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THE FALLACY OF THE EUROPEAN SATRAPY

Abstract: This paper deals with the status of Thrace and Macedonia within the royal administration of the Persian Empire. The scholar views expressed so far are opposing and mutually exclusive, thus making it very difficult to attain a common ground between them. The complete corpus of information on the satrapies comes from the Persian administrative documents and from the extant Greek sources: however, the meaning of the word “satrapy” in the Greek sources is very vague, and moreover, this technical term is nowhere to be found in the Persian documents. This calls for a re-thinking and re-examination of the term “satrapy” as a terminus technicus, as well as for a broader analysis of the mechanisms of satrapal actions and their place within the Persian administrative and fiscal framework. As things stand, the term “satrap” should be analysed only in its first, basic meaning, “protector of the King/Empire” – a status that did not hinder the possibility of holding other local or foreign offices or honours.

1. This paper deals with subject which can be defined in few words: it concerns the status of Thrace and Macedonia – or, more precisely, the Persian territories in Europe – within the royal administration of the Persian Empire. The dilemma whether a European satrapy ever existed and whether it is hidden behind the concept of “Skudra” is a never-ending source of inspiration for opposing views, analyses and historical hypotheses. Unfortunately, the manner in which this issue is treated and explained in scholar literature is completely different from its seeming simplicity.

Most historians that study the history of Persia usually include in their lists of Persian satrapies a satrapy bearing the name of Skudra, one that allegedly covered the largest part of the Persian territories in Europe – and, according to some, even the kingdom of Macedon.¹ The starting (or, to be fair, the only) element for these assertions is the

¹ See, for example, Olmstead, 1948: 157-8; Meritt et al., 1950: 214; Hammond, 1959: 179; Burn, 1984: 110-111; Castritius, 1972: 4, 10; Danov, 1976: 272; and Errington, 1990. A very tenacious supporter of this view is Hammond, 1980, 53-61 and *passim* in his works. In the impossible mission to mention everyone, all the other, numerous, entries have been left out.

mention of Skudra on the Persian royal inscriptions, as well as in a number of other administrative documents. On the other hand, there are historians who, on the basis of the very same epigraphic and archival documents, oppose the claims concerning the existence of any kind of a European satrapy, and allege that the documents from Persepolis, Naqsh-e Rostam, Susa and Behistun list peoples and/or lands under Persian rule, but not clearly defined administrative governing entities.² Yet a third group of historians does not set their beliefs on any Persian documents, but rather on Greek narrative sources. According to the information on the structure of the Persian Empire that come chiefly from Herodotus, as well as the terms he uses in order to present the local administration in Asia Minor, these historians claim that not only did a European satrapy exist, but that we also know its capital, and even the name of its satrap.³

The views expressed so far are opposing and mutually exclusive; thus, it is rather difficult to attain a common ground between them. The questions that arise are several: why are there still scholarly debates concerning this issue, and how is it possible that a question that provoked speculation for almost a century still causes such dilemmas in the scientific community? In truth, this state of affairs is no different from many other issues that usually plague the mind of a historian; likewise, the root of this dilemma is very straightforward – and that is the nature of our extant sources.

Let us first look at how things stand with our sole fully preserved narrative source. In 1912, How and Wells describe Herodotus as “our best and most reliable source on the ethnography of the Ancient East.”⁴ In 1978, writing about this very issue, Balcer expresses dissatisfaction that Herodotus is once again taken as the main authority on ethnography, as well as on the organization of the Persian Empire.⁵ And even today, it seems impossible to write about this issue without setting out from the text by the Greek historiographer. Thus, there are continuous references to Herodotus’ great satrapy-list of Book 3, as

² Cameron, 1973: 47–56; Borza, 1990: *passim*. Wiesehöfer, 2001: 59–63 provides an excellent, concise summary of the opposing views.

³ Pajkowski, 1983: 243–255, who not only revives the idea of the European satrapy, but also claims that Sestos was its capital, and the Persian general Artayctes its satrap. The evidence given by Pajkowski is based on his arbitrary translation of the phrase in Hdt. 9.116.1. Errington, 1990: 10 alleges, on no further evidence, that Bubares, son of Megabazus, was the satrap of Skudra, supposedly ascending to this position in 492 BC.

⁴ How & Wells, 1989: 2.151.

⁵ Balcer, 1988: 2.

well as the list of gift-bearers and the assignment of tribute.⁶ Things are quite the same with the alleged parade and the review of the army in Doriscus, an event that allegedly provides a list of the united Persian army that Xerxes gathered for his invasion of mainland Greece.⁷ However, nearly a century after Herodotus was spoken of in such glowing terms by his two commentators, we need to ask ourselves: do his facts – above all, those facts that do not recount events, but are rather more of a shot at a political and economic analysis – really deserve our trust and attention to such an extent? Moreover, as we have no other fully preserved narrative account concerning this, are we able to check its veracity, or are we even allowed to believe what Herodotus tells us?

The Persian epigraphic and archival sources, found in archaeological excavations, would seem a good way to control Herodotus; yet this opens up another set of problems. Above all, in the past, scientific opinion concerning the interpretation of these sources was very unfitting to their importance. To illustrate, as far back as the time of Rawlinson,⁸ up to Macan even, every time the Persian sources presented things differently than Herodotus, priority was always given to the historiographer.⁹ Today, things seem to be somewhat different: the Persian documents have been studied, among others, by Kent and Cameron,¹⁰ Herzfeld, Schmidt and Hauser have catalogued the large monuments,¹¹ and various scholars have studied in detail other epigraphic and anepigraphic monuments, mainly from Susa and Pasargadae. These documents might have been very useful in helping us understand the Persian system of local administration – had it not been for the fact that we have to deal with official documents, previously prepared, checked, revised and approved by the central government.¹² True, one can easily claim that Herodotus does not understand things to their full extent, that he is only aware of the conditions in the western satrapies, that he conveys only what Greeks of his time understood, or thought they did; yet, on the other hand, we have to work with texts previously prepared and approved, texts which, most likely, do not represent reality, but rather what the court wanted to put across to its people. So the historian is set between two

⁶ Hdt. 3.89–97.

⁷ Hdt. 7.59–81.

⁸ See, for example, Rawlinson, 1860: 4.57, the note on Persepolis.

⁹ Macan, 1908: 1.1.83: “if the monuments do not show it [*sc.* what Herodotus says], so much the worse for them.”

¹⁰ Kent, 1953: 116–156; Cameron, 1973: 47–56, with a detailed bibliography.

¹¹ Schmidt, 1939; 1953; 1970.

¹² Cf. *DB* 4.88 sqq., where it is stated even by Darius.

types of sources with an opposite nature, bearing more drawbacks than advantages; for this reason, it is very difficult to bring together the two views, and just about impossible to tell where the truth lies.¹³

2. Nevertheless, it is fair to admit that a large part of the problem is caused by the historians themselves. Dedicated to scientific debates on whether it should be Herodotus or the primary sources that ought to be believed, battling with analyses and hypotheses on whether the existence of a European satrapy ought to be recognised, they seem to have forgotten the question all of this was supposed to set out from: namely, what exactly is a “satrapy”?

The only primary source that we have at our disposal is the corpus of Achaemenid royal inscriptions, or more precisely, “the lists of lands” that these inscriptions contain.¹⁴ There, the word “satrap” really does appear in the form *xšaça-pāvan* or *xšaθrapāvan*¹⁵ – but the word “satrapy”¹⁶ is nowhere to be found. To make matters worse, the lands in the lists are not referred to as satrapies, but rather as *dahyāva* – a word with a meaning so general, that it is all but impossible to narrow it down in an administrative context.

For a long time this served to confuse historians, who were trying to solve the problem using a variety of hypotheses. First, it was believed that the Persian lists, completely different from those presented by Herodotus or the historians of Alexander, have nothing to do with being a directory of the administrative entities that made up the Empire. Later, on the basis of Herodotus’ statement that the conquered peoples were the main constitutive element of the satrapies, there was the idea that the Achaemenid Empire ought to be defined not as a set of precisely defined territorial entities, but rather as a mixture of conquered peoples; the lists of *dahyāva* were thus interpreted as lists of conquered/taxed/gift-bearing dependencies.¹⁷ And

¹³ Or, as Armayor (1978: 2) wittily remarks, it is an issue that is loudly seeking a solution, and we can neither hide it, nor shove it aside.

¹⁴ *DB*, § 6; *Dna*, § 3; *DNe*, *Dpe*, § 2; *Dsaa*, § 4; *Dse*, § 3; *DSm*, § 2; *DSv*, § 2; *XPh*, § 3. Cf. Stěve, 1974, 1987; Lecoq, 1997. The inscriptions found on the base of the statue of Darius I in Susa, as well as the steles of Suez represent an additional source.

¹⁵ *DB* 3.14, 58. The word *xšaça-pāvan-* is made up of the roots *pā-* (“I protect”) and *xšaça-* (“authority, authority of the Emperor, state”), which provide the basic meaning of “protector of (the) authority (of the Emperor)”; cf. Schmitt, 1976: 373.

¹⁶ Based on the word “satrapy”, we would expect the Old Persian form **xšaça-pā-vana-*; v. Hinz, 1975: 134.

¹⁷ Junge, 1942: 28–31; Cameron, 1973; Bernard, 1987: 185; Tuplin, 1987: 113; Balcer, 1988: 1; Cuyler Young, 1988: 87, as well as Lecoq, 1990, who provides philological arguments in light of this interpretation.

there is yet a third explanation – that it is of no great concern that these territories were called dahyāva, and not “satrapies” – because the word dahyu- could supposedly stand for territorial as well as for ethnic entities;¹⁸ in that case, we would be dealing with an “altper-sische Sprachregelung”, a concept for representing administrative entities.

As in many other cases, the supporters of the opposing views have at their disposal numerous arguments to back them up, and seem fully convinced that they are in the right. However, we are confronted with a difficult and complex issue, and the first-hand accounts, which should help us solve it, are too scarce. Apart from that, the strength of the supporting arguments offered by both sides is relatively even, so unless we dare involve our own personal views and opinions, it would possibly be best to leave it open. If one needs to take a side, then it should be said that it is unimportant whether dahyu- means *only* peoples/land, or that *it may mean* a separate territorial entity. Of more significance is the fact that “satrapy”, as a terminus technicus, does not have an equivalent in terms of territory – which is rather strange, but still indicates that, for the time being, we cannot envision a satrap *of Skudra*, but rather a satrap *in Skudra*. It is very possible that *dahyu-* and *dahyāva* underwent a shift from their original meaning “[conquered/defeated] peoples/land”, and gained a political and administrative connotation; yet, it seems that these terms did not reach the exactness of the concepts “administrative entity”, “fiscal entity” or “province”, but rather remained somewhere in the middle, signifying a “taxed people/land”, without precisely defining the legal status of the territory within the administration of the Persian Empire.

One of the main reasons why the word “dahyāva” cannot be given any precision is because these lists appear in several different versions, which creates many problems in their interpretation. For example, the list of lands at Bisitun (*Db*) contains at most 23 dahyāva, whereas the one from Persepolis (*Xph*) contains 32 – even though the territory of the Empire remained the same, and we have no information regarding any administrative reforms. The number of mentioned peoples/lands also varies in the artistic illustrations of these lists, where the dahyāva are represented either as embassies, or as throne-bearers.¹⁹ Finally, these lists lack certain lands that were of vital importance to

¹⁸ Schmitt, 1977: 91-99; Schmitt, 1999: 443-452; Vogelsang, 1992: 169-173.

¹⁹ Calmeyer, 1983: 107-112; Roaf, 1974; Jacobs, 2002: 357-362, 374-378, and especially the iconographic and historical analysis by Briant, 1996, with detailed drawings and a rich bibliography.

the royal administration (Cilicia, Hellespontine Phrygia, Syria),²⁰ so many historians conclude that the lists are incomplete, and that they are propaganda declarations rather than administrative documents that could serve as an objective historical source.²¹ However, this cannot be easily proven, and for this reason it is not fully accepted in the scientific community. For example, Jacobs warns that the oldest list can be found in the Bisitun inscription²², which, among other things, had the aim to document the greatness of the Empire of Darius. Besides this, the inscription on the tomb of Darius in Naqsh-e Rostam²³ indicates that the list of *dahyāva* has an instructional and programmatic character: “If you are wondering how many peoples King Darius reigned over, then behold those that bear the throne. You will see that the reign of the Persian warrior reached far, and you will know that the Persian warrior fought far from Persia”...²⁴

3. All these problems clearly show why historians have dilemmas whether to use these lists in their attempts to reconstruct the Persian administration, as well as the reason why the majority of historians attach more significance to the information found in the Greek sources. Let us see, then, how things stand there.

Most of the information concerning satraps and satrapies comes from the so-called list of *nomoi* from Herodotus;²⁵ from the lists of satrapies by the historians of Alexander (that is, from the texts on the division of satrapies in Babylon,²⁶ in Triparadis²⁷ and in Persepolis);²⁸ from the later lists in the so-called “Will of Alexander”²⁹ and “The Alexander romance”;³⁰ from some mediaeval sources;³¹ and finally, from other literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources.

²⁰ Krumbholz, 1833: 11; Calmeyer 1983: 194; Vogelsang, 1985: 88; Lecoq, 1990: 133-134; Briant, 1996: 189.

²¹ Frye, 1984: 110-111; Briant, 1996: 185, 194, 399, 400; Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 2001.

²² Jacobs, 1996.

²³ *DNa* 38-42.

²⁴ Schmitt, 2000: 30.

²⁵ *Hdt.* 3.90-96.

²⁶ *Arr. Succ.* 5-6 (= *Phot. Bibl.* 92.69a-b); *Curt.* 10.10.1-4; *Dexip. apud Phot. Bibl.* 82.64 a-b; *Diod.* 18.3.1-3; *Pomp. Trog. apud Iust.*, 13.4.10-24; *Oros. Hist.* 3.23.7-13.

²⁷ *Arr. Succ.* 34-37 (= *Phot. Bibl.* 92.71b); *Diod.* 18.39.5-7.

²⁸ *Diod.* 19.48.1-6.

²⁹ *Test. Alex.* 117.

³⁰ *Ps.-Callisth.* 3.33.13-22; 52-61; *Iul. Valer.* 3.94; *Leo Archipr.* 3.58.

³¹ *Sync. Chron.* P 264 D-265 B; *Georg. Kedr.* P 155 D.

In the whole corpus of written sources from Herodotus to Photius, the word “satrapy” (in its forms *satrapeia*, *satrapeie* or *ksatrapeia*) appears approximately 250 times.³² However, the mere appearance of this word does not carry the same significance everywhere. Our problem takes us back to the time when Cyrus the Great has been dead for barely 50 years – a relatively early period in the development of the administration of the Persian Empire; on the other hand, out of the 250 times it is mentioned, this word shows up 242 times in the works of much later writers, who belong to a period when the Achaemenid satrapies are a part of the distant past, and are moreover describing the satrapies of Alexander III, the diadochi, or some even later governing or territorial entities – when the primary meaning of the word has either been forgotten, or has evolved beyond recognition.³³ We will therefore leave aside the data presented by Plutarch, Diodorus, Arrian, Strabo, Cassius Dio, Polybius and Appian, and focus only on the instances that are, in a sense, contemporary or resulting from the events that we are studying: namely, the mentions from the 5th, or at the latest, the first half of the 4th century BC.

And it is precisely then that the results become dismaying. Namely, in the work of Herodotus, the word *satrapeia*, *satrapeie* or *ksatrapeia* is mentioned only twice:

[...] The governing of that land, which the Persians call a “satrapal authority”, yields better economic results than the governorship practiced in other lands. Thus, the government of that land, which the King had bestowed to Tritanchaemus, son of Artabazus, yielded him an artab of silver every day...³⁴

[...] Once he had done that, he organized Persia in such a way as to form twenty provinces, called satrapies. He assigned governors (satraps) to rule these satrapies and calculated how much tax the people

³² It must be noted that only those entries referring to the territorial entity are counted; thus, the word “satrapy”, but not the word “satrap”, which is clearly explained.

³³ Cf., for example, the use of the word in the Septuagint, Josue (Cod. Vat. + Cod. Alex.) 13.3: ἕως τῶν ὁρίων Αἰκκᾶρων ἐξ εὐνύμων τῶν Χαναναίων προσλογίζεται ταῖς πέντε σατραπειαῖς τῶν Φυλιστιμ, τῷ Γαζαίῳ καὶ τῷ Ἀζωτίῳ καὶ τῷ Ἀσκαλωνίτῃ καὶ τῷ Γεθθαίῳ καὶ τῷ Αἰκκᾶρωνίτῃ· καὶ τῷ Εὐαίῳ ἐκ Θαιμαν καὶ πάσῃ γῇ Χανααν ἐναντίον Γάζης; Septuagint, Judices (Cod. Alex.) 3.3.2: τὰς πέντε σατραπείας τῶν ἀλλοφύλων καὶ πάντα τὸν Χαναναῖον καὶ τὸν Σιδώνιον καὶ τὸν Εὐαῖον τὸν κατοικοῦντα τὸν Λίβανον ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ Βαλαερμων ἕως Λοβωμηαθ; or, for example, in Origenes (*Theol. Selecta in Psalmos* 12, 1421, 53): Ἔθνη λέγει τὰς πέντε σατραπείας τὰς ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ, Γεθθαίους, Ἀζωτίους, Ἀκαρωνίτας, Γαζαίους, καὶ Ἀσκαλωνίτας.

³⁴ Hdt. 1.192.

should pay; apart from that, he also taxed the neighbouring peoples, and beyond them, even other, more distant peoples...³⁵

In the less trustworthy fragments by Ctesias, it appears a total of four times:

[...] once he had realized how much military power would be necessary, she sent messengers to all the satrapies and told the satraps to start recruiting the most renowned and best young men...

[...] Arbaces commended the man and suggested that, once everything was over, he be given a satrapy in Babylonia...

[...] Pissoutnes' satrapy (satrapal authority?) was given over to Tissaphernes...

[...] Shamed by his brother, Cyrus retreated to his own satrapy and began to prepare for rebellion...³⁶

Thucydides mentions it only once:³⁷

[...] Pleased by the letter, Xerxes sent Artabazus, son of Pharnaces, out to sea, with orders to replace Megabates, to take over his satrapal authority in Daskyleion, and to bring the reply to Pausanias in Byzantium as soon as possible...

And finally, it appears only once in Xenophon's "Hellenica".³⁸

[...] In the part of Aeolis which belonged to Pharnabazus, the governing satrap was Zenides of Dardanus; once he became sick and died, Pharnabazus prepared to pass the satrapal duties over to somebody else...

Thus, even though the word satrapy appears rather frequently in the Greek sources that date back to the 5th and early 4th century BC, it appears as a technical term in only three out of eight accounts. Five out of eight times, we are not certain whether it is used in the context of an administrative entity at all, because the corresponding Greek term may (and usually should) be translated as "a satrapal authority", or at most, "a territory governed by a satrap". Thus, apart from it not being used by the Persians at all, it seems that the term "satrapy", referring to an administrative entity, is also overlooked by the Greek historians of the time. In truth, Greeks often use other, Greek terms to refer to the object of our interest; but can we dare speculate

³⁵ Hdt. 3.89.

³⁶ Accordingly, *FGrH* F 3c, 688, F, fr. 1b, 448; fr. 1b, 714; fr. 15, 73; fr. 16, 10.

³⁷ Thuc. 1.129.4.

³⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.10.

on the basis of what may be an *interpretatio graeca*, and as far off from the truth as our own contemporary definitions?

4. The historians that uphold the idea promoting the existence of a European satrapy claim that we should not expect Herodotus to mention the term *satrapeie* at all, because in the place of “satrap” and “satrapy”, he uses the corresponding Greek terms *hyparkhos* and *nomos*. Nevertheless, as Balcer illustrated in his excellent analysis, Herodotus uses the term *nomos* with a simple basic meaning of “territorial unit”, and the term *hyparkhos* – with the meanings of “government official / chieftain / first man / authority”; in only very few places do these terms have the secondary meaning of “administrative / fiscal entity” and “governor / ruler of the corresponding entity”.³⁹ Let us see, then, what this means.

Out of the 36 times that Herodotus uses the term *nomos*, it refers to some kind of a political and economical equivalent of a satrapy on only five occasions.⁴⁰ The remaining mentions refer to the Egyptian *nomoi*, which are fiscal entities of a lower order within the satrapy of Egypt (Mudraya);⁴¹ bearing this in mind, it would be quite illogical to claim that the term *nomos* corresponds to the term satrapy, based on only five mentions out of 36. As for the term *hyparkhos*, it is mentioned 23 times in Herodotus. On seven occasions, it refers to the satrap in Sardis, i.e., to the satrap of the Sparda satrapy;⁴² Herodotus names Oroites and Artaphernes as satraps,⁴³ and in that context, his account is historically sound. However, the remaining 15 examples refer to governors and rulers with a different status and level of authority. Ariandes is said to have been a hyparch of Egypt, which also seems to be true, based on the historical facts;⁴⁴ Masistes is mentioned as a satrap of Bactria, which may be possible, yet is unconfirmed;⁴⁵ however, we also have the fact that Hystaspes, the father of Darius, was a satrap of (or rather, *in*) Parthia,⁴⁶ even though Parthia was not a satrapy, but stood for the Parthians as a whole, as a conquered tribe/

³⁹ The statistical data is based on the analysis carried out by Balcer, 1988: 2-8.

⁴⁰ Hdt. 1.192.2; 3.120.2, 3; 5.102.1, and 9.113.1.

⁴¹ Hdt. 2.4.3, 42.1, 46.3, 91.1, 152.1, 165, 166.1, 169.4, 172.1; Hdt. 3.90.1, 90.2, 90.3, 91.1, 92.1, 93.1, 94.1, 94.2, 127.1; Hdt. 4.62.1, 66, and most clearly stated in 2.164.2: “The warriors are named... in accordance with the province they come from; namely, all of Egypt is divided into provinces (*nomoi*).

⁴² 3.120.1; 5.25.1, 73.2, 123; 6.1.1, 30.1, and 42.1

⁴³ Accordingly, Hdt. 3.120.1 & 5.25.1.

⁴⁴ Hdt. 4.16 6. 1; cf. Polyaen. 7.11.7.

⁴⁵ Hdt. 9.113.2.

⁴⁶ Hdt. 3.70.3

people. Also problematic are the three mentions of hyparchs in Daskyleion; the hyparchs Mitrobates⁴⁷ and Oibares⁴⁸ can under no circumstances be considered real satraps at that time, as that region became a fully-fledged satrapy only during the time of Xerxes' campaign.⁴⁹ Lastly, two mentions of hyparchs most probably refer to local governors or military chieftains,⁵⁰ whereas on four occasions, these hyparchs are "merely" chiefs of towns or forts.⁵¹ After all is said and done, it is enough to simply state two stone-cold facts – that there were a number of hyparchs in Thrace, and that there were a number of nomoi in Egypt⁵² – to show that the whole idea on drawing parallels between the terms *nomos*/*hyparchos* and "satrap"/"satrapy" does not hold water.

What can be concluded from what has been said so far? Simply, that we venture time and time again into looking at the accounts and debating the existence of a European satrapy, even though we are neither certain what we are looking for, nor how to recognise it. It is obvious that this problem cannot be solved by looking for a defined administrative entