return of their German administrators, a number of notables sending a letter to Solf in 1923 asking him to return. The work of Solf and his second in command, Schultz-Ewerth, governor from 1910, was fondly remembered by the Samoans: Solf's portrait continued to hang in the residence of the Samoan head of state, he was spoken of favorably during Samoan preparations for independence in 1954, he was honored with coinage in 1980, and even into my day the Samoans consult the records of the *Land und Titel-Kommission*, die *Gruendstueckbuecher* and the *Personenstandregister*. And they point to German economic activity as forming the foundation for the modern Samoan economy, a foundation which survived in spite of New Zealand mismanagement.⁷ It is into this array that I place Herodotus' account of Artaphernes and Mardonius.

Herodotus 6.42 is an account bracketed by the concepts of utility and stability. It describes the quite useful activities of Artaphernes. By compelling the Ionians to place their disputes under arbitration and by measuring their land, he establishes a rule of law based upon the clear delineation of possessions. By setting tribute based upon these measurements, he provides a statement of the responsibilities of the local government toward the satrapal government, based upon those resources possessed by the local state and its members. Note the qualities assigned to Achaemenid administration in Herodotus:

- Rational — careful measurement before assessment. The administration, which investigates local conditions, can be shaped to accommodate them.

- Precise and transparent — the measurement is carried out using a well-known and easily convertible standard. (Herodotus and Ionians would know the parasang.)

• Just — since the amounts assessed are nearly the same as those which existed before the disturbances. The Ionians are not financially punished by the assessment paralleling a putatively weaker time of Achaemenid administration.

• Efficient and stable — Herodotus implies that assessment activities took one year; the assessment was done once and was done right, hence it lasted in place into Herodotus' day. Artaphernes' activities are thus conducive to peace, conducive to stability, and not a source of resentment. Artaphernes is not described, as would later be Aristides, as accomplishing something impossible (so Diod. 11.47.1-2). Nor are his activities from a time of Kronos (Plut. *Arist.* 24.3) threatened with immediate degeneration by the posturing of transitory demagogues. In silence, the account damns the fibrillations of reassessment and the punishments under Athenian rule.

The characteristics noted in Herodotus' account of Artaphernes' settlement are mirrored elsewhere in his work: in his accounts of Achaemenid finances and in his accounts of Achaemenid engineering (both real and expected projects). Achaemenid metal work set the standard which others hoped and tried to emulate. The story of Aryandes' silver (Hdt. 4.166) makes clear that Achaemenid authorities offered honest and stable bullion. Herodotus 3.96 accepted the view that smelted bullion was stored in a uniform and accountable form, which precluded a Lydian-style rolling around in the gold-dust (cf. Hdt. 6.125). Known and convertible standards were used for assessment in the Empire as a whole (cf. in Babylon, Hdt. 1.192). Darius' activities (Hdt. 3.89) are Artaphernes' writ large. The king established a rule of law based upon the delineation of his own property, the appointment of local custodians of that property, and the setting down of responsibilities to the crown based upon the measurement of resources. Uncertainty and disorder are banished.

Here I must digress to Darius as *kapēlos*. The terms 'father' and 'despot' have very much a moral quality about them. A father will try to see only the best in his family members and treat them mildly in hopes of increasing their goodness. The despot looks down upon those he rules and at the same time fears, sees only the worst, sees only threats, and so acts harshly in order to defend his wrongfully-occupied position. But the *kapēlos* does not deal in moral characteristics; he relies upon physical characteristics which can be observed and which can be measured. Morality plays a role only when those entrusted with the observation and measurement falsify their data. Then, the ruler, if just (as suggested in the Polyaeus anecdote [7.11.3]) intervenes.⁸

The Achaemenid organizational ability in carrying out complex and large projects attracted Greek attention and makes frequent appearance in Herodotus. The realities of engineering, such as the Bosphorus bridges and Xerxes' canal at Athos (Hdt. 4.83 ff.; 7.6, 8, 22 ff.), the road system (Hdt. 5.52-3; 8.98), the siege works at Soloi (5.115) and the reports of dam and irrigation projects in Central Asia (3.117) —all carried out with resources mustered from different portions of the empire— are complemented by the wonders of technology, for instance, Xerxes' threat to terraform Thessaly into a lake (Hdt. 7.130), the battlefield plan to place a dam across to Salamis (Hdt. 8.97.1),⁹ and Mardonius' ability to signal events across an island network (Hdt. 9.3).¹⁰ But Mardonius' first experimentation with technology is overshadowed by the amazing event Herodotus records at 6.43.

