

SHORTER CONTRIBUTIONS

AGAMEMNON 437: *CHRYSAMOIBOS* ARES, ATHENS AND EMPIRE*

Abstract: The chorus' depiction of Ares as a 'gold-changer of bodies' and trader in precious metals underscores the increased intersection of finances and war in fifth-century Athens. The metaphor's details point to three contemporary developments (in addition to the *patrios nomos* allusion noted by Fraenkel): the increased conscription of citizens, the institution of pay for military service, and the payment of financial support for war orphans. And as leader of the Delian League, Athens itself resembled the war-god, establishing equivalents between men and money, and profiting from its acceptance of tribute payments in a variety of currencies. Taken together, the metaphor's contemporary dimensions probably had an unsettling effect on the Athenian audience.

In *Agamemnon*'s first stasimon, the chorus employ a bold metaphor to depict Ares:

ὁ χρυσαμοιβὸς δ' ἄρης σωμάτων
καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχαι δορὸς
πυρωθὲν ἐξ Ἰλίου
φίλοισι πέμπει βαρὺ
ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον, ἀν-
τήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-
ζων λέβητας εὐθέτου(ς).

Ares, gold-changer of bodies
and balance-holder in spear-battle
from Ilium to loved ones
sends fired, heavy
dust, ill-wept, filling the handy urns
with ashes exchanged for men.¹ (437-44)

The comparison describes how the ashes of Greek warriors who died at Troy return home in urns to their next of kin. For the audience, the grim metaphor derived much of its efficacy from its familiar field of reference.² The chorus' war-god is not so much a distant deity seated atop Olympus or a berserker cutting a swathe through men on the battlefield as a commonplace figure from the nearby Agora: the trader in precious metals. The metaphor also highlights the increasing intersection of finances and war in fifth-century Athens. Although Fraenkel noted an allusion to the *patrios nomos*,³ to date other contemporary echoes have remained unexplored. In the aftermath of the Persian Wars, the nature of warfare changed. The contest against the Great King faded; the Delian League expanded and became an empire; land battles close to home involving phalanxes increasingly yielded to fleets and lengthy sieges conducted abroad. The chorus' description of Ares points to three of the most important consequences of these changes: the increased conscription of citizens, the institution of pay for military service, and the payment of financial support for children of the fallen. The metaphor further suggests that Athens itself had become χρυσαμοιβός ... σωμάτων/ καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχαι δορὸς. As leader of the Delian League, the city determined how many men the allies should contribute to the cause. When these allies substituted financial payments for ships and crews, Athens established equivalents between men and money. And in collecting the annual tribute, the city became a trader in precious met-

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¹ The Greek text is that of West (2000).

² Fraenkel (1950) 2.228.

³ Fraenkel (1950) 2.227.

als, profiting from its acceptance of payment in a number of gold and silver currencies. Taken together, the metaphor's contemporary dimensions suggest apprehension in the audience about the uncertain path upon which imperial Athens had embarked.

Lexically the most eye-catching element of the metaphor is χρυσαμοιβός. Derived from gold (χρυσός) and changer (ἀμοιβός), the word is a *hapax* in classical literature. One scholiast glossed it as ἀργυραμοιβός, an assayer/changer of silver, while Hesychius paraphrased it as ἀργυρογνώμων.⁴ This second noun was used by Ps.-Plato (*De Virtute* 378d7-9) and Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1375b7) to denote someone skilled at judging the composition and purity of precious metals. Thus while the chorus' word χρυσαμοιβός is novel, Ares' function is not. On the contrary, he is doing what war has always done, offering definitive judgements about the worth of individual men.⁵

To determine the value of a particular specimen, a χρυσαμοιβός needed to know quantity as well as composition. Ares' description as ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχαι δορός is suggestive in this regard. A scholiast naturally linked the phrase with the Homeric Zeus holding the balance in warfare.⁶ In the *Iliad*, for instance, the god uses the instrument to determine both the fates of Achilles and Hector (22.209-12) and the outcome of battle on a particular day (8.69-72). *Agamemnon's* chorus may therefore be suggesting that Ares deals out death to individual Greeks and heavy losses to their side. But in Homer Zeus measures dooms, κῆρες, while in Aeschylus' lost tragedy *Psychostasia* Zeus weighs the ψυχαί, souls, of Achilles and Memnon.⁷ The change reflects considerations of substance as well as metre: while two heroes' κῆρες may differ drastically on any given day, their ψυχαί are more similar. In Aeschylean hands τάλαντα compare like with like, assessing weight. Ταλαντοῦχος thus complements χρυσαμοιβός: together the two attributes let Ares take the full measure of a warrior's mettle.

In assessing men's value, Ares pursues one of *Agamemnon's* main themes. Noting Helen's centrality to the drama, Wohl has analysed the chorus' description of her as an ἄγαλμα πλούτου (741). As an ἄγαλμα, Helen is an invaluable object of incalculable worth linked to various types of aristocratic exchange. She functions simultaneously as πλοῦτος, the more pedestrian, democratic sort of wealth linked to commerce. Standing at the intersection of these two economies, Helen is the '*Agamemnon's* universal equivalent'.⁸ And the play's characters explore just how much (or how many) of her is equivalent to the sack of a city, the deaths of warriors, the sacrifice of a virgin or the murder of a king.⁹ The golden daughter of Leda makes possible the calculation and expression of the value of disparate items in a common currency: herself.

If Helen is the play's gold standard, χρυσαμοιβός Ares is its most skilled day-trader. Son of the Ταλαντοῦχος supreme and brother of the divine metallurgist, he comes by his abilities naturally. One term crucial to our metaphor is ψῆγμα (442), 'that which is rubbed or scraped off, shavings, scrapings, chips'.¹⁰ Ares is a trader who accepts bulkier items of lesser value, paying out comparable amounts of costlier and more compact substances, namely precious metals. The noun is first modified by the aorist passive participle πυρωθέν ('having been fired', 440), which appropriately describes the ash sent home from the pyres. Headlam plausibly saw in the word a reference to the refining of ore.¹¹ The third main meaning of πυρώω ('treat with fire: roast, grill ... melt') offers an even more intriguing possibility: the participle may refer to metal that has been heated and shaped into currency.¹² Given the context, πυρωθέν ... ψῆγμα might mean ore fired and cast into bullion or struck into coins.

⁴ Demetrius Triclinius *ad* 437c (in Smith (1993) 136). Seaford (2004) 157 n.37 claims '*chrysaioibos* is more appropriate than *arguramoibos* to the heroic age and to a god'.

⁵ E.g. Thuc. 2.42.2.

⁶ Cited by Smith (1993) 136.

⁷ Nauck (1926) 88-9.

⁸ Wohl (1998) 85.

⁹ E.g. lines 534-7; see also Wohl (1998) 83.

¹⁰ LSJ⁹ s.v. ψῆγμα. On its occasional meaning of 'gold-dust', see Fraenkel (1950) 2.230.

¹¹ Cited by Fraenkel ((1950) 2.229-30), who rejected the claim.

¹² LSJ⁹ s.v. πυρώω note this usage in a third-century inscription from Oropos.

Another part of the metaphor describes how Ares pays out his recompense (ἀντ-ήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-/ζων λέβητας εὐθέτου(ς), 442-4). At one level the phrase is an ordinary one describing the handling of human remains. For instance, in *Choepori* the disguised Orestes brings Clytemnestra a tale of his own death in exile and asks whether she wishes his remains to be returned to Argos or buried in Phocis: his dust has been well wept, and is currently housed in a bronze vessel (νῦν γὰρ λέβητος χαλκείου πλευρώματα / σποδὸν κέκευθεν ἀνδρὸς εἰ κεκλαυμένου, 686-7). The similarities between the two passages suggest Ares' treatment of the dead is customary and even reverential. But as χρυσαμοιβός, the war-god is primarily concerned with profit.¹³ The entire metaphor depicts a financial transaction, and an involuntary one at that; what Ares presides over is a 'fire sale'. The use of the adjective βαρὺ ('heavy', 441) to further modify ψήγμα captures the unfair nature of the exchange. In one sense the dust is incomparably βαρὺ, grievous for the kin. But in another it is all too light: they sent living kilos of flesh and blood to Troy, and receive but scant grammes of ash. The discrepancy is linked linguistically to the sullen words (βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις σὺν κότῳ, 456) that follow the urns' return. The final adjective modifying ψήγμα likewise has multiple senses. Given battlefield conditions, the dead were δυσδάκρυτον; they had not been properly mourned *in situ*. But the prefix δυσ- also describes the angry way the men's families later weep over their remains.

And then there are the urns themselves. λέβητες (444) encompassed a number of shapes, could be made out of metal or clay, and often served as water basins or cinerary urns.¹⁴ But the noun can also be employed more generally to denote a container or casket.¹⁵ Moreover, archaeologists have found that pottery vessels housing human remains were often reused: 'only in exceptional circumstances, or as a secondary function after their employment in a domestic context, was the use for burial attested'.¹⁶ The metaphor's λέβητες may thus be akin to *amphorae*, the ubiquitous containers used to ship foodstuffs and liquids throughout the ancient Mediterranean. The accompanying adjective εὐθέτου(ς) (444) is similarly ambiguous. On the one hand, it suggests urns that were appropriately decorated or appointed. Yet it may also have the more utilitarian sense of 'conveniently placed' or 'easily stowed', as aboard a ship.¹⁷ The sub-text of the noun-phrase thus calls to mind unseemly practicalities of storage and shipment. The loved ones' families sent off to war were unique; the returning ash is uniform and packed in the ancient equivalent of reused tin cans.

In creating our metaphor, Aeschylus relied on the numismatic particulars of his own day. The evidence of coin hoards implies a conspicuous lull in Athenian coin production between 480 and approximately 450.¹⁸ Moreover, 'bullion, which performed money functions for the Greeks before the invention of coinage, continued to do so long after the widespread adoption of coinage'.¹⁹ *Agamemnon* thus dates to a liminal period, with πυρωθέν ... ψήγμα spanning the gap between full-blown trade in bullion and a monetarized economy reliant on Athenian owls.²⁰ Some traders in precious metals were independent, others affiliated with private banks.²¹ Maritime trade led some to concentrate in the Piraeus, while others operated out of the north-west corner of the Agora convenient to the Dipylon Gate.²² Finding a χρυσαμοιβός was easy; finding an honest one, more difficult. The number of currencies in circulation, the fluctuation of individ-

¹³ In this regard he resembles Kurke's κάπηλος ((1999) 78).

¹⁴ Given the importance of bridal imagery in the stasimon (e.g. lines 406-11), the term may also hint at the λέβητος γαμικός.

¹⁵ E.g. Soph. *Trach.* 556; see LSJ⁹ s.v. λέβητος.

¹⁶ Ebbinghaus (2005) 54.

¹⁷ LSJ⁹ s.v. εὐθετος.

¹⁸ Kraay (1976) 66-8.

¹⁹ Seaford (2004) 88; see also von Reden (1997) 162ff.

²⁰ Χρυσάμοιβός Ares elides many of the gold/silver, bullion/coinage and aristocratic/egalitarian distinctions drawn by Kurke (1999) 304-5 and *passim*.

²¹ Cohen (1992) 19 notes that 'although bankers continued in the fourth century to provide exchange facilities, this was not the dominant aspect of their business'.

²² On the location με[ταξὺ τῶν τρ]-απεζῶν, see Stroud (1974) 165-6.

ual issues (in purity, weight and wear), the presence of counterfeits, the range of commissions charged, and the paucity of reliable information all provided experts with opportunities for fraud and profiteering.²³ To guard against such sharp trading, the Athenians eventually undertook several measures. By 425 they installed the ἀγορανόμοι to ensure that goods changing hands ‘were in an acceptable condition and that there was no fraud’.²⁴ One of their duties was to ensure that wares were unadulterated, ἀκίβδηλα; Rhodes notes that ‘κίβδηλος is frequently used of adulterated coins, in which the metal is not of the expected purity’.²⁵ Complementing the ἀγορανόμοι were the μετρονόμοι, who policed the weights and measures used by sellers (*Ath. Pol.* 51.2). And by 398/7 the city had established public slaves as currency testers (δοκιμασταί) in both the Agora and Piraeus.²⁶ But back in 458, none of these institutions existed. And a good portion of *Agamemnon*’s suffering stems from the fact that, in the terms of our metaphor, Ares is an unprincipled dealer in death working in an unregulated marketplace.

Agamemnon’s military campaigns have similarly contemporary aspects. The herald’s gritty remarks (555-67) about naval voyages and lengthy sieges, about hard work and poor rations, about heat, cold and lice, all need to be read in light of the recent campaigns against Carystus, Naxos and Thasos, and the ongoing effort against Aegina.²⁷ The composition of the Greek forces besieging Troy is also significant. Unlike Homer, Aeschylus does not present the war as a contest fought primarily by nobles drawn from around the Greek world; on the contrary, ordinary Argives play the greatest part. As the chorus put it, Helen’s departure for Troy meant difficult work for her countrymen:

λιποῦσα δ’ ἀστοῖσιν ἀσπίστορα
κλόνους λοχισμούς τε καὶ
ναυβάτας ὀπλισμούς ... (403-5)

The vocabulary and syntax of this participial clause are complex.²⁸ Helen’s compatriots are referred to by a word often denoting citizens, ἀστοῖσιν.²⁹ Ἀσπίστορα are shield-bearing men, and κλόνοι the throes of battle. Accepting Beattie’s λοχισμούς in place of the codices’ λογίμους, we have either ‘marshallings of companies’ or ‘ambush parties’.³⁰ Ναυβάτας is a standard term for the marines regularly shipped aboard each Athenian trireme. And ὀπλισμούς here probably means labour accomplished with implements.³¹ No matter how much asyndeton we see in the passage, the Argives were not chariot-borne heroes. On the contrary they were hoplites, light-armed troops, marines and ordinary sailors, and as such resemble the force-mix routinely fielded by fifth-century Athens. Moreover, despite their differences in function, the term ἀστοῖσιν stresses the civic tie binding them all. In this regard the chorus resemble the speakers of Athenian funeral orations, ‘obstinately silent on whatever does not promote the unity of the polis’.³²

Aeschylus assigns his Argives less lofty reasons for fighting: not for them the oaths sworn by Helen’s suitors or high-minded talk of Δίκη and Zeus Ξένιος. The returning herald celebrates his survival, not the pursuit of glory (568-79). The families left behind mutter about a war fought for another’s strange woman (ἀλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναικός, 448-9) and curse their own leaders (456-7). In short, the men seem not so much eager volunteers as reluctant draftees. Although pre-

²³ Cf. Cohen (1992) 19 n.82.

²⁴ Rhodes (1993) 576, on [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 51.1.

²⁵ Rhodes (1993) 576.

²⁶ Stroud (1974) 177.

²⁷ Leahy (1974) 5-6. On the chronology of the Aegina campaign see Gomme (1956) 412 n.2.

²⁸ Wilkens (1971) 229 proposes more extensive emendations.

²⁹ Osborne (2002) corrects Cohen’s attempt ((2000) 70-8) to have ἀστοί include non-citizens.

³⁰ On the merits of this emendation, see Gannon (1997) 560.

³¹ Gannon (1997) 563 takes ναυβάτας and ὀπλισμούς to mean ‘all the πόνος of using ships to travel’.

³² Loraux (1986) 36-7; Anderson (2003) 150.

cise evidence is lacking, Anderson has argued that following the overthrow of the Peisistratids in 508/7, Cleisthenes and his supporters used their new tribal organization to develop a system for mobilizing 'a genuinely pan-Attic citizen army'.³³ The Themistocles Decree details the mobilization of all able-bodied Athenians prior to the battle of Salamis in 480.³⁴ And the Aristotelian *Ath. Pol.* (26.1) speaks of hoplite expeditions mustered ἐκ καταλόγου prior to the reforms of Ephialtes in 462.³⁵ In depicting the Trojan War, *Agamemnon* drew on its spectators' experiences as conscripted soldiers and sailors in the same theatre of operations.³⁶

Fifth-century Athenians were well aware of the costs of military expeditions. The Erechtheid casualty list documents the combat deaths of 177 Athenians just prior to 458 in several locales: Cyprus, Egypt, Phoenicia, Halieis, Aegina and Megara.³⁷ Hansen has estimated that 'there may have been something like 60,000 adult male citizens'³⁸ in 450. Assuming a fairly even distribution among tribes, some 6,000 will have belonged to Erechtheis; the stele may thus record the deaths of nearly 3% of all adult males in the tribe in a single year. Many of those attending *Agamemnon*'s performance doubtless noted the absence of fallen friends and relatives.³⁹

As awareness of the hazards of military service increased, so did draft evasion.⁴⁰ One way the *polis* deflected opposition to mandatory and potentially lengthy service abroad was by linking military campaigns to individual self-interest.⁴¹ Athens made military service more palatable to its citizens in at least three distinct ways: the *patrios nomos*, the payment of military wages, and financial support for war-orphaned. Dating the start of each of these practices is difficult. However, the most plausible *termini ante quem* lie in the years shortly before 458, and each practice finds expression in the metaphor of gold-changing Ares.

During the Archaic period, Greek war-dead were handled in a variety of ways.⁴² Some fighters were cremated or inhumed *in situ*. In other instances survivors collected remains, particularly those of the élite, and brought them back to the families.⁴³ By 506 the Athenians began burying fallen citizens in battlefield *polyandria*, with or without prior cremation.⁴⁴ And at some point in the 470s or 460s, the Athenians instituted the *patrios nomos*, combining battlefield cremation, repatriation of the remaining ash and/or bone, eulogy at home, public interment and the erection of stone casualty lists.⁴⁵

Dating the start of the *patrios nomos* remains controversial.⁴⁶ Yet Cimon's treatment of the dead from the River Eurymedon in 468, the casualty list of the dead from Drabescus in 464, and a passage from Plato's *Menexenos* (242 B-C) demonstrate that the *patrios nomos* was an established feature of Athenian civic life by 458. *Agamemnon* does acknowledge epic tradition, according aristocrats like Achilles their tombs on the plain of Troy (452-5). But its emphasis is on the remains of ordinary Argives. And as Fraenkel noted, their cremation and repatriation in urns parallels contemporary Athenian practice.⁴⁷ Moreover, the popular response to the returning dead echoes the language of funeral orations. The families engage in collective eulogy (στένουσι δ' εὖ λέγοντες, 445) and laud individual fighters as 'skilled in battle' (μάχης ἴδρις,

³³ Anderson (2003) 150.

³⁴ Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 48-52 no.23; see especially lines 23-5. Many scholars (e.g. Morrison *et al.* (2000) 108) accept its provisions as accurate but deem the document a fourth-century literary product.

³⁵ Christ (2001) 400-1 argues that the phrase refers to conscription generally.

³⁶ Christ (2004) 47 suggests that Sophocles' *Akhaion Syllogos* projected Athens' contemporary means of mustering troops onto the mythical past.

³⁷ Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 73-6 no.33.

³⁸ Hansen (1999) 53.

³⁹ Particularly if they sat according to tribe; see Csapo and Slater (1995) 289-90.

⁴⁰ Christ (2004).

⁴¹ Seaford (2004) 158 notes that the image of χρυσασμοιβός Ares 'implies the pervasive power of money even over the traditional heroism of death in battle. In the fifth century, after all, the notion that the aim of warfare may be monetary gain is common.'

⁴² Pritchett (1974) 95ff.

⁴³ E.g. the Alcmeonid Kroisos. See Anderson (2003) 27-8.

⁴⁴ Anderson (2003) 151-5 claims this first occurred with those who fell in a battle with the Chalcidians near the Euripus.

⁴⁵ On the institution in general, see Clairmont (1983).

⁴⁶ Hornblower (1991) 292 provides bibliography.

⁴⁷ Fraenkel (1950) 2.227-8.

446) and ‘nobly fallen in war’ (ἐν φοναίς καλῶς πεσόντ’, 446).⁴⁸ One important feature of the *patrios nomos* is indeed missing: there is no speaker ‘chosen by the city, of able intellect and widely respected’ (Thuc. 2.34.6).⁴⁹ But this very omission is significant. Aeschylus draws attention to the fact that no public encomium follows the families’ praise:

... τάδε σίγά τις βαύ-
ζει, φθονερὸν δ’ ὑπ’ ἄλγος ἔρ-
πει προδίκους Ἀτρείδαις.

These words are quietly muttered
and hatred creeps up
on the leading men, the sons of Atreus. (449-51)

The noun προδίκους reminds us of the official position of the rulers, and that it is they who should be praising the dead. Their silence speaks volumes about them, becoming a cause for popular reproach.⁵⁰ The treatment of the remains of the Argive rank-and-file resembles the civic death-ritual enacted annually on the other side of the Acropolis.

The genitive σωμάτων (‘of bodies’, 438) modifies the nominative χρυσάμοιβός and highlights the link with the *patrios nomos*. In an age of sumptuary restraint, Athens lavished glory and money upon its transformed bodies, providing aristocratic epigram and grand tomb at public expense.⁵¹ Yet the word σωμάτων points in other directions as well, referring not just to the men’s bodies, but to their exertions while alive.⁵² In this context it suggests the physical labour and danger inherent in warfare. And fifth-century Athens instituted pay for precisely this type of work, enabling many of its citizens, especially those from the lower classes, to support themselves and their families. Although the eve of the Peloponnesian War provides a firm *terminus ante quem*, the practice almost certainly began earlier.⁵³ *Ath.Pol.* 24.3 claims Aristides proposed pay for military service shortly after the Persian War,⁵⁴ while Ulpian’s hypothesis to Demosthenes 13 (Περὶ Συντάξεως) credits the institution to Pericles.⁵⁵ Rhodes and Loomis have suggested pay for soldiers and sailors preceded the introduction of pay for dicasts in the late 460s, and Pritchett that it followed shortly thereafter.⁵⁶ Moreover, the city often withheld a portion of military wages during campaigns, paying the arrears once the men had returned to the Piraeus.⁵⁷ Seen in this light, χρυσάμοιβός δ’ Ἄρης σωμάτων resembles a paymaster, and the dust he remits a final settling of accounts.

The families of the dead Argives may receive wealth from an additional source as well. In a scholion to line 437, the Byzantine scholar Demetrius Triclinius commented that ‘the survivors in the armies were accustomed to carry into the homes of the fallen all the booty that the men had amassed while still alive, in addition to the dust of their bodies in jars’.⁵⁸ Throughout *Agamemnon* warriors are driven by the desire for spoils. Clytemnestra fears and hopes the Argives will be conquered by thoughts of gain (κέρδεσιν νικωμένους, 342). The herald exults with his leaders in the booty (λάφυρα, 578). And in his homecoming speech Agamemnon draws an unwitting yet telling connection between the confiscated wealth of Ilium and the dust Ares sends to Argos. In describing the smoke issuing from the smouldering city, the king says ἄτης

⁴⁸ Similar praise is bestowed by Pericles (Thuc. 2.42.3-4).

⁴⁹ Leahy (1974) 4 notes the compatibility of the return of ashes to private homes with the public ceremony.

⁵⁰ Scodel (2006) contrasts the private utterances of the less powerful with the public vaunt of the herald and rulers at lines 575-9.

⁵¹ Humphreys (1983) 121: ‘It was the state funerals for the war dead which first brought the honours of heroic burial within the range of every citizen.’

⁵² E.g. Xen. *Mem.* 2.8.1.

⁵³ Loomis (1998) 36-7.

⁵⁴ On the difficulties provided by this section of *Ath.Pol.*, see Rhodes (1992) 300-9.

⁵⁵ Σ.Dem. 13 (in Dilts 167.24-5).

⁵⁶ Loomis (1998) 36; Rhodes (1992) 306; Pritchett (1971) 12-13.

⁵⁷ Gabrielsen (1994) 250 n.17.

⁵⁸ In Smith (1993) 135.

θύελλαι ζῶσι, δυσθνήσκουσα δὲ/ σποδὸς προπέμπει πίονας πλούτου πνοάς ('the squalls of destruction live, and the dying/ dust sends forth fat breezes of wealth', 819-20). The phrase *δυσθνήσκουσα δὲ σποδὸς* is an unmistakable reminder of that other dead dust from Troy, the *ἀν-/τήνορος σποδοῦ* (442-3). Moreover, both dusts are paradoxically sources of wealth, *πλοῦτος*. On this reading the *πυρωθέν ... ψῆγμα* sent to Argos might include a share of the loot gleaned from Troy.⁵⁹

According to the metaphor, the recipients of Ares' payments are the dead men's next-of-kin (*φίλοισι*, 441). The noun takes on added meaning in light of the assistance Athens provided to the sons of citizens who died in battle. Such support is cited by *Ath. Pol.* 24.3 as one of the city's expenditures prior to 462, and may be mentioned in an inscription dated by Lewis to before 460.⁶⁰ Stroud concludes that 'the practice was known in the period *ca.* 478-462'⁶¹ and may have begun even earlier. Tragic audiences were reminded of the city's help each year by the coming-of-age presentation of war-orphans at the City Dionysia.⁶²

Χρυσανομοιβός Ares resembles nothing so much as the Athenian empire itself. As with the war-god, the commercial and military aspects of Athens' *ἀρχή* formed two sides of the same coin. Shortly after the Persian War Athens assumed the leadership of the Delian League, establishing cities' contributions of ships and men.⁶³ As time went on, it supervised allies' attempts to substitute financial payments for manpower contributions. Thucydides describes the process thus:

διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀπόκησιν ταύτην τῶν στρατειῶν οἱ πλείους αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ ἀπ' οἴκου ᾧσι, χρήματα ἐτάξαντο ἀντὶ τῶν νεῶν τὸ ἱκνούμενον ἀνάλωμα φέρειν, καὶ τοῖς μὲν Ἀθηναίοις ἤϋξετο τὸ ναυτικὸν ἀπὸ τῆς δαπάνης ἦν ἐκείνοι ξυμφέροισιν, αὐτοὶ δέ, ὅποτε ἀποσταίεν, ἀπαράσκευοι καὶ ἄπειροι ἐς τὸν πόλεμον καθίσταντο.

On account of this reluctance for campaigns, most of them, so that they might not be away from home, arranged to pay the expense coming due in money rather than ships. And the navy of the Athenians was increased by the funds which they were contributing, and the allies, whenever they revolted, were unprepared and inexperienced when it came to war. (1.99)

Meiggs has shown that this passage refers to allies' attempts to change their contributions mid-stream.⁶⁴ Although the verb *ἐτάξαντο* is an aorist middle indicative, they could not set their contribution levels by themselves. It was the Athenians who fixed the original assessments, approved the terms of each subsequent switch from ships to tribute, and employed force against cities seeking unilateral changes in status. More and more allies thus became parties to increasingly one-sided and involuntary transactions. And their reactions matched those of the Argive *φίλοι* in *Agamemnon*: while publicly acknowledging the superiority of their overlords, they muttered under their breath and watched for chances to revolt.

Athens' ability to dictate exchange rates between men and money was carved in stone with the appearance of the first tribute list in 454/3. The dedication of the Lapis Primus atop the Acropolis meant Athens was officially *ταλαντοῦχος*, with Athena Parthenos supplanting Delian Apollo as holder of the League's many *τάλαντα*. The inscription also marks Athens as *χρυσανομοιβός*. Coins struck by many entities on several different weight standards circulated widely throughout mainland Greece, the Aegean, Ionia and the Hellespont.⁶⁵ And when the allies paid in their League contributions, they did so in a number of different forms.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ The distribution of Troy's booty is explicitly mentioned at *Eum.* 397-402.

⁶⁰ *IG I³ 6 C40-1.*

⁶¹ Stroud (1971) 288.

⁶² Goldhill (1990) 113-14.

⁶³ Thuc. 1.96 with Gomme (1956) 1.272 *ad loc.*

⁶⁴ Meiggs (1972) 63 n.2; see also Merritt *et al.* (1950) 246-8.

⁶⁵ Figueira (1998, 84-91) summarizes the minting activity of allied cities during this period.

⁶⁶ Figueira (1998) 268 makes the somewhat self-contradictory claim that 'the allies were always required to pay in Attic coin, however often exceptions may have been tolerated in the early years'.

The early tribute lists show that the *Hellenotamiai*, drawn exclusively from the Athenians,⁶⁷ established equivalents between currencies. In the very first year (*IG* I³ 259, 454/3), a postscript totals up all ἀπαρχαί dedicated to the goddess. While lines 8-9 record the total paid in silver, [τῷ] ἀργυρίῳ · [κεφάλαιον], lines 10-12 record the total paid in Cyzicene staters made of electrum, [χ]ρυσίῳ σύμ[παντος Κυζικ]-ενῶ · κ[ε]φά[λαιον ἐν στατῆρ]-ες Κυ[ζικενοί]. Although the latter figure is not clearly attested, it was probably between 13 and 23 talents.⁶⁸ Working from the assumption that Cyzicus paid its normal tribute amount of 9 talents in its own currency, Eddy concluded that the nearby Hellespontine cities of Tenedos, Dardanus, Elaeus, Madytus and Alopeconnesus were responsible for many of the remaining Cyzicene staters.⁶⁹ Another entry from the same year (II.27) suggests that the dynast Sambaktys paid in a different gold currency, Persian *sigloi*.⁷⁰ And still other figures (from both the first and subsequent tribute lists) may reflect payments made in multiple currencies.⁷¹ While the tribute was calculated and recorded in Athenian drachmas,⁷² it was sometimes paid in other currencies, especially ‘in the late 450s and early 440s’.⁷³

By 458 the Athenians were presiding over numerous currency conversions in a variety of precious metals. Like χρυσσαμοιβός Ares, the city profited handsomely from these exchanges. With regard to Cyzicene staters, the early tribute lists show that ‘Athens was charging an agio, or exchange premium, of five obols, or roughly 3½%’.⁷⁴ Later in the century Athens enacted the Standards Decree that compelled the allies to abandon their own independent silver coinages, closed local mints and required the use of Athenian coins, weights and measures throughout the empire.⁷⁵ Athens met the heightened demand for its currency by serving as χρυσσαμοιβός to all and sundry. Cities and individuals could come to its mint, trade in their foreign currency and receive Athenian owls in return, paying a fee of 3% (or possibly 5%) for the privilege.⁷⁶

Arguably the most unsettling aspect of the χρυσσαμοιβός metaphor is the interchangeability of men and money it implies: Ares is adept at converting one into the other. Over time, imperial Athens developed the same facility. As Thucydides notes, the allies’ shift to financial contributions accelerated the growth of Athenian might. The city turned the coin of others into its own ships and sailors; these forces then created yet more revenue by policing and expanding the empire. The Athenian proficiency at turning men into money reached its apogee during the Samian revolt. In 440 the islanders broke with the Athenians, who responded with their usual tactics of naval blockade and siege. After Pericles sailed off with the bulk of the fleet, the Samians attacked the remaining Athenian ships, disabling many and taking numerous prisoners. They then took particular advantage of the situation:

Οἱ δὲ Σάμιοι τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἀνθυβρίζοντες ἔστιζον εἰς τὸ μέτωπον γλαῦκα· καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνους οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι σάμαιναν.

And the Samians, committing an outrage in retaliation, tattooed owls on the foreheads of the Athenian captives. For the Athenians had tattooed theirs with a *samaina*. (Plut. *Pericles* 26.4)

The Samians treat the Athenians like slaves, marking them indelibly with a sign identifying them as property and themselves as owners. The prefix of the participle ἀνθυβρίζοντες indicates that

⁶⁷ Thuc. 1.96.2; see further Meiggs (1972) 234.

⁶⁸ Eddy (1973) 48.

⁶⁹ Eddy (1973) 52.

⁷⁰ Eddy (1973) 54. On payments made in *sigloi*, see also Figueira (1998) 279-81 and Vickers (1996), who argues (174) that ‘the pattern [of relevant anomalies] exists throughout the tribute lists, from the earliest entries’.

⁷¹ Figueira (1998) 278.

⁷² The tribute lists contain no explicit notations (such as the sigmas of the Parthenon accounts, *IG* I³ 436-51) marking transactions conducted in other currencies.

⁷³ Figueira (1998) 292.

⁷⁴ Eddy (1973) 58-9.

⁷⁵ Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 111-17 no.45. The date of this decree remains disputed; for recent arguments in favour of a date later in the 420s, see Vickers (1996).

⁷⁶ Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 113.

the Samians were responding to a similar move on the part of the Athenians. And the choice of tattoo was deliberate: the γλαῦξ was the owl familiar from Athenian tetradrachms, the σάμαινα a ship with a boar-shaped prow featured on Samian coins.⁷⁷ Yet as Stadter has noted, more reliable versions of the story hold that ‘the Athenians marked the Samians with an Athenian owl, and the Samians used the *samaina*’.⁷⁸ What the Athenians originally did was turn the Samians into cold hard cash, stamping them as their own currency and then selling them into slavery.

What was the impact of Aeschylus’ metaphor on his audience? Did the Athenian spectators see its connections with their empire, and accept its negative implications? After all, it was they who, seated in a different venue, authorized the military campaigns creating and maintaining the ἀρχή. And they did so at least in part because they thought they benefited from it individually.⁷⁹ Many doubtless resembled *Agamemnon*’s herald, who focuses on his own bottom line (κέρδος, 571) despite his misgivings about the overall campaign. Yet not all Athenians employed the same calculus. Indeed, the mood of some of the spectators in 458 may have matched that of the first stasimon’s speakers. Goldhill has noted the chorus’ difficulty in tracing patterns in the events happening around them, and the uncertainty and apprehension that result.⁸⁰ At the start, the chorus exult over the fall of Troy. Yet as they reflect on the relationship between wealth and deeds of violence, they grasp that the dynamic at work is at once open-ended and threatening: the righteous workings of Zeus merge with the operations of Ares.⁸¹ And the spectators’ thoughts may have pursued a similar path, ranging from their own great victory over the heirs of Troy to the slide into empire, the methods involved, and the wealth derived from them.⁸² With Athens bearing down on Aegina, they had ample reason for foreboding. Like the chorus, they undoubtedly believed that τῶν πολυκτόνων γὰρ οὐκ/ ἄσκοποι θεοί (‘the gods are not heedless of those who kill much’, 461-2). And perhaps some nodded their assent to the prayer closing the final strophe:

κρίνω δ’ ἄφθονον ὄλβον·
μήτ’ εἶην πολυπόρθης,
μήτ’ οὖν αὐτὸς ἀλοῦς ὑπ’ ἄλ-
λοι βίον κατίδοιμι.

I choose unenvied prosperity:
may I not be a sacker of cities,
and may I not look upon life
as a captive in thrall to another. (471-4)

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⁷⁷ Von Reden (1997) 174 n.111.

⁷⁸ Stadter (1989) 250. See Aelian, *VH* 2.9, and Photius and *Suda* s.v. Σαμίων ὁ δῆμος.

⁷⁹ Samons (2004) 83.

⁸⁰ Goldhill (1984) 44.

⁸¹ Conacher (1987) 20-2.

⁸² On tragedy’s tendency to represent Persians as Trojan ‘Others’, see Hall (1991). Rosenbloom (1995) 95 interprets *Agamemnon* as a broad-based critique of Athenian naval hegemony.

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