

The Long-Armed Persian King: Disabled or Powerful Man?

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Abstract. *This article examines the evidence of ancient authors on the unofficial nicknames of Achaemenid Persian kings. It pays special attention to the interpretation of the nickname of Μακρόχειρ. Two variants are considered for its translation. In the first case, one must talk about the ancient authors' perceptions of this nickname as relating to a person who had one arm longer than the other. In the second case, the nickname is interpreted metaphorically: it is believed to be used for a ruler who is seeking an extension of his possessions. The possibility of applying the nickname of Μακρόχειρ to each of the three Persian kings – Darius I, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I – is investigated.*

Keywords: *Nicknames, Artaxerxes, Darius, Xerxes, Achaemenids.*

The issue of Greek nicknames of Persian kings remains virtually out of view of modern researchers. It is possible to find only a few remarks on this subject in the literature and, of course, only in relation to a few Persian monarchs, but even here the researchers' views diverge⁴. This work is dedicated to the examination of one nickname – Μακρόχειρ – and the question is raised regarding the possibility of interpreting it as 'Long-Armed.'

According to the most common version, the Persian king Artaxerxes I received the nickname Μακρόχειρ (that is, 'Long-Armed'). This, in particular, is discussed in Plutarch's two

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⁴ Giving Darius III the epithet *Codomannus*, for example, is causing for discussion. This is reported only by Justin (10. 3. 3), but his information is interpreted ambiguously. Rüdiger SCHMITT 1982, 90-1 + not. 34. referred to the report of the Babylonian astronomical diaries, from which it follows that Darius III's own name was Artašat; that suggests that *Codomannus* was his Persian nickname. Otherwise, Ernst BADIEN 2000, 247-8, who believed that *Codomannus* was a personal name, interpreted it as the Aramaic word *qdmwn*, meaning 'Eastern' or 'From the East.' However, *Codomannus* is, of course, a nickname or name known to the Greeks in its eastern version. Other nicknames of Persian kings, however, were of Greek origin: Μακρόχειρ ('Long-armed'), Νόθος ('Bastard') and Μνήμων ('Mindful'). As far as Μνήμων is concerned Said Amir ARJOMAND 1998, 245 argued that it can and should be taken as a Greek translation of the theophoric name, *Vahuman* (New Persian "Bahman"), which he assumed as a sign of his devotion to Vohu Manah ('Good Thought'), the second of the Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas ('Holy Immortals'). Alternatively, Carsten BINDER 2008, 85 proposes that the epithet Μνήμων was a Greek literal translation of the same Persian nickname reported by Hesychius as ἀβιάτακα (Hesych. s. v. ἀβιάτακα μνήμονα. Πέρσα).

works: in the biography of the Persian king Artaxerxes II and in *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*. In his biography of the king the author reports that the first Artaxerxes, preeminent among the kings of Persia for gentleness and magnanimity, was surnamed “Long-Armed”, because his right hand was longer than his left, and was the son of Xerxes (Ὁ μὲν πρῶτος Ἀρτοξέρξης, τῶν ἐν Πέρσiais βασιλέων πραότητι καὶ μεγαλοψυχίᾳ πρωτεύσας, Μακρόχειρ ἐπεκαλεῖτο, τὴν δεξιὰν μείζονα τῆς ἐτέρας ἔχων, Ξέρξου δ' ἦν υἱός) (Plut. *Artax.* 1.1). Taking the Greek text into consideration, one can see the ordinal πρῶτος as applied to Artaxerxes – not only designating him as the first king who bore that name but also emphasizing his superiority over other kings, his primacy, and thus consonant with the verb πρωτεύειν. However, the nickname Μακρόχειρ, as explained by a physical disability of the king (the right arm longer than the other), is left without further comment.

Plutarch’s information in his other work – *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* – is even more interesting since it metaphorically explains the nickname of the king. According to him, Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, called ‘Long-Armed’ because of his having one hand longer than the other, used to say that it is more kingly to give to one who has than to take away (Ἀρτοξέρξης ὁ Ξέρξου, ὁ μακρόχειρ προσαγορευθεὶς διὰ τὸ τὴν ἐτέραν χεῖρα μακροτέραν ἔχειν, ἔλεγεν ὅτι τὸ προσθεῖναι τοῦ ἀφελεῖν βασιλικώτερόν ἐστι) (Plut. *Mor.* 173d). And thus, in this passage the ‘long-armedness’ of the king corresponds not only to the physical disability but also to his generosity (as indicated, apparently, according to Plutarch, as the longer arm of this king).

However, even earlier than Plutarch, Cornelius Nepos wrote about this nickname of Artaxerxes I in his work *Of Kings: (Artaxerxes) Macrochir* was greatly celebrated for a most noble and handsome person, which he rendered still more remarkable by extraordinary bravery in the field because for no one of the Persians was more valorous in action than he (*Macrochir praecipuam habet laudem amplissimae pulcherrimaeque corporis formae, quam incredibili ornauit uirtute belli: namque illo Perses nemo manu fuit fortiori*) (Nep. *De reg.* 1).

It is also noteworthy that Nepos uses the word ‘long-armed’ through its Greek analog *Macrochir*, and not the Latin translation *Longimanus* (under which he appears, for example, in the Latin text of the chronicle of Hieronimus: *Artaxerxes qui Longimanus cognominobatur* – Hieron. *Chron.* 192f). However, the concluding part of the characterization of Artaxerxes in Nepos’s exposition uses the phrase, *namque illo Perses nemo manu fuit fortiori*.

It is also interesting that Nepos decided to use the Greek version of *Macrochir*, whereas the word *Longimanus* undoubtedly provides the necessary play on words, correlating with the noun *manus* (in the usual translation – ‘hand’ – but other meanings of the word are strength, might, courage, hand-to-hand combat, the fight, battle). The use of the epithet *Macrochir* undoubtedly speaks of the fact that Nepos used a Greek source. In general, the epithet ‘long-armed’ (Μακρόχειρ, *Macrochir*) is used in relation to Artaxerxes I by most Greek and Latin authors. This is mentioned, for example, by the author of the *Chronicon Paschale* (P. 304), George the Monk

(Chron. P. 284), the *Suda*'s lexicon (s. v. Ἑσδρας), Ammianus Marcellinus (30. 8. 4), and some others. They all undoubtedly go back to the same source, but the earliest obviously was Cornelius Nepos, who used the *Persian History* of Deinon of Colophon (*Con.* 5) in his work.

Meanwhile, originally there could have existed several versions of which of the Persian kings was called 'Long-Armed.' Strabo was obviously familiar with this tradition. In his *Geographica* he cites the historian Polyclitus,⁵ who assigns the epithet 'Long-Armed' to Darius I (15.3.21. Translation by H.L. Jones):

Perhaps also the following, mentioned by Polycritus, is one of their customs. He says that in Susa each one of the kings built for himself on the acropolis a separate habitation, treasure-houses, and storage places for what tributes they each exacted, as memorials of his administration; and that they exacted silver from the people on the seaboard, and from the people in the interior such things as each country produced, so that they also received dyes, drugs, hair, or wool, or something else of the kind, and likewise cattle; and that the king who arranged the separate tributes was Dareius, called the Long-armed, and the most handsome of men, except for the length of his arms, for they reached even to his knees (τὸν μακρόχειρα, καὶ κάλλιστον ἀνθρώπων πλὴν τοῦ μήκους τῶν βραχιόνων καὶ τῶν πήχεων: ἄπτεσθαι γὰρ καὶ τῶν γονάτων).

We note that in some editions of Strabo's *Geographica* the last sentence is excluded as a later interpolation, though there are no immediate reasons for such an exception.⁶ In this passage Strabo, when explaining the nickname Μακρόχειρ as attributed to Darius, gives it a rationalistic interpretation. But Herodotus, who, as we know, had a special interest in this question, says nothing about such a nickname for Darius, son of Hystaspes.

Especially interesting in this context is mention of nicknames that, in the words of Herodotus, were given to the first three kings in Persia: '... the Persians say that Darius was a merchant, Cambyses was the Lord, and Cyrus was the father, because Darius arranged all his power in a tradesman's way; Cambyses – because he was cruel and arrogant; and Cyrus – because he was merciful and they owe him all the benefits' (λέγουσι Πέρσαι ὡς Δαρεῖος μὲν ἦν κάπηλος, Καμβύσης δὲ δεσπότης, Κῦρος δὲ πατήρ, ὁ μὲν ὅτι ἐκαπήλευε πάντα τὰ πρήγματα, ὁ δὲ

⁵ In this passage Strabo uses the name Polycritus, however, publishers have corrected it to Polyclitus due to the fact that the latter is mentioned elsewhere (15. 3. 21).

⁶ See, for example, the critical commentary on this passage in the well-known Loeb edition of Strabo's *Geographica*: 'Various publishers believe that this is an interpolation. Plutarch (Artaxerxes I) refers to Artaxerxes, that he had the nickname 'Long-Armed,' since his right arm was longer than the left; but the above-stated in relation to Darius lacks confirmation' (JONES 1930, 185, note 2). In the most recent edition of Strabo's *Geographica* the text includes lines about Darius the Long-Armed (RADT 2005, 269).

ὅτι χαλεπός τε ἦν καὶ ὀλίγωρος, ὁ δὲ ὅτι ἥπιός τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ σφι πάντα ἐμηχανήσατο).⁷ In another place the historian focuses on an interpretation of the Persian kings' own names (6. 98): 'Now as touching the names of those three kings, Darius signifies the Doer, Xerxes the Warrior, Artoxerxes the Great Warrior; and such the Greeks would rightly call them in their language' (δύναται δὲ κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ταῦτα τὰ οὐνόματα, Δαρεῖος ἐρξίης, Ξέρξης ἀρήιος, Ἄρτοξέρξης μέγας ἀρήιος. Τούτους μὲν δὴ τοὺς βασιλέας ὧδε ἂν ὀρθῶς κατὰ γλῶσσαν τὴν σφετέρην Ἑλληνες καλέοιεν).⁸

Thus, we emphasize that Herodotus, who was interested in all that concerned the epithets of Darius, does not report the nickname the 'Long-Armed' for him. However, the fact that Strabo correctly understood Polyclitus's evidence is confirmed by Pollux's statement in the *Onomasticon* (2. 151) as an attempt to explain the word Μακρόχειρ: 'either according to Polyclitus, it is Darius the son of Hystaspes, or Xerxes, according to Antileon; either, according to most, Artaxerxes, called Ochus, or having a right arm longer than the left, or both' (εἶτε κατὰ Πολύκλειτον ὁ Ὑστάσπου Δαρεῖος, εἶτε κατὰ Ἀντιλέοντα Ξέρξης, εἶτε κατὰ τοὺς πλείστους Ὡχος ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Ἄρταξέρξης, ἤτοι τὴν δεξιὰν ἔχων προμηκεστέραν ἢ τὴν ἀριστερὰν ἢ ἀμφοτέρως). We immediately note that Pollux undoubtedly confused Artaxerxes I and Artaxerxes III Ochus, citing the 'majority opinion' – κατὰ τοὺς πλείστους. But the author confirms that Polyclitus called Darius 'long-armed,' and Antileon called Xerxes this. Pollux's last phrase deserves close attention: 'and also because each spread his power as far as possible' (οἱ δὲ ὅτι τὴν δύναμιν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐξέτεινεν).⁹

⁷ Raymond DESCAT 1994 believes that the nickname κάπηλος was given to Darius I in connection with his coinage and currency-based economy. However, in the opinion of other researchers, this nickname should have had a pejorative character. Christopher TUPLIN 1997, 379–381 believes that in the view of the Greeks the καπηλοὶ were completely vicious people. Leslie KURKE 1999, 65–100 suggests that with the use of the word κάπηλος in relation to Darius, Herodotus hints at the desire of this Persian king to be adventurous, as befits a merchant.

⁸ Arthur COOK 1907, 169 suggested that according to Herodotus, the correspondence between the names of Persian kings and Greek words, perceived as their equivalents, should have been different from the beginning. In the opinion of the researcher ἀρήιος should refer to Δαρεῖος, ἐρξίης to Ξέρξης, and κάρτα ("very" is a more appropriate word than μέγας) ἐρξίης to Ἄρτοξέρξης. One of the arguments was the following: why did Herodotus have to use the very rare word ἐρξίης unless he wanted to do so to establish the obvious etymology of the name Xerxes? Lionel SCOTT 2005, 349 believed that the name of Darius in the text of Herodotus should not correspond to ἐρξίης, but rather to *ἐξίης, derived from the verb ἔχω and meaning "possessor," which thus bringing the explanation closer to the actual meaning of the name Darius. It is commonly accepted that the name "Darius" (ancient Persian *Dārayavauš*) is a composite and comes from a combination of two ancient Persian words: *dāraya-* "the one who possesses" and the adjective *vau-* "good"; consequently, the name should mean: "possessing good." The name "Xerxes" (ancient Persian *Xšayārša*) is composed of the two words *xšaya-* "reigning" and **ršan-* "hero"; it is translated as "reigning over heroes," while the name "Artaxerxes" (ancient Persian *Artaxšaça*)—as "the one who reigns in justice" (about the meaning of the names of Persian kings, see for more details see: SCHMITT 1977, 424–425; 1982, 93–94).

⁹ Carsten BINDER 2008, 83 finds confirmation of this statement of Pollux in the following lines of the ancient Persian inscription on the Naqsh-e Rostam tomb of Darius I: "When you think how many countries were ruled by Darius the king, then look at the image [of the subjects] supporting the throne. Then you will learn and you will know that the

With regard to the relationship of ‘long-armedness’ and power, there is, among other things, the rather interesting statement in Herodotus (8.140) that Alexander I – sent by Mardonius as ambassador to Athens after the battle of Salamis in 480 BC – cites one of the arguments in favour of reconciliation of the Athenians with the Persians: ‘for the king’s might is greater than human, and his arm is very long’ (καὶ γὰρ δύναμις ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον ἢ βασιλέος ἐστὶ καὶ χεὶρ ὑπερμήκης).

It is interesting that the various derivations of the word τὸ μῆκος – length, in connection with long-armedness of the Persian kings – are mentioned in the above-cited excerpts: the expression μήκοι τῶν βραχιόνων καὶ τῶν πῆχεων by Strabo (15. 3. 21) and προμηκεστέρα by Pollux (2. 151). In the text cited by Herodotus, ὑπερμήκης acts as a superlative adjective. In the opinion of Thomas Harrison, the nickname ‘long-armed’ (μακρόχειρ), which is assigned by various ancient authors either to Darius or to Xerxes (Pollux. 2. 151), or to Artaxerxes I (Plut. *Artax.* 1. 1; *Mor.* 173d), in fact originates from Alexander’s misunderstood statement in Athens, that king Xerxes has χεὶρ ὑπερμήκης – ‘a very long arm.’¹⁰ One can conclude that despite the nickname “Long-Armed” was used for Artaxerxes I by the most of ancient authors it seems to have been an opinion in the sources that this nickname was used for Darius I and Xerxes as well. Meanwhile the sources do not exclude also some metaphorical meaning of Μακρόχειρ as relating to the spreading power as far as possible.

In a recent article, Aleksey Vigasin particularly focuses on the meaning of the term μακρόχειρ in ancient authors. He concludes that the epithet had an eastern origin and, moreover, was used in a metaphorical sense, that is, in what Pollux ultimately points to, saying that the nickname comes from the fact that the power of each of the kings spread as far as possible. Vigasin reinforces his conclusion with references to eastern cases of the use of this kind of epithet, including Indian material very familiar to him.¹¹ In addition, eastern connotations of the nickname Μακρόχειρ with involvement of Persian material, which Vigasin in fact omitted, were specially studied by the Iranian scholar Ahmad Tafazzolī. He referred to the Iranian ‘national epic,’ which tells the story of Bachmann or Ardashir, king of the mythical Kayanian dynasty, nicknamed ‘Long-Armed’ (*Darāz-Dast*), whom we believe is a prototype of Artaxerxes I. From this, Tafazzolī derives a possible ancient Persian form of the word ‘long-armed’ – *darga dasta*.¹² It is worth noting that we, like Vigasin, give preference to the metaphorical meaning of the nickname, stating that the word *dast* is used in a number of Iranian languages in the meaning of ‘power.’ But this is not surprising considering the common Indo-European base of all these languages; both the Greek χεῖρ and the Latin *manus* have the

spear of the Persian warrior penetrated far; then you will know that the Persian warrior struck the enemies far from Persia” (DNa. 39–47).

¹⁰ HARRISON 2011, 65–66.

¹¹ VIGASIN 2015.

¹² TAFAZZOLĪ 1994.

added meanings of 'power,' 'force,' 'might.' It would seem that everything is true in this interpretation, except for one thing: the historical aspect. Artaxerxes I, to whom most ancient and modern historians assign the nickname Μακρόχειρ, was a much less suitable candidate for the bearer of the nickname 'Long-Armed' in its metaphorical meaning while Xerxes would have been the most suitable, as in fact Herodotus intuitively understood. And in this case, another interpretation seems more probable: the ancient authors' reference to the king by the nickname Μακρόχειρ did not proceed from his 'imperious characteristics' but rather precisely from physical disability (that is, one arm longer than the other). In fact, this could be quite visible to both the Greeks and the Persians, who were present at an audience of this king and who noticed this disability, which would have been very difficult to conceal. And only then they interpreted the word Μακρόχειρ in relation to a specific king metaphorically, as this appears only in the report of Pollux (2. 151).¹³ It is worth here to cite Ammianus Marcellinus who combines both characteristics of Artaxerxes I, physical and powerful: the author reports of him as *rex potentissimus* and continues: *Macrochira membri unius longitudo commemoravit* (30.8.4. Translation by J.C. Rolfe):

Artaxerxes, that mighty king of the Persians (*rex potentissimus*), whom the length of one of his limbs made known as Macrochir (*quem Macrochira membri unius longitudo commemoravit*), with inborn mildness corrected various punishments which that cruel nation had always practised, by sometimes cutting off the turbans of the guilty, in lieu of their heads; and instead of cutting off men's ears for various offences, as was the habit of the kings, he sheared off threads hanging from their head-coverings. This moderation of character so won for him the contentment and respect of his subjects, that through their unanimous support he accomplished many noteworthy deeds, which are celebrated by the Greek writers.

Yet there is a medical approach to the topic of long-armedness. Of course, our constructions on this topic can only have a tentative character since we, not having the possibility of obtaining the analysis of the remains or absolutely accurate images of the ruler¹⁴, must rely primarily on data of the narrative tradition. With regard to some rulers of the ancient world, numismatic data can help us, namely their portrait images. Incidentally, even here, while proposing a hypothesis, one should maintain a certain (or even significant) share of hesitation.

¹³ About representation of physical characteristics of the dynasty of the Achaemenids, who appear as perfect rulers in every way, see BINDER 2008, 84; LLEWELLYN-JONES 2015.

¹⁴ There are many depictions of Persian kings on reliefs, cylindric seals and coins, but the difficulties with identification of each king in these images as well as the stereotyping features in royal figures make almost impossible to use this material for reconstructing of physical appearance of every monarch in Persia.

Scholars have advanced various hypotheses regarding the kind of disease that could give Artaxerxes I the nickname 'Long-Armed.' Hutan Ashrafian proposed that the monarch could have had a *unilateral upper limb gigantism*.¹⁵ Also, the author singles out the presence of macrodactyly in the king (which has not been recorded in the sources), saying its probable cause was *neurofibromatosis*.¹⁶ The researcher relies on the opinion of Don Todman and point to the monetary image of the Parthian king Phraates IV, which displays an image of presumed *neurofibromatous* lesions on the forehead. Ashrafian expressed the opinion that if a kinship connection in fact existed between the Parthian and Achaemenid ruling dynasties, then *neurofibromatosis* could have afflicted Artaxerxes I as well.¹⁷ We note, however, that characteristics for this disease with lesions that could be on the body of the Persian king are not mentioned in the sources.

Alternatively, it can be supposed that the king suffered from Marfan syndrome, which incidentally is transmitted most often through the male line and has a genetic etiology. In this case, all three famous representatives of the Achaemenid dynasty could be long-armed.¹⁸ At the same time, as a cautious supposition, other medical versions of the origin of the 'long-armedness' of the Persian monarch should be considered. We can presume another alternative version, namely that Artaxerxes I could have suffered from *acromegaly*.¹⁹ This disease, judging by extant sources, also occurred in the ancient world, and not just in the Persian monarchs: thus, they note enlarged facial features with elongation of the mandible and increase in nose, lips, and ears in images of Pharaoh Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV)..²⁰ There is the example of the Roman Emperor Maximinus Thrax (Maximinus I), who, according to written sources (Hist. Aug. *Maxim.* 12.1–4), was of tall stature and great physical strength. In addition, there are probable

¹⁵ ASHRAFIAN 2011, 557.

¹⁶ "Neurofibromatosis is a hereditary disease. Manifested by tumors and pigmentation of the skin combined with tumors along nerve trunks. The disease is inherited autosomal dominantly; its frequency is 3–5:10,000" (BADALYAN 1987, 227).

¹⁷ ASHRAFIAN 2011.

¹⁸ 'Marfan syndrome is an inherited connective tissue disease characterized by pathological changes in the heart and blood vessels, musculoskeletal system, and eyes. Marfan syndrome is detected in 1 in 3,000-5,000 people, but several other inherited connective tissue diseases have similar clinical manifestations and similar dangerous complications. ... Marfan syndrome can be inherited from one of the parents or (in about a quarter of cases) be the result of spontaneous mutation. There are said to be spontaneous mutations in cases where no one in the family has previously suffered from this disease. The probability of inheritance of Marfan syndrome from an afflicted parent is 50:50.' One of the signs of the disease may be tall stature and long limbs. (http://www.almazovcentre.ru/?page_id=9733).

¹⁹ "Acromegaly is a severe neuroendocrine disease caused by chronic hyperproduction of a growth hormone (somatotropin, STH) in individuals with complete physiological growth and characterized by pathological disproportionate periosteal growth of bones, cartilage, soft tissues, and internal organs, as well as impairment of the morpho-functional state of the cardiovascular, pulmonary system, peripheral endocrine glands, and various types of metabolism. Most often those with acromegaly fall ill between 20 and 40 years of age, but sometimes it occurs after the age of 50." See DEDOV 2014, 6.

²⁰ PRONIN and MOLITVOSLOVOVA 2009: 103–104;

signs of *acromegaly* on coins of Maximinus: protruding brow and enlarged lower jaw and nose.²¹ It is noteworthy that various ancient authors assign a similar characteristic either to Darius I (Strabo. 15.3.21) or to Artaxerxes I (Nep. *De reg.* 1), while Herodotus (7.187) assigns it to Xerxes: 'Of all those tens of thousands of men, for goodliness and stature there was not one worthier than Xerxes himself to hold that command' (κάλλεός τε εἶνεκα καὶ μεγάθεος οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἀξιονικότερος ἦν αὐτοῦ Ξέρξεω ἔχειν τοῦτο τὸ κράτος). *Acromegaly* can also be due in some cases to heredity.

Therefore, it is also impossible to exclude here the proposition of supposed inheritance of the disease through the male line of the Achaemenids. We note that *acromegaly*, as a rule, does not occur in a patient unilaterally but rather with symmetrical lengthening of extremities. Therefore, this description of the disease does not fit the evidence that says one arm is longer than the other, but corresponds to the testimony of Strabo's *Geography* (15. 3. 21) and Pollux's *Onomasticon* (2. 151) that the Kings (at least possibly in the cases of Darius and Xerxes) might have both arms very long. It is attractive to conclude that ancient authors' reports of physical abilities of Darius I (Strabo. 15. 3. 21), Xerxes (Hdt. 7.87) and Artaxerxes I (Nep. *De reg.*1) reflected not only images of these Persian monarchs in Greek imagination but resulted from some hereditary disease.

Recently Omar Coloru skeptically viewed the medical interpretation of the 'long-armedness' of Artaxerxes, given the state of our sources, and preferred a symbolic interpretation for the nickname 'Long-Armed,' citing Tafazzoli and supporting his arguments with reference to the *Yashts*. In one fragment Zarathustra is being praised for physical abilities, namely his strong legs and long arms.²² However, based on the above references to descriptions of the diseases and considering the state of the sources, we can say that the Greeks gave the nickname Μακρόχειρ most likely to each of three Persian kings of the Achaemenid dynasty (Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes I) very probably due to their physical disability. Moreover, the first Achaemenids could have suffered from some hereditary disease (either *neurofibromatosis* or from *Marfan syndrome* or *acromegaly*). In this case we only cautiously touched on the medical versions of why they could have had the nickname 'Long-Armed.' However, their striving to interpret the nickname metaphorically led to the fact that they were unable to determine which of the Achaemenids was more worthy of it.

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²¹ With references to earlier literature, we notice that an image of a coin of Maximinus I was placed on the front of the dust jacket of the cited book, in which only one chapter of eight is dedicated to the history of the study of *acromegaly*.

²² COLORU 2017, 68–69.

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The Funeral Rite of the Spartan Kings

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Abstract. *This article is a historical commentary on Herodotus' account of the funerals of the Spartan kings. It is an attempt on the author's part to explain why for centuries the royal funerary ritual continued unchanged despite its being too lavish for ascetic Sparta. The study focuses on the socio-economic composition of the funeral attendees. In the author's opinion, the participation of representatives of the lower classes - the helots and perioikoi - in the ceremony facilitated the evolvement of elites from both categories of the Spartan subordinate population. The funeral ceremony performed an important ideological and propaganda function serving as a unifying factor for all the social classes and indoctrinating the masses with the belief in the eternal and immutable nature of the royal authority and, by extension, of the Spartan state.*

Rezumat. *Articolul de față reprezintă un comentariu asupra informațiilor oferite de către Herodot asupra funeraliilor regilor Spartei. Mai concret, este vorba despre o încercare a autoarei de a explica motivul pentru care ritualul funerar a continuat să persiste sub aceeași formă, deși era mult prea lasciv raportat la ascetismul spartan. Studiul este concentrat pe coordonatele socio-economice ale participanților la astfel de ritualuri. Conform opiniei autoarei, participarea unor reprezentanți ai claselor inferioare - hiloși și perioikoi - la ceremonie a facilitat dezvoltarea unor elite în rândul ambelor categorii ale populației aflate pe treptele inferioare ale societății. Ceremonialul funerar a avut o importantă funcție ideologică, servind ca liant pentru toate clasele sociale. De asemenea, acesta avea rolul de a îndotrina masele pentru a crede în natura eternă și de neclintit ale autorității regale și, prin extensie, a statului spartan.*

Keywords: *Herodotus, Plutarch, Spartiates, helots, perioikoi, Spartan kings, Sparta.*

Not so much is known about the funerary customs in Sparta, however, it may safely be said that the burial rituals there were far more modest than in other Greek states. The Spartans, at least in the Classical period, were known for burying their dead in unmarked graves lacking the names of the deceased. That was done in accordance with the idea of equality central to the Spartan culture, the introduction of which idea they connected with the legislation of Lycurgus. Apparently, as early as the Archaic period the Spartans had already called themselves *homoioi* (ὄμοιοι), i.e., 'alike', 'equal' (Xen. Lac. pol. 13. 1 and 7; Arist. Pol. V. 6. 1. 1306 b 30), and in many respects full citizens were equal indeed. They received the same type of education in military boarding schools; they were given the same food in the so-called *syssitia*,

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i.e., mess-companies; they paid the same dues for their upkeep; all of them without exception were liable for military service and started their military careers on equal footing. Outside of Sparta historians and philosophers, such as Xenophon or Plato, also emphasized the egalitarian trends in the Spartan politics and economy while deliberately understating the extent of economic, social and political stratification in Spartan society².

Being the central national idea of the Spartans, the idea of citizen equality was actively promoted by the state propaganda. The constitutional changes enshrined in the *Great Rhetra* (Plut. Lyc. 6) altered not only the political system – eventually, the whole mode of life and, if we may say so, death in Sparta was transformed. The new developments affected the burial rituals which became an essential part of the existing legislation; they were integrated into the general propaganda trend of citizen equality. The rules pertaining to the royal funerary ritual, traditionally associated with the legislation of Lycurgus³, might have been established at the same time, i.e., in the early Archaic period.

In this article, we undertake a specific task which is the evaluation of an important aspect of Spartan civil life – the royal funerary ritual. It should be noted that in any society burial rites are an integral part of the nation's cultural code and speak volumes about their creators, thus, it is entirely true for Sparta as well. By carefully examining different facets of the ritual we will be able to discover possible reasons why the Spartans insisted on upholding kingship over the whole period of Sparta's existence as an independent state.

The concept of equality, carried to its logical conclusion in Sparta, resulted in the depersonalization of ordinary graves which did not bear the names of the deceased. It is unclear when the practice was introduced, but the reason for it was probably the intention of the authorities to deny the Spartan aristocracy the opportunity to erect magnificent tombs in order to flaunt their wealth and high rank. According to Margaret Alexiou, 'by taking such a step in good time, along with other social and economic measures, Lykourgos was able to forestall the rise of all-powerful noble families who might challenge both the position of the kings and the limitations imposed on economic and political developments'⁴. No other Greek *polis* adopted a similar practice of anonymization of ordinary graves, although in the Archaic period the burial rites underwent simplification in many cities, as evidenced by both epigraphic (Keos: SIG 1218; Delphi: Rhodes and Osborne 2–7) and literary sources (Dem. XLIII. 62–63; Plut. Sol. 12. 8; 21. 5; Cic. De Leg. II. 59; 64–66; cf. Plat. Leg. XII. 958d–960a)⁵. For instance,

² CHRISTESEN 2010, 51.

³ GARLAND 1989, 14.

⁴ ALEXIOU 2002, 17.

⁵ For instance, in Mytilene Pittacus (650–570 BC) limited the number of funeral attendees to the relatives of the deceased (Cic. De Leg. II. 66); in Syracuse the law enacted even before Gelon (540–478 BC) stipulated that funeral costs had to be reduced (Diod. XI. 38. 2); the lawgiver Charondas from Catana (6th century BC) simplified the funerary ritual (Stob. XLIV. 40). R. Garland enumerates the nine *poleis* which possibly implemented the laws regulating and simplifying

this happened in Athens in the time of Solon, who, according to Plutarch, cancelled 'the harsh and barbaric practices in which their women had usually indulged up to that time' (Plut. Sol. 12. 8, translated by B. Perrin)⁶. Apparently, singling out women as a specific group in need of being held in check reflects their previous status at funerals which Solon found unacceptable⁷.

In Archaic Sparta the burial rituals were also significantly curtailed, which apparently dealt a severe blow to the aristocratic clans and, on the other hand, alleviated the plight of ordinary citizens. Plutarch gives a list of the implemented measures standardizing and simplifying the burial practices: 'Lycurgus did away with all superstitious fear connected with burials, granting the right to bury the dead within the city, and to have the tombs near the shrines. He also abolished the pollutions associated with death and burial. He permitted the people to bury nothing with their dead, but only to enfold the body in a red robe and olive leaves, and all to treat their dead alike⁸. He also did away with the inscriptions on tombs, except of those who had met their end in war, and also did away with mourning and lamentation' (Plut. Mor. 238 d = Inst. Lac. 18, hereinafter translated by Fr. C. Babbitt; see also: Plut. Lyc. 27. 1–2). The tradition ascribes the burial laws to Lycurgus (Xen. Lac. pol. 15. 9). However, the Spartans associated any reforms introduced in the Archaic period with the name of Lycurgus⁹.

It is entirely possible that the burial laws simplifying the funerals of ordinary citizens were not included in the legislation of Lycurgus, but were in fact implemented sometime later – at the beginning¹⁰ or in the middle¹¹ of the 6th century BC – as part of sumptuary laws. We should note that it was precisely during this period that similar restrictions were introduced in other Greek *poleis*. It cannot be ruled out that the *ephor* Chilon¹² – the only major political figure of that epoch known to us besides the kings – had a hand in formulating the law¹³. It is possible that the prohibition on excessive displays of grief and sorrow was issued in his day¹⁴.

the funeral ceremony (Garland 1989, 1–15). For more information on the legislative measures curtailing the burial rites in certain Greek *poleis* and the reasons for their implementation, see: ALEXIOU 2002, 14 – 23. As a rule, such restrictions were imposed in the *poleis* that achieved greater success in fighting against the aristocracy (ALEXIOU 2002, 17, 22). Similar regulations existed in Rome. *Leges duodecim tabularum* already contained provisions restricting the lavishness of funerals. Cicero noted that these provisions were almost an exact copy of Greek statutes, including those of Solon (De Leg. II. 64).

⁶ These are the earliest burial laws which we have relatively detailed information about. It appears that we can see the genuine tradition here (GARLAND 1989, 3–8).

⁷ ALEXIOU 2002, 18.

⁸ Plutarch raises a crucial point – the funeral ceremony was the same for everybody.

⁹ On initial reforms in Sparta, see: PECHATNOVA 2020, 25–95.

¹⁰ WEES 2018, 222.

¹¹ Henceforth, all dates are BC.

¹² NAFISSI 1991, 430.

¹³ After his death Chilon, like Lycurgus, was venerated as a hero (Paus. III. 16. 6) and even had a shrine in Sparta (III. 16. 4).

¹⁴ PETROPOULOU 2009, 593.

Therefore, the Spartans, having lost the right to retain their names on tombstones, found themselves more equal in death than they had been in life; although an exception was made for two categories of *Spartiates*. The first category comprised those who fell in battle (Plut. Lyc. 27. 2; Mor. 238 d = Inst. Lac. 18). Their names survived on tombstones, but the stones themselves were most commonly located outside of Sparta and were plain in the extreme. This provision is mentioned by Plutarch: 'It was Spartan custom, when men of ordinary rank died in a foreign country, to give their bodies funeral rites and burial there, but to carry the bodies of their kings home' (Ages. 40. 3, translated by B. Perrin). At that time burying the fallen either on the battlefields (Paus. IX. 2. 5) or in the territory of the allied communities in the vicinity (Her. IX. 85; Xen. Hell. II. 4. 33) was common practice starting at least as early as mid-6th century BC. The second category consisted of the Spartan kings or, more precisely, those of them who managed to either die in battle or pass away peacefully in bed. Not only did they retain their names on the tombstones, they were also honoured with a funeral ceremony that was uncommonly lavish for ascetic Sparta. In this aspect again Sparta was the exception rather than the rule. In other *poleis* the restrictions applied to all citizens without exception, which was indicative of increasing democratization of society. In Sparta, on the other hand, the law was administered selectively and did not affect the royal funerary ritual in the slightest. The oriental splendour typical of the ancient funeral ceremony which amazed Herodotus remained intact there. According to R. Parker, '... royal funerals were surely among the most spectacular pageants that the Peloponnese ever saw'¹⁵.

Since royal funerals in Sparta are a peculiar phenomenon contrasting starkly with the modest burial rituals the rest of the Spartans observed, we should examine it in more detail. The first step is to consult the literary sources. Although non-Spartan in origin, all of them were authored by the historians very familiar with the situation in Sparta – first and foremost by Herodotus, Xenophon and Plutarch. Herodotus left the most comprehensive description of the royal funerary ceremony (VI. 58). This description is part of his excursus on the royal authority in Sparta (VI. 52–59). Since the Greeks, the Athenians in particular, knew but little about the inner workings of Spartan society due to state-implemented secrecy, as Thucydides puts it (Thuc. V. 68. 2), Herodotus attempts to fill this lacuna to a certain extent. As Nino Luraghi notes, the information about Sparta which Herodotus gives has 'a distinctly ethnographic tone, comparing the Spartans with the Persians and the Egyptians'¹⁶. This holds true for his account of the Spartan royal funerals which he definitely finds exotic. This explains why he says that 'the Lacedaemonians have the same custom at the deaths of their kings as the foreigners in Asia...' (VI. 58. 2, hereinafter translated by A. D. Godley). He also compares the heir's conduct to the Persian customs – 'this successor releases from debt any Spartan who

¹⁵ PARKER 1989, 153.

¹⁶ LURAGHI 2002, 156.

owes a debt to the king or to the commonwealth' (τῷ βασιλείῃ ἢ τῷ δημοσίῳ)¹⁷. Herodotus notes that 'among the Persians the king at the beginning of his reign forgives all cities their arrears of tribute' (VI. 59). Apparently, according to Herodotus, in this aspect the Spartans resembled the Persians whom the historian knew well, being a native of Halicarnassus¹⁸ (V. 80). He underscores the frenzy the Spartans worked themselves into at the royal funerals¹⁹ and the heir's generosity unusual for a poor country. Both these aspects were uncommon for Herodotus' contemporaries in other Greek states.

Naturally, the royal funerary ritual as described by Herodotus was not exclusive to Sparta. At one point similar rituals existed in many Greek *poleis*, yet, they disappeared with the collapse of the royal authority. It should be noted that certain changes the Spartans made to the royal funeral ceremony proceeded from the circumstances unique to Sparta. The bond between the lower classes and the Spartan kings stipulated the presence of the former's representatives at the funerals. Herodotus notes that the royal funerals had to be attended not only by *Spartiates*, but also by the *perioikoi*²⁰ and *helots*: 'When a king of the Lacedaemonians dies, a fixed number of their subject neighbors must come to the funeral from all Lacedaemon, besides the Spartans (χωρὶς Σπαρτιητέων). ... these and the *helots* and the Spartans themselves have assembled in one place to the number of many thousands (πολλὰ χιλιάδες), together with the women' (VI. 58. 2).

¹⁷ This might be an ancient legal formula that had no substance due to the diminishing authority of the Spartan kings. We know little about the Spartan treasury. It is seldom mentioned in the sources and when it is mentioned, it is generally to lament its emptiness (Thuc. I. 80. 4). H.W. Stubbs even suggests that there was no treasury in Sparta (STUBBS 1950, 34).

¹⁸ SCOTT 2005, 248.

¹⁹ In Herodotus' day excessive displays of emotions when reacting to misfortune or death were considered typical of oriental practices. For instance, in Aeschylus' *Persae* Xerxes, on witnessing the destruction of his fleet in the Battle of Salamis, tears his clothes and screams shrilly (464–469). By the end of the tragedy Xerxes' (and the chorus') emotions become even more uncontrollable and exaggerated – excessive weeping and groaning, beating their breast and tearing out the beard (910–917, 946, 1030–1033, 1040–1080). As Edith Hall notes, 'it is these features, along with the references to Mariandynian and Mysian styles of mourning (937, 1054), which ensure that the atmosphere created is distinctively 'un-Greek'' (HALL 1989, 84).

²⁰ The Spartan kings acted as intermediaries between the center and the world of the peripheral *poleis*. The *perioikoi* considered themselves members of the League of the Lacedaemonians headed by Sparta. They even shared shrines with the Spartans, e.g., the Apollo's temple on the promontory of Tenarum (SHIPLEY 2006, 68–69). On the status of the *perioikoi*, see: SHIPLEY 1997, esp. 201–206; Idem 2006, esp. 67– 1. The kings owned estates (τεμένη) in the *perioikoi*'s territories (Xen. Lac. pol. 15. 3); and their main source of income was probably the tribute (βασιλικὸς φόρος), that the *perioikoi* paid directly to them. According to Plato, this tribute was quite substantial (Alc. I. 123a). But first and foremost, the kings owed high prestige they enjoyed among the Spartan population to the fact that they were the main, if not the only, representatives of the gods and the high priests for the whole community (Xen. Lac. pol. 15. 1–2). The royal monopoly in the sphere of religion stems from the responsibility to the gods for the fates of the troops and the country that the kings had as the supreme commanders. Both the *perioikoi* and the *Spartiates* as their military leaders fell under the royal authority. The religious privilege was one of the most important indicators of the kings' prestige in Sparta.

It is noteworthy that Herodotus treats both the *perioikoi* and *helots* as the population categories well-known to his readers. He gives no explanation of their status. According to the commentary of L. Scott, ‘for Herodotus, the *helots* are just part of the Spartan landscape’²¹. Herodotus lists the three main categories of the Spartan population whose representatives had to attend royal funerals. Firstly, he mentions *Spartiates* but does not elaborate if all adult full citizens were to put on mourning and attend the ceremony. Most likely, that was the duty of the *Spartiates* who were then in the city²². In Herodotus’ day their numbers were not large, since the phenomenon of *oliganthropia* (ὀλιγανθρωπία – literally, ‘fewness of persons’)²³ had already manifested itself. In any case, the *perioikoi* and *helots* outnumbered full citizens²⁴.

Herodotus does not give the exact figures; however, his words about obligatory, and most likely, enforced attendance of the funerals by a certain number of the *perioikoi* (ἀριθμῶ τῶν περιόικων ἀναγκαστοῦς ἐς τὸ κῆδος ἰέναι) are a clear indication that a certain quota – at least for the *perioikoi* – existed. This quota was probably not a constant and could change depending on the time and circumstances of the funeral of this or that king. Taking the context into account, we may assume that a similar quote existed for the *helots* as well. The following observation by A. Petropoulou seems to be correct: ‘In fact, those participating in the royal funeral represented all sections of the population, their numbers being seemingly in proportion to their social status: a couple from every Spartan household, a smaller number of couples of *perioikoi*, and even fewer *helots*’²⁵. But any, however small, congregation of lower class representatives in one place must have been viewed by the Spartans as a real threat²⁶. It can be safely assumed that most of the time the only *perioikoi* and *helots* that could be found in the city proper were those used as domestics and artisans. Besides, it is entirely possible that the funeral attendees from among the *perioikoi* were limited to the *perioikoi* nobility – those who were building their careers in the Spartan army (Xen. Hell. V. 3. 9; Plut. Cleom. 11. 2). Apart from them, the representatives of prosperous families that were not uncommon among the *perioikoi*²⁷ could also attend royal funerals. The *perioikoi* themselves probably viewed the invitation to arrive in Sparta accompanied by their wives and to take part in the grand ceremony as a sign of belonging to the elites. For them such a trip to the capital and

²¹ SCOTT 2005, 249.

²² PETROPOULOU 2009, 591.

²³ By *oliganthropia* we mean a catastrophic decline in the number of full citizens that Xenophon commented on (Lac. pol. 1. 1). For more recent research into *oliganthropia*, see: DORAN 2018, 1–106.

²⁴ On the number of the *helots*, see: FIGUEIRA 2003, 193–239; SCHEIDEL 2003, 240–247.

²⁵ PETROPOULOU 2009, 592. See also: PARKER 1989, 153.

²⁶ The Spartans perceived all the *helots*, especially after the Third Messenian War, as a menace. They did not feel safe even in their own homes (Critias ap. Liban. Or. XXV. 63). The fear and distrust of this class were ever-present. For instance, in 369 BC it was only out of despair that the Spartans conscripted six thousand *helots* into the army (Xen. Hell. VI. 5. 29).

²⁷ On the socio-economic stratification among the *perioikoi*, see: ZAYKOV 2005, 69–85.

participation in a splendid pageant so untypical of ascetic Sparta could become a source of pride and something to remember for years to come.

What surprises the most about Herodotus' list of attendees is the presence of the *helots* as mandatory participants²⁸. While the *perioikoi* were generally loyal to the Spartans, the *helots* always remained a potential and at times a real threat to the latter. Thus, the practice of gathering the *helots* in the very centre of the state seems odd²⁹. Apparently, the presence of the *perioikoi* and *helots* could primarily be ascribed to the religious factor. The Spartan kings were considered semidivine ancestors and patrons of all the Spartans and the joint participation of the representatives of all the social groups, especially the lower classes, in the funeral ceremony was to hammer the point home. Therefore, royal funerals served as a unifying factor for all the classes: full citizens, the *perioikoi* and *helots*. Involving the *perioikoi* and *helots* in the funerary rituals was done on purpose – the reason behind this lavish and expensive ceremony was to indoctrinate the masses with the belief in the eternal and immutable nature of the royal authority and, by extension, of the Spartan state. Therefore, the corpse of the king in the eyes of the lower classes turned into a symbol of power of Sparta and the Spartans³⁰.

It is unclear whether royal funerals had to be attended by both the Laconian and Messenian *helots* or by only one of these groups³¹. Although an unambiguous answer to this question does not exist due to the scarcity of sources, speculation is certainly possible. The Laconian *helots* would naturally have closer ties with the Spartans by virtue of their geographical location and their early enslavement³². Apparently, the Spartans were not so apprehensive about admitting them into Sparta during royal funerals. Still, the very presence of any number of the *helots* in the capital seems surprising, since oligarchies or similar regimes always feared, and rightly so, mass gatherings of free people, let alone the *helots*, in the city.

²⁸ To some degree it can be attributed to the ambivalent attitude free citizens had towards slaves. There are mentions of slaves changing places with their masters during festivals – the latter waited on their slaves and feasted together with them. For instance, that happened in Athens during the celebration of Kronia (Macrob. Sat. I. 7. 37). In Cydonia on Crete slaves could even flog free people (Ephor. FgrHist 70 F 29). According to the historian Polykrates, in Sparta during the Hyacinthia 'citizens feasted all their acquaintances and their own slaves' (Athen. IV. 17. 139 f – δειπνίζουσιν οἱ πολῖται πάντας τοὺς γνωρίμους καὶ τοὺς δούλους τοὺς ἰδίους) (ALEXIOU 2002, 58)

²⁹ M. Alexiou argues that the *helots* were made to lament at the funeral of a king. Such a custom existed throughout Homeric Greece – in the Iliad, Trojan women, captives in the Greek camp, were forced to lament for Patroklos (XVIII. 339–342); but during the Classical period the custom gradually disappeared, so the main responsibility for lamentation rested with the next of kin (ALEXIOU 2002, 10).

³⁰ PARKER 1989, 153.

³¹ The commentaries on Herodotus known to us do not address this problem.

³² Fairly recent studies emphasize the difference in status between the two groups of the *helots* and assert that the Laconian *helots* were more privileged than their Messenian counterparts. See: WHITBY 1994, 99 and 109; BIRGALIAS 2002, 249–266; KENNEL 2003, 81–105; LURAGHI 2003, 109–141, PECHATNOVA 2020, 325–341.

(Arist. Pol. V. 1311a 13–14; [Arist.] Rhet. ad Alex. 1425b 8–10: μηδὲ [χρῆ] συνάγειν ἐκ τῆς χώρας τὸν ὄχλον εἰς τὴν πόλιν)³³. In any case, since the *perioikoi* and *helots* were allowed to congregate in the city, the authorities must have tightly controlled the whole process. It is possible that the Laconian *helots* themselves had ambivalent feelings about the necessity to be present at the royal funerals, viewing it not only as an ignoble and forced duty but also as a sign of trust their *Spartiate* masters put in them. If it is true that only the Laconian *helots* had a right to attend royal funerals, for them it could be a distinguishing feature that set them apart from the Messenian *helots*. At least, Herodotus insists that horsemen carried the news of the king's death throughout the whole of Laconia (κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν Λακωνικὴν – VI. 58. 1). This is the only part of Herodotus' narrative that may suggest that the *helots* the historian refers to are indeed Laconian.

The term 'Laconia' or 'Laconian land' is hardly ever used by Herodotus, only in case when the historian wants to identify the precise location of a certain place or to mention specific dishes or units of measure existing only in Laconia. For instance, while writing about Amompharetus, the leader of the battalion from the Pitonate, one of the five Spartan villages, Herodotus uses the phrase 'τὸ στρατόπεδον τὸ Λακωνικόν' (Laconian army), since he refers exclusively to the troops recruited from the Spartan villages (*obai*) (IX. 53. 3). Mentioning a place called Thornax, the historian clarifies that it is situated in Laconia (τῆς Λακωνικῆς – I. 69. 4); likewise, the island of Cythera is located off the coast of Laconia (ἐπὶ τὴν Λάκαιναν χώραν – VII. 235). The weight and size of the king's tribute is termed by Herodotus as 'a Laconian bushel of barley-meal and a Laconian quart of wine' (VI. 57. 2). A reader can also encounter the phrase 'a dinner in Laconian fashion' (Λακωνικὸν δεῖπνον – IX. 82. 2). Therefore, it is obvious that by Laconia Herodotus does not mean the state *in toto*, but only its Laconian part. The few instances when Herodotus resorts to using this term or its derivatives leave little doubt that the historian was very clear on the difference between Lacedaemon, which was the official name of the Spartan state³⁴, and the part of its territory known as Laconia. But the hypothesis that only the Laconian *helots* were invited to attend royal funerals is contradicted by the evidence of Pausanias.

³³ SIMONTON 2018, 13 – 14.

³⁴ Herodotus generally calls the Spartan state Lacedaemon (e.g., VII. 220; 228; VIII. 124), less often Sparta (V. 75; VI. 71). The state included both the territory of Laconia and Messenia. In Herodotus' writing, the terms 'Spartans' and 'Lacedaemonians' are synonymous and often used interchangeably within a chapter or even within a sentence (e.g., I. 67; 82; 83; 153; V. 63; 65; 90; 91; VI. 60; 70; 77; 120; VII. 104; 134–136; 159; 211; VIII. 114; 124; IX. 33; 47–48). *Ephor* Chilon (I. 59), king Cleomenes (V. 49; 54; 70), king Leonidas (VII. 204) and regent Pausanias (V. 32) are termed by the historian as Lacedaemonians and Lycurgus as a noble Spartan (I. 65). On the other hand, by the Spartans Herodotus always means full citizens, while Lacedaemonians sometimes include the *perioikoi* – mostly when he refers to the composition of the Spartan army (VI. 58; VII. 234; IX. 28).

The author of *Description of Greece* claims that the treaty Sparta and Messenia concluded after the end of the First Messenian War (late 8th century BC)³⁵ contained the following ‘ritual’ clause – ‘It was also ordained that for the funerals of the kings and other magistrates men should come from Messene with their wives in black garments’ (ἄνδρας ἐκ τῆς Μεσσηνίας καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἐν ἔσθῃτι ἤκειν μελαίνῃ... – IV. 14. 4–5, hereinafter translated by W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod). It should be noted that neither Pausanias, nor Tyrtaeus he quotes mention the *helots*³⁶. Judging from the political component of the treaty, the Messenians were given the same status as the Laconian *perioikoi* and were able to partly retain their autonomy. The clause about the presence of the Messenians at the funerals of the Spartan kings and *gerontes* was apparently quite typical of such treaties during the Archaic period. For instance, after Corinth defeated Megara during roughly the same time frame, the Megarians were obligated to send their mourners to attend the funerals of the Corinthian kings from the ruling family of the Bacchiadae (FgrHist 327 F 19). If Pausanias gives an accurate account of the official agreement forced by Sparta onto the Messenians as the losing side, then apparently in the late 8th century BC the Messenian *helots* did not yet exist as a legal object. Therefore, using Pausanias’ account as conclusive proof of the Messenian *helots*’ mandatory attendance of royal funerals in Sparta does not seem appropriate. It should also be reiterated that, according to Herodotus, the horsemen bearing the sad tidings travelled only throughout Laconia (VI. 58. 1).

It is also not quite clear what the phrase ‘two free persons from each house, a man and a woman, are required to wear mourning (καταμιαίνεσθαι)³⁷ in the excerpt under discussion means (VI. 58. 1). L. Scott, the author of a commentary on Herodotus, takes the sentence literally and understands the phrase ‘free people’ to denote solely the Laconian *perioikoi*³⁸. As an additional argument he quotes Herodotus’ words that disobedience to this order will result in ‘heavy penalties’ (ζημίαι μεγάλα). In L. Scott’s view, such a punishment could only befall the *perioikoi*. However, in this sentence Herodotus emphasizes the number of mourners and their gender rather than their social status. Similarly, the previous phrase merely refers to women ‘beating on cauldrons’. Therefore, ‘free persons’ should denote the *Spartiates* and the *perioikoi* together. As for corporal punishment, it could be inflicted on both the *perioikoi* and

³⁵ Apparently, 5th century historians showed no particular interest in the Spartan conquest of Messenia. Not only did they not know the details of the Messenian Wars, they were not aware there had been several conflicts. For instance, in his account of the foundation of Tarentum Antiochus of Syracuse writes that it happened ‘after the Messenian War’, apparently thinking there was only one such war (ap. Strab. VI. 3. 2. p. 278). Thucydides touches upon the matter in passing mentioning that ‘the *Helots* were mostly the descendants of the Messenians who had been enslaved long ago’ (I. 101. 2). N. Luraghi, the author of a relatively recent study on Messenia, is of the opinion that the orthodox version of the history of these conflicts did not appear, even if as a sketch, before 330 BC. (LURAGHI 2008, 78)

³⁶ LURAGHI 2008, 73–75. Judging by the excerpts from Tyrtaeus found in Pausanias, after the First Messenian War the population of Messenia was not yet turned into the *helots* (LURAGHI 2003, 129–132), since the Second Messenian war is called the fight between two *hoplite* armies (Tyrt. fr. 8 v. 31 sq. and 9 v. 21 Diehl3).

³⁷ Lit. ‘to defile oneself’. On the procedure of defilement, see: HORNBLOWER 1989, 166.

³⁸ SCOTT 2005, 248.

the *Spartiates*. The latter grew accustomed to physical abuse since childhood (Xen. Lac. pol. II. 8–9; Anab. IV. 6. 15; Plat. Leg. I. 633b).

Besides the male population, women also participated most actively in the funeral ceremony, which is mentioned by Herodotus more than once. It was women who signaled the beginning of the burial rites. According to the historian, ‘in the city women go about beating on cauldrons’ (VI. 58. 1). Together with their husbands they put on mourning and played an essential role in the proceedings (58. 3). As evidenced by the tradition, women typically had a significant part in performing funeral rites not only in Sparta but also in other Greek poleis. Apparently, before passing the law on simplification of the burial practices women carried out a prominent role in the funeral ceremony – lamentation for the departed was a duty imposed on them and an integral part of the ritual. Their weeping was by no means due to a sudden onslaught of grief. So the frenzied tearing of clothes, faces and hair, especially at the funerals of the rulers and the highest magistrates, was not a sign of overwhelming sorrow but rather an element of a sacred ritual³⁹. And while other *poleis*, such as Athens in Solon’s day, came to regard the leading role of women in the funeral ceremonies as inappropriate, in Sparta apparently their participation in the royal funeral rites was mandatory and as such had never been reassessed.

Describing the process of interment of the kings, Herodotus emphasizes the sheer number and the agitated emotions of the attendees whose exaggerated grief was not at all suppressed but rather encouraged as compulsory – ‘When these (the *perioikoi* – L. P.) and the *helots* and the Spartans themselves have assembled in one place to the number of many thousands, together with the women, they zealously beat their foreheads and make long and loud lamentation, calling that king that is most recently dead the best (*ἄριστον*) of all their kings’ (VI. 58. 3). Declaring the deceased the best of kings most likely was the obligatory refrain in the lament. It was an appeal to the new king to contend for the right to be buried to the accompaniment of the same refrain.

Obviously, in many cultures funerals went together with the extreme idealization of the departed, and Sparta was not an exception. It should be noted that the tradition traced the maxim that one should not speak ill of the dead back to the reformer Chilon in the 6th century BC (Diog. Laert. I. 3. 70)⁴⁰. Apparently, the crowd of mourners acted as a unified whole, disregarding the differences in age, gender and social status. It was a rare occurrence of

³⁹ See: ALEXIOU 2002, 4–7; 207, n. 27: references to the literary sources; n. 31: references to the images of funeral procession on vases in the Geometric style.

⁴⁰ In A. Powell’s opinion, such extreme glorification of the late Spartan kings was in a sense the lesser evil, since too often the kings and the members of the royal families were offenders against the state who were not entitled to any posthumous honours and whose names had to be expunged from memory. One may say, the civil landscape of Sparta was full of gaps. Thus, it became all the more important to honour those kings who managed to preserve their reputation. In this respect, according to A. Powell, Classical Sparta was one of the least stable Greek states of that period (POWELL 2018, 16).

inverted reality, when all things familiar and mundane appeared reversed. Undoubtedly, the laws of theatrical performance were in action then. As Plutarch notes in this regard, ‘the unusual is proper in mourning’ (Plut. Mor. 267 a = Quaest. Rom. 14) Such excessive displays of grief were probably the relics from the Homeric epoch (Il. XVIII. 23–35.), preserved in Sparta solely for the funeral ceremony of the kings and kings only. In this respect the rest of the royal family members were on equal terms with commoners.

For the Greeks of the Classical period, such magnificent ceremonies and complicated rituals enacted by a large number of people who were not related to the deceased by blood had already become exotic events with an oriental flavour. Even in Sparta public wailing and laments only accompanied the royal funerals. All other Spartans were laid to rest either in absolute silence or with their close kin showing self-restraint even in grief.

Herodotus does not provide the exact location where the royal funeral attendees gathered. It is assumed that their assembly point was at the royal tombs⁴¹. The tombs of the Agiads were in Pitane, while the Eurypontids were buried in Limnae (Paus. III. 12. 8; 14. 2). This arrangement of the royal tombs on opposite sides of the city could hardly be a coincidence. N. Richer was able to formulate a plausible hypothesis explaining the fact. In his opinion, the Spartans had a penchant for doubling the gods and heroes protecting them. As the examples of this phenomenon he mentions *Dioskouroi*, the Divine Twins, greatly venerated in Sparta, and the two different locations of the royal tombs. In his words, ‘Sparte est gardée à ses limites par les tombes des deux dynasties: celles des Eurypontides au sud et celles des Agiades au nord’⁴².

At the end of his account of royal funerals in Sparta Herodotus mentions the period of mourning which temporarily suspended all activities: ‘For ten days after the burial there are no assemblies or elections (οὐδ’ ἀρχαιρεσίη συνίξει), and they mourn during these days’ (VI. 58. 3). The historian’s remark about elections is slightly baffling since it is unclear what elections he refers to. There are speculations that Herodotus hints here at the election of a new king⁴³. Indeed, the transition of power was not fully automatic. Apparently, in the absence of disputes between the members of the royal family and objections from the *ephors* and the *gerontes* the new king was installed without discussion with *Apella*, i.e., ancient Spartan assembly. In case of any dispute the election of the new king was probably held in the form of a contest taking place in the *Apella*. At least, Xenophon’s words that ‘the state (ἡ πόλις) chose Agesilaus king’ (Hell. III. 3. 4, hereinafter translated by C. L. Brownson) ‘when the prescribed days of mourning had been religiously observed (ἐπεὶ δὲ ὡσιώθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι)’ (III. 3. 1), (i.e., after the mourning period was over) can be interpreted in this way⁴⁴.

⁴¹ PETROPOULOU 2009, 592 – 593.

⁴² RICHER 1994, 89.

⁴³ PETROPOULOU 2009, 594.

⁴⁴ In 399 BC Agesilaus was able to prove he had a better claim to the throne than the legitimate heir Leotyichidas (Xen. Hell. III. 3. 1–3; Plut. Lys. 22. 6–13; Ages. 3; Paus. III. 8. 7–10).

Herodotus mentions another peculiarity of the royal burial practice: ‘Whenever a king dies in war, they make an image of him (εἶδωλον)⁴⁵ and carry it out on a well-spread bier’ (VI. 58. 3). M. Toher, who devoted an article to the analysis of what the tradition has to say about εἶδωλα, interprets Herodotus’ words as follows: εἶδωλον should have been present at the funeral of any Spartan king slain in battle, regardless of whether there was a corpse or not⁴⁶. According to the researcher, modern commentators do not have compelling reasons to suspect Herodotus of inaccuracies⁴⁷. However, it has long been an established opinion among scholars that the use of εἶδωλα at the funerals of the Spartan rulers could have been introduced specifically for king Leonidas⁴⁸, whose body and severed head apparently had fallen into the hands of the Persians (Her. VII. 238)⁴⁹. The cenotaph⁵⁰ of Leonidas is thought to have been erected among the royal tombs of the Agiads with the purpose of placing his εἶδωλον there. According to A. Petropoulou, interring εἶδωλα might have been a burial practice exclusive to Laconia⁵¹. A Spartan king’s εἶδωλον was probably a potent visual symbol representing an important transformation the king underwent posthumously, attaining the status of a hero⁵². However, Herodotus is silent on the issue of the Spartan kings being worshipped as heroes after death. Commentators consider it a significant flaw of Herodotus’ otherwise detailed account of the Spartan royal funerals⁵³.

This lacuna can be filled with the help of Xenophon. A passage from *Hellenica* reads that ‘...he (king Agis – L.P.) received a burial more splendid than belongs to man’ (Hell. III. 3. 1); while in *Polity of the Lacedaemonians* we find information that ‘Lycurgan laws demonstrate their (Spartans’ – L.P.) intention to honour the kings of Lakedaimonians not as men, but as heroes’ after their death (Lac. pol. 15. 9, translated by M. Lipka). But do these texts prove beyond doubt that those of the Spartan kings who received royal funerals were venerated as heroes *post mortem*? It would indeed seem that such a conclusion should be drawn from the above-

⁴⁵ It was a life-sized wooden figure which was a substitute for the corpse. For more information, see: PETROPOULOU 2009, 596 – 601.

⁴⁶ The use of the image of the deceased at the funeral was not a rare occurrence in ancient times. In Rome it was common practice bearing no relation to the heroization of the dead (Polyb. VI. 53. 4–10). For instance, along Julius Caesar there was a wax figure of him on the bier (Appian BC. II. 147). Later, wax images of the Roman emperors were also present at their funerals.

⁴⁷ TOHER 1999, 115.

⁴⁸ SCHAEFER 1965, 324–325; SCOTT 2005, 360; RICHER 2007, 249.

⁴⁹ In other cases the body of the king was brought back to Sparta as per tradition. See: Agesipolis I, who died from fever during the campaign of 381 BC in Macedon (Xen. Hell. V. 3. 19; Diod. XV. 93); also Agesilaus, who died in Libya in 360 BC (Plut. Ages. 40. 3). Both were brought back to Sparta to be given a royal funeral there.

⁵⁰ Cenotaphs were known in Greece back in Homer’s day (Od. I. 289–91; II. 220–223).

⁵¹ PETROPOULOU 2009, 598.

⁵² In the more recent commentaries there is speculation that εἶδωλα of the kings slain in battle do not automatically imply awarding special honours (HORNBLOWER, PELLING 2017, 165).

⁵³ HORNBLOWER, PELLING 2017, 165.

mentioned passages by Xenophon. Even Pleistoanax in 427/6 BC was reinstated solely at the Pythia's request, since she called the disgraced king 'the seed of the demigod son of Zeus' (Thuc. V. 16. 2, translated by M. Hammond; cp.: Plut. Mor. 403b = Pyth. or. 19). As M. Flower notes, 'the permeability of the categories of moral, hero, and god, and the easy slippage between them, is more pronounced than in other Greek communities of pre-Hellenistic Greece'⁵⁴.

Regarding king Leonidas, his supposed remains were buried in Sparta forty years after his death in the specially built tomb located not far from the theatre (Paus. III. 14. 1). It is unclear why Leonidas' bones were not interred among the other royal burials of the Agiads. Apparently, by mid-5th century BC king Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans were seen as undisputed heroes whose brave deeds served to educate the next generations of Spartan citizens. That, it would seem, was the reason for situating Leonidas' tomb in the city centre. The same location, according to Pausanias, was used to erect 'a slab with the names, and their fathers' names, of those who endured the fight at Thermopylae against the Persians' (III. 14. 1). The Spartans were well aware of the power of visual propaganda and adept at using it. According to the tradition, building tombs in the city centre was permitted, sanctioned even by Lycurgus himself (Plut. Mor. 238 d = Inst. Lac. 18). Leonidas might have been the first Spartan to be given this honour. Later, in addition to the tomb of Leonidas, memorials were erected close to it to pay homage to two more outstanding Spartan commanders – the regent Pausanias and Brasidas (Paus. III. 14. 1). Plutarch explains the tradition 'to bury their dead within the city, and to have memorials of them near the sacred places' (Lyc. 27. 1, translated by B. Perrin) by the necessity to spread visual propaganda more actively and make it more relatable for the young Spartans. Plutarch customarily ascribes this provision, just like any other innovation, to Lycurgus, although the practice is likely to have appeared relatively late. The memorial to Leonidas was probably the first among the tombs eventually built inside the city⁵⁵.

It is known that by the time of Herodotus the power of the Spartan kings had significantly diminished. They retained their position as supreme commanders, but the rest of their responsibilities had to be shared with or transferred to the *ephors* and the *gerontes*. However, after their death they were still buried and venerated in a way similar to Homeric heroes. It appears that the funerary ritual remained unchanged since the earliest times. On account of its oriental splendour and considerable complexity the ceremony was at odds with the other facets of life in Spartan society. Moreover, the ritual did not truly reflect the status of the

⁵⁴ FLOWER 2009, 214.

⁵⁵ In the Classical period burials within city limits were considered extraordinary occasions. Not many were found worthy of this singular honour: e.g., Brasidas in Amphipolis (Thuc. V. 11. 1), Euphron in Sycion (Xen. Hell. VII. 3. 12), Timoleon in Syracuse (Plut. Tim. 29).

Spartan rulers either. The royal authority was not characterized by any attributes typical of Near Eastern monarchies. Rather, the Spartan kings were first among equals and their citizens could freely approach them (Xen. Hell. V. 4. 28).

The royal funerary ritual in Sparta was artificially preserved in a pseudo-archaic form since it fulfilled a vital political function of transferring the sacred power from the late king to his legitimate heir⁵⁶. This funerary lavishness persevered in Sparta despite the fact that by the 5th century BC the kings had lost a large share of their political, military and judicial power. However, as sacred figures they had a high degree of importance to the community even after their death. If in his lifetime a king did not bring disgrace upon himself, he most probably acquired the status of a hero posthumously⁵⁷. For instance, in an attempt to justify the barbaric funerary excesses so untypical of Sparta, Xenophon mentions that the Lacedaemonian kings were venerated as heroes (Lac. pol. 15. 9).

It can be inferred from Xenophon's remark that technically all the Spartan kings were awarded heroic honours after their death, i.e., their heroization was tied to their 'office'⁵⁸. The sole exception was the kings who had committed a crime⁵⁹. As the heads of state, the rulers of Sparta were sacred and their posthumous heroic cult helped to maintain the stability of the whole community. Heroization was in essence the last step of the funerary ritual. The deference with which the Spartans treated their kings as head priests in their lifetime and recipients of heroic honours after their death at least partly stemmed from Sparta's exceptional conservatism and reluctance to change anything pertaining to ideology. Sparta's steadfast refusal to alter and simplify the royal funerary ritual could probably be attributed to the fact that the ceremony performed an important ideological and propaganda functions – it unified all the classes and stressed the importance of preserving the royal authority as the core component of Spartan statehood.

Performed in a 'barbaric' manner, the royal funerary ritual strikingly exemplifies the unique, one of a kind nature of the royal authority in Sparta as contrasted with the panhellenic context.

⁵⁶ The kings acted as priests of their divine ancestor Zeus; they were symbolically connected with the god's two sons – *Dioskouroi* (Thuc. V. 16. 2; Her. VI. 56) and exercised control over all public forms of divination. Against Greek standards, the Spartan kings wielded a huge amount of sacred power. In this respect 'their tight control over public forms of divination, has a much closer affinity to the religious-political power of Near Eastern monarchs than to that of magistrates in other Greek cities' (FLOWER 2009, 213).

⁵⁷ 'Heroization' of major political figures became almost commonplace in the Hellenistic period.

⁵⁸ This, however, is open to argument. The main argument against the hypothesis is that Herodotus does not mention posthumous heroization of the kings among their privileges. It is also entirely possible to split hairs over Xenophon's wording, which is not that the kings were heroized posthumously, but merely that the kings were honoured not as mortal men but as heroes (οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώπους, ἀλλ' ὡς ἥρωας).

⁵⁹ There are known examples of kings being dethroned for committing crimes, whether real or fictitious, so their posthumous heroization would be out of the question. For instance, the Spartans never attempted to retrieve and rebury the body of king Pausanias, who had been sentenced to death, escaped to Tegea and died there.

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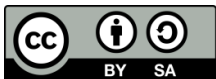
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Delius of Plutarch and Dias of Flavius Philostratus: On the Political Activities of Platonists in the Fourth Century BC

Maxim M. KHOLOD¹

Abstract. *The present paper evaluates from the point of view of historical credibility two passages, that of Plutarch (Adv. Colot., 32.1126d) and that of Flavius Philostratus (Vitae soph., 485-486), where respectively Delius and Dias appear. The first of the persons, as is claimed, especially influenced Alexander the Great and the second did Philip II in the matter of the war against Persia. The author argues that in contrast to Philostratus' report, Plutarch's account can well be accepted (albeit not without reservations) as credible.*

Rezumat. *Acest studiu evaluează, dintr-un punct de vedere istoric, credibilitatea a două pasaje literare: cel al lui Plutarh (Adv. Colot., 32.1126d) și cel al lui Flavius Philostratus (Vitae soph., 485-486). Mai exact, este vorba despre cele în care apar numele lui Delius și Dias. Primul dintre cei doi ar fi fost o influență importantă asupra lui Alexandru cel Mare, iar cel de-al doilea ar fi fost responsabil de sfătuirea lui Filip al II-lea în vederea războiului împotriva Persiei. Autorul sugerează că, spre deosebire de informațiile oferite de Philostratus, cele venite din partea lui Plutarh pot fi cu ușurință acceptate (deși nu fără anumite rezerve) ca fiind credibile.*

Keywords: Plutarch, Flavius Philostratus, Philip II, Alexander the Great, Greek cities in Asia Minor.

Both Plutarch and Flavius Philostratus write, each in a separate passage, about the special impact that those from the Academy, the Ephesians, had on the Macedonian kings' decisions to wage war against Persia.² Apart from several other details, these accounts differ from one another in that Plutarch states this representative of the Academy to have been Delius, while according to Philostratus, it was Dias. Besides, the Macedonian king mentioned by Plutarch is Alexander the Great, whereas Philostratus records that it was Philip II. The passages are as follows:

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² All dates are BC/BCE unless otherwise noted.

“And the emissary sent to Alexander by the Greeks of Asia, who more than any other kindled his ardour and spurred him on to take up the war against the barbarians, was Delius of Ephesus, a follower of Plato” (Plut. *Adv. Colot.*, 32.1126d).³

(transl. Ph.H. De Lacy, Loeb)

“Dias of Ephesus made fast the cable of his philosophy to the Academy, but he was held to be a sophist for the following reason. When he saw that Philip was treating the Greeks harshly, he persuaded him to lead an expedition against Asia, and went to and fro telling the Greeks that they ought to accompany Philip on his expedition, since it was no dishonour to endure slavery abroad in order to secure freedom at home” (Philostr. *Vitae soph.*, 485–486).⁴

(transl. W.C. Wright, Loeb)

In the present essay, I intend to assess these passages in terms of historical credibility.

To begin with, it should be pointed out that, apart from the information these two passages provide, we know nothing about either Delius or Dias, and this fact seems to give us a compelling reason to believe that the renown the two people enjoyed in their lifetime, if, of course, they existed at all (see below), was quite modest. That alone is already enough to regard as implausible the statement occurring in both passages that such persons were the instigators of the Macedonian kings' decisions to wage war on Persia. But the main point in this connection is the following. It is quite clear that influencing such decisions made by the Macedonian kings would prove impossible for anybody, even for Isocrates in the case of Philip. There is no doubt that both Philip's decision to start a war with Persia and Alexander's decision to continue this war were their fully independent decisions.⁵

Nevertheless, it does not follow from this that the Macedonian kings did not have any contacts, including personal meetings, with some Greek intellectuals and could not have discussed, *inter alia*, the issue of the war against Persia with them, because through Isocrates' efforts this issue had gained widespread popularity in the intellectual milieu, as well as in Greek society in general (Isocrates' letters to Philip are the best-known proof of the existence of such contacts). Therefore communication between Philip and Alexander and such people as Delius or Dias does not appear unlikely in and of itself. However, in our case it appears that these episodes should not be considered as both having really taken place. Indeed, while comparing the above-mentioned passages, one can notice some striking similarities which do not seem to have occurred by accident. Rather, they lead us to believe that what Plutarch and Philostratus

³ ὁ δὲ πεμφθεὶς πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Ἀσίᾳ κατοικοῦντων Ἑλλήνων καὶ μάλιστα διακαύσας καὶ παροξύνας ἄψασθαι τοῦ πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους πολέμου Δῆλιος ἦν Ἐφέσιος, ἑταῖρος Πλάτωνος.

⁴ Δίας δὲ ὁ Ἐφέσιος τὸ μὲν πείσμα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ φιλοσοφίας ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας ἐβέβλητο, σοφιστῆς δὲ ἐνομίσθη διὰ τὸδε: τὸν Φίλιππον ὀρῶν χαλεπὸν ὄντα τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν στρατεῦναι ἔπεισε, καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνας διεξῆλθε λέγων, ὡς δεόν ἀκολουθεῖν στρατεύοντι, καλὸν γὰρ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἕξω δουλεῦναι ἐπὶ τῷ οἴκῳ ἐλευθεροῦσθαι.

⁵ FROLOV 2001, 522–527; cf. MARKLE 1976, 80–89; ISAYEVA 1994, 165–173.

write about is the same event and not two separate ones: in addition to the statement that both Delius and Dias attempted to persuade the Macedonian kings to start a war against Persia, it is said that they were both Platonists, both Ephesians, and even their names bear a certain similarity to each other (they are relatively short and starting with the same letter).⁶ If it is true, a legitimate question then arises: which of the two passages should be recognized as being the record of an event that actually happened?

In my opinion, preference should be given to Plutarch's account in this case. Along with the fact that Plutarch in general is much more trustworthy than Philostratus in terms of conveying historical information (although at times his narrative does contain inaccuracies), another thing should be noted as well. Philostratus' Dias, with his promotion of the idea of it being necessary to wage war on Persia in order for the Greeks to be free in their native land, in fact completely follows the Panhellenic program of Isocrates. And it is quite noteworthy that further on, in his account of Isocrates' life, Philostratus makes absolutely no mention of his efforts to enlist Philip's help to organize such a military campaign (*Vitae soph.*, 503–506). Taking this fact into account, one should raise the question whether Philostratus might have mistakenly ascribed the activities carried out by Isocrates to Dias, knowing from his source that Dias communicated with the Macedonian king regarding the war against Persia. Incidentally, if so, it becomes clear why this Macedonian king in Philostratus' passage is none other than Philip. At any rate, it is obvious that all this is not conducive to enhancing the credibility of Philostratus' account. Lastly, it is remarkable that in his narrative Philostratus confines himself to conveying general historical information, which serves as nothing more than the background to the sophistic position of Dias, while the passage of Plutarch contains a number of specific details. Moreover, due to the presence of such details, Plutarch's account may be put into a more particular historical context than what Philostratus writes, and this also argues for its preferability.⁷

Indeed, Plutarch's words that Delius was "sent to Alexander by the Greeks of Asia" attest to his connection with the Greek cities in Asia Minor. Besides, given Plutarch's reference to Delius as an Ephesian (Philostratus' description of Dias as an Ephesian is further confirmation of his origin), one may suggest that at that time Delius was active mainly in Ephesus. On the other hand, one can infer from the account of Plutarch that the meeting between Alexander and Delius should have taken place before the Macedonian king launched his campaign against Persia, i.e. between October 336, when he ascended the throne,⁸ and the spring 334. Therefore it is clear that Delius' visit to Alexander, as described by Plutarch, should be considered in the

⁶ Cf. NATORP 1901, 2446; BERVE 1926, 131, n. 251; TRAMPEDACH 1994, 101.

⁷ Cf. TRAMPEDACH 1994, 101.

⁸ On this date, see especially HATZOPOULOS 1982, 21–42.

context of events occurring in the Greek cities in western Asia Minor, and in Ephesus in particular, in that period of time.

These events were connected with the military operations conducted in western Asia Minor starting from the spring 336 by the Macedonian expeditionary corps – the advance-guard of the army which under Philip's command was supposed to invade Persia some time later. Although, as is well-known, Philip's plans were thwarted, the advance-guard was not withdrawn by the new king Alexander, but it remained in Asia Minor until he arrived there in 334.

During the first year of the campaign the Macedonian expeditionary corps managed to achieve considerable successes: if not all, then the majority of Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor from Cyzicus in the north to Ephesus (or even Magnesia-on-the-Maeander) in the south fell under Macedonian control. What happened in Ephesus at that time as well as in the following year, one can learn from Arrian (*Anab.*, I, 17, 9–12). According to him, the city's siding with the Macedonians was attended by overthrowing the rule of the pro-Persian oligarchs and establishing democracy. It is unclear whether Heropythus, one of the leaders of the Ephesian democrats, who was mentioned by Arrian, died in this struggle or soon after that. At any rate, it is known that he received from the winning democratic faction a tomb at the *agora* and possibly even honours paid to him as a hero. Besides, in the famous temple of Artemis the Ephesian democrats erected a statue of Philip II, which may be considered as a token of gratitude of the new government to the Macedonian king for some help in overthrowing the oligarchic regime and also as an attempt to solicit his favour and protection in the future. However, in 335 the situation on the west coast of Asia Minor changed dramatically. The Persians launched a successful counteroffensive there. As a result, all the Greek cities in Asia Minor, controlled by the Macedonians earlier, with the exception of Abydos (and maybe Rhoeteum), were brought back under the Great king's authority and thus, pro-Persian oligarchies and tyrannies were restored in them. The same Arrian speaks (see above) that at that time Ephesus surrendered to Memnon, a famous Rhodian mercenary general in the Persian service, who installed a garrison in the city and facilitated the establishment of an oligarchy run by Syrophax and his family. On having seized power, the oligarchs immediately plundered the temple of Artemis, threw down Philip's statue in it, profaned Heropythus' tomb at the *agora* and inflicted penalties on the pro-Macedonian democrats, forcing them into exile and possibly even executing some of them.⁹

It cannot be ruled out that at the time of Delius' meeting with Alexander the former was one of the Ephesian exiles. Indeed, it is highly improbable that Delius was officially sent to Alexander by the Greeks of Asia Minor collectively, as follows from the account of Plutarch, for

⁹ For a detailed account of the events, see KHOLOD 2018, 407–446. In addition, on the statue of Philip in the Artemisium, see KHOLOD 2016, 497, n. 7.

there is nothing to indicate that they could take any action jointly and in concert at that time. It is quite possible that Delius acted either on his own initiative or, which is more likely, on behalf of his pro-Macedonian fellow citizens while presenting himself as a spokesman for the whole Greek community in Asia Minor. It should not surprise us that in this case Delius would have acted as an adherent of democracy, a form of government which should not be able to command the respect of a disciple of Plato, or at least, should not be actively supported by him (cf. Plato *Resp.*, 557a–558c).¹⁰ Indeed, the crux of the matter seems to be not Delius' abstract sympathies or antipathies towards some form of government, but rather his implacable opposition, as a graduate of the Academy too, to the barbarians' dominion over the Greeks (cf. Plato *Resp.*, 469b–c; 470c–d; 471b) or, to be precise, to the Persians' dominion over the Greek cities in Asia Minor, including Ephesus. In my view, that alone was enough to compel Delius to side with the Ephesian democrats – the political force that was decidedly anti-Persian in his home city. On the other hand, there appears to be one more factor that should be taken into account in this context. The fact is that, regarding the representatives and graduates of the Academy, one has to distinguish between philosophers proper (such as Speusippus, Xenocrates, Aristotle and naturally Plato himself) and young elitist men, who, similar to Isocrates' disciples, joined Plato's school mainly to further their education. When the latter (those of the outer circle of the Academy, so to say) returned to their native cities, they could be involved in local politics, not acting as Platonists but rather as scions of their influential families, and as such they could support democracy if need be. For instance, Leo of Byzantium and Euphraeus of Oreus did exactly that, becoming pro-democracy politicians in their home cities.¹¹ That could be the case with Delius as well.

If Delius actually paid a visit to Alexander while already in exile, this meeting should have taken place sometime in the winter 335/4 or in early spring 334. But it cannot be ruled out that the visit was made earlier – either at the end of 336, when Philip's demise must have caused fear among the Ephesian democrats (whose representative Delius could have been) that the new young king would postpone or even abandon the war against Persia,¹² or in the autumn 335, when the defeats suffered by the Macedonian advance-guard put democracy in Ephesus at risk. At any rate, it is worth believing that the purpose of Delius' visit to Alexander was first and foremost to enlist the king's help to solve the Ephesian matters or, to be more exact, to determine the fate of the pro-Macedonian democratic regime – to support it if it still existed at that time, or to restore it later on if it had already been overthrown. However, it is likely that Delius was concurrently expressing the expectations common for a significant number of the

¹⁰ In more detail: SANTAS 2007, 70–89; MARSHALL 2009, 93–105; TOPALOĞLU 2014, 73–83.

¹¹ TRAMPEDACH 1994, 93–100.

¹² Cf. BERVE 1926, 131, n. 251; BOSWORTH 1980, 131; TRAMPEDACH 1994, 101; FLOWER 2000, 107, n. 50; HECKEL 2006, 106.

Greeks in Asia Minor – those of Alexander as *hegemon* of the Hellenic League to deliver them as soon as possible from the ignominy of being controlled by the Persian barbarians, which, as I suppose, is reflected in a rather garbled fashion in Plutarch's words of Delius' sending to the Macedonian king by these Greeks collectively.

In conclusion, it seems that the offered analysis of the two passages of Plutarch and Philostratus from a historical point of view allows one to think that, despite their apparent discrepancies, they describe the same event. However, in my opinion, preference should be given to Plutarch's passage since he provides a more credible report of the event (although not a completely accurate one). Thus, there is no need to agree with the scholars casting doubt on the veracity of Plutarch's account in general.¹³ On the contrary, it should be considered as supplying valuable information which, if viewed critically, gives us a better understanding of the processes taking place in the Greek cities in Asia Minor and especially in Ephesus shortly before the Asian expedition of Alexander.

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¹³ See e.g. GEHRKE 1985, 59, n. 22; BRUNT 1993, 291.

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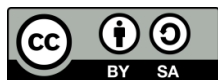
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