In the next year, spring 492, Mardonius journeys down to the coast. The other generals —with the arms and other men summoned up in the time of

emergency (cf. Hdt. 5.102.1)— have been demobilized.¹¹ Mardonius conducts joint sea and land maneuvers, taking command of the fleet. When he lands in Ionia, he accomplishes a great, amazing act, which particularly attracted Herodotus' attention, because the historian believed a similar one had been discussed in the Achaemenid heartland: Mardonius puts an end to the rule of tyrants and establishes democracies. I call attention to the context of Mardonius' actions. He commands a fleet moving unchallenged along the coast of Asia. He lands in Ionia. He establishes democracies. This is not a parody of the Athenian establishment of democracy in Asia, but rather the rational manner in which that establishment should have taken place — in the course of a well-planned campaign, in the absence of in-fighting among rival commanders, and without the thrashing of pirates' oars propelled by the whims of *Peithō* and *Anankaiē* (Hdt. 8.111, 121). Mardonius represents Empire, but it has not become a tyranny. Mardonius' expedition, if we strip away attempts to anticipate the future (6.43.4-44.1), becomes one of inspection, correction, and exploration. I believe a chief goal of his expedition was to determine the present efficacy of joint land and sea maneuvers in maintaining peace. The visit to Ionia, certainly not Mardonius' only landing point, may have included some ceremonial aspect, for instance, honoring the Ionians' gods (cf. Xerxes in Hdt. 7.43).¹² The results obtained beyond the Hellespont, including losses of men and materiel, were part of the gaining of a better view of the far western frontier, including the geographic and climatic challenges for which the Achaemenids would attempt to design solutions.¹³

If Herodotus is relating an account of Achaemenid administration which portrays it as just (and the Athenian, by implication, as unjust), then I may begin to remove some difficulties in the interpretation and use of Herodotus' account. Herodotus' statement about the permanence of Artaphernes' assessment should be not used to indulge in the curious argument that the Achaemenids never abandoned past financial claims to any break-away portion of their realm. Thus, I forgive Tissaphernes' (and Pharnabazus') decades-worth of back-taxes. They do not receive a bill for a near century's-worth of back-taxes, the amount perhaps lessened by the ancestral Achaemenid custom of forgiving debts outstanding from the previous king's reign (Hdt. 6.59). Thucydides 8.5, the passage used as evidence for this debt, is introducing us to Tissaphernes and explaining why he is anxious to obtain the services of Spartans as spear-bait. The satrap has been unable to maintain the baseline of his administrative responsibilities: keeping order and forwarding tribute. The Athenian activities preventing transmission of tribute from the Greek (*Hellēnidōn*) cities are those taking place during Thucydides' narrative, activities which must have included operations parallel to those undertaken later by Xenophon and his friends against the estate of Asidates (*Xen. Hell.* 7.8.7 ff.) and raids on tribute caravans such as the one recorded in Nepos (*Dat.* 4). Thucydides' use of the term *neosti* is reflective of the Great King's continued exasperation, which prompts Tissaphernes to introduce another foreign army into the King's House. The various agreements between Achaemenid and Spartan authorities which appear later in Thucydides' narrative seem to be focused on preventing such raiding activities and on regulating Spartan movements by making Achaemenid authorities responsible for provisioning, while denying supplies to the Athenians (cf. *Thuc.* 8.18, 37, 58; 8.43 represents the hyperventilation of Lichas and Tissaphernes).¹⁴

I have suggested that Herodotus' account, as a means of criticizing Athenian claims, portrays Mardonius, sacker of Athens, as the establisher of democracies in Ionia. Attempts to explain what is meant by democracy here are inconclusive and have advanced little since How and Wells' commentary published in 1912.¹⁵ I feel justified in dismissing the Mardonius-democrats because of their flagrant absence not only in the narratives of Mardonius' reappearance in Greece, but also in the speeches assigned to participants in the Xerxes campaign. A most obvious place to introduce Mardonius' earlier activities and the democrats appointed by him would have been in book 8. But when Alexander of Macedonia speaks the words of Mardonius—who speaks the words of the Great King (Hdt. 8.140; cf. 9.4 ff.)—to the Athenians, the kinsmen of the Ionians, there is no mention of how Mardonius has benefited the Ionians in the past (cf. Diod. 11.28).

What remains, then, of the System Artaphernes-Mardonius? Perhaps, the command to be responsible; and a foundation for a future administration based upon, number one, the satrapal expectation that individual communities would turn to arbitration, and, number two, an assessment carried out, as Gerassimos Aperghis suggests, on a macro-level.¹⁶ Fulfilling financial obligations to the Achaemenid administration becomes the responsibility of the community as a whole. I hesitate to see any form of *Assessorismus*, the imposition of a uniform bureaucratic straight-jacket.¹⁷ Nor do I see the mechanical implementation of an *Eingeborenenrecht*, a legal system in which native laws and customs, once collected by or presented to an imperial authority, must await that authority's approval for their continued existence.¹⁸

¹ See, in the first place, Scott's recent commentary on Book Six with extensive references to earlier treatments of these problems (Scott 2005: esp. 185-203, and 533-45 [Appendix 11]). See, in addition, Briant 2002: esp. 154-7 (with notes on p. 906), and 493-7 (with notes on p. 953). I note that Scott's explanation (pp. 193, 543) for Herodotus' invoking of *es eme* (6.42.2) relies upon the existence of a Peace of Callias, the view being that Achaemenid administration was evil and that this evil would persist today in places if they were not protected under Athenian hegemony. Of value, but not cited in Scott, are the contributions of Wallinga 1989 and Corsaro 1989. Equally useful are the two separate pieces by Stadter and Flower, respectively, in the recent English-language, publisher-generated collection of essays on Herodotus by Dewald and Marincola (2006).

My reference to grammar and mathematics (cf. note 8, below, on Tuplin 1997) is not meant to be facetious, but rather to sum up verbally the many attempts I found when I first examined this topic in 2002 to save the phenomena that (1) Artaphernes'

assessment persisted, (2) cities paid funds and resources to the Athenians during the same time period, and (3) there existed a direct relationship between the assessments made, respectively, by Artaphernes and Aristides. In addition to the works cited above, see Murray 1966 (falling back to Grote's distinction between an amount assessed and an amount actually collected) and Evans 1976.

Samons (2000) offers general, salutary observations about the limited evidence available concerning the early financial affairs of Athenian rule. Samons (45-6 with n. 82) notes Athenian arrogance as well as Herodotus' understanding of the irony engendered in the view that Athens saved Hellas from the Achaemenids but does not bring to bear our passage as reflecting the view of those 'liberated'. In his discussion of Aristides (pp. 84-91, esp. n. 37 on pp. 90-1) we see reflections of the previous scholarly debates over assessment and amounts actually collected. 'Public relations' represents the minimum requirement for the Athenians' refusal to use the Achaemenid assessment (cf. pp. 252, 330-2).

One work which I find to have advanced the analysis of Herodotus is Bloesel 2004. As Steinbock (2006) aptly points out in his excellent review of Bloesel's work, the latter scholar 'argues that Herodotus, in search of a higher truth, radically altered his source material to stylize his Themistocles as an incarnation of fifth-century Athens with all its contradictions, thus implicitly chastising its unbridled imperialism in his own time . . .' Bloesel discusses Artaphernes (pp. 301-3), arguing that Herodotus' listeners would perceive the tie between Achaemenid and Athenian tribute because 'es primaer diese Abgaben waren, die einerseits von den Athenern als Basis ihrer Herrschaft angesehen wurden und andererseits als schwerste Belastung die Buendner zu Revolten aufstachelten'. Bloesel holds the view that Achaemenid administration was maleficent, that the Achaemenids claimed *de iure* tribute after 479 (p. 306), but not that the (nostalgic, or merely disgusted) Ionians themselves were able to offer an account which portrayed Achaemenid administration as a 'golden age'. Jung 2006 (which I have not been able to consult) should also be of value to those wishing to examine changing perceptions of the Achaemenid far western border wars.

² Briant 1998.

³ See Briant 2003. Since the inscription was meant to be accepted as real by the literate public of the second century AD, an examination of Chariton's romance (the now standard edition by Reardon places the novel not much before Nero's time), set in part in the Achaemenid empire, might provide indications about what the public would associate with the Achaemenid empire. Cf. Pers. 1.134. Also discussed by Schwartz 2003 (*non vidi*).

⁴ I have drawn these statements from Kang (2001: esp. 10-13). The Koreans interviewed were those who emigrated to America and settled in the San Francisco Bay area (pp. xi-xv). The 'black umbrella' is Japanese rule. The interviews were done in the later 1990s (cf. p. 150).

⁵ See the documents and photograph in Zeller 2000: 137-8, 319 item 119, and photograph on p. 105.

⁶ 'Wadatschi maneno makali lakini roho mzuri; wengereza maneno mazuri lakini roho kali'. This statement, given in Kisuheli, appears in print in early 1919 (e.g., von Lettow-Vorbeck 1919: 16, 111). For internal date, see Schnee 1919: 435, cf. p. 415.

⁷ Solf has been the subject of two biographies, the first publishing extracts from his papers: von Vietsch 1961: 352-66 (Solf's account of his difficulties with Samoan notables); additional analysis is offered by Hempenstall and Mochida 2005. Solf's speech to the Samoan notables is printed on pp.

134-6 of Gruender's (1999) collection of the relevant primary source material. For the German administration in Samoa in general, see Hiery 2001. I own a copy of the coin mentioned, minted for Samoa in Singapore. Solf's portrait (i.e., physical appearance) is accurate, but his title and province are given anachronistically as 'Governor of Western Samoa' rather than 'royal governor of Samoa'. For the present-day use of German-period records, see the 2 July 2002 entry in the guestbook by Kappus n.d. at www.traditionsverband.de; also www.samoareisen.de.

⁸ As regards the topics raised, including the digression, I confine myself to citing these scholars, from whose works additional bibliography might be generated: Zournatzi 2002a,b; Tuplin 1989, 1997; van Alfen 2004-5. The Polyaeus anecdote is not cause to suggest Darius halved Artaphernes' assessment as argued by Georges 2000: esp. 34.

⁹ To be complemented by Strab. 9.1.13 and Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 13(30). See Wallinga 2005: 65.

¹⁰ The reality of which is dismissed quickly by Flower and Marincola 2002: 105. Briant (2002: 371, and note on p. 928) regards Achaemenid practice as the model for signaling in Aeschylus. During the last century the heliograph, used commonly in Deutsch Ostafrika, could transmit signals up to 150 km using the sun (see Schnee 1920: 55-6, s.v. 'Heliographen').

¹¹ Cf. Scott. 2005: 194, 483-4 with n. 17. He is not the first to assign an unnecessary, degenerate 'oriental' distrust to the Great King in the making of appointments.

¹² On Xerxes' visit, see the interesting comments by Gnoli 1998. I note that Datis uses Greek myth in the form of Medus to lay claim to Athens (Diod. 10.27). Perhaps it is not improper to suggest some propagandistic use of foreign mythology or syncretism by Mardonius — when could one first see the footsteps left behind by Rostam in the Achaemenid Far West?

¹³ On Mardonius' expedition in general, use as starting point Briant 2002: 156-7 (with notes on pp. 906-7), 496-7 (with notes on p. 953); Scott 2005: 192-203, 482, 542-5. In reference to solutions designed, I note Wallinga's comment (2005: 152-3): 'I would indeed say that it is perfectionism rather than the enormity of their war aims that explains the extreme care with which the Persian staff planned the whole expedition and the final blow in particular.' How did the Achaemenids, an inland power, perceive the sea? I note that one of the first images in Xenophon's *Hellenica* (1.1.6) is of Pharnabazus riding his horse into the surf in defense of his satrapy. Above, I noted Mardonius' chain of fire signals

across the islands. How does one transform excellence in horsemanship and in communications (roads included) into a mastery of the sea? Perhaps the Achaemenids viewed the sea in two fashions:

- First, as a flooded landscape in which only the mountain tops (i.e., the Mediterranean islands) were visible; Mardonius' island-signals can be seen as an adaptation of the means by which signaling was done from high point to high point on the Asia mainland.

- Second, as a form of desert inhabited by bandits (i.e., pirates; cf. Wallinga 2005: 76-7), from which only limited sustenance might be drawn (i.e., food—fish—but no potable water), dotted with oases (islands, ports), and subject to its own form of sandstorms—as Mardonius discovered at Athos.

Such dangers, plus the ability to manipulate the 'desert' only on its edges (e.g., constructing Xerxes' canal = making a passable road), can account easily for the desire to take 'extreme care'. There also existed the expectation that elements of the Achaemenid fleet could communicate with each other and with the islands by means of (fire) signals. This stands behind the anecdote concerning Miltiades' expedition to Paros, during which the Parians believe they have received a signal from Datis (Steph.Byz. s.v. 'Πάρος' [= Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 63]; cf. Scott 2005: 630-47).

¹⁴ Scott 2005: 540-1 with ns. 24-5 (on the treaties) with bibliography.

¹⁵ How and Wells 1912: 80. Cf. Scott 2005: 542-5;

Briant 2002: 497 (sounding much like How and Wells), 953.

¹⁶ Aperghis 2004: 140-1 (general discussion on pp. 139-42).

¹⁷ Hdt. (1.135) suggests just the opposite. Cf. Tuplin 1987: 109-60 (esp. 109, 111-12, 145-6, 157-8).

¹⁸ E.g., the view proposed in Frei and Koch 1996. A recent work which discusses this 'theory of imperial authorization' in connection with Anatolia is Fried 2004 (esp. 108-55). Of the documents she handles, only the Myous-Miletus land dispute (see Tod no. 113) is germane here (cf. Scott 2005: 534-8, esp. 537 n. 17, and 538 n. 18). But I note that the surviving traces of the term 'King' on Fragment A offer no hint of legal context and that the arbitration comes to end prematurely when it is abandoned by the city of Myous.

Final note:

Because a moral, non-academic obligation and responsibility kept me from attending the conference in person, I have decided to leave my words as they were spoken. I thank Antigoni Zournatzi, David Stronach, and Makis Aperghis for their suggestions and for arranging for my words to be spoken. I also thank Molly Samson for her assistance in preparing the copy needed for publication.

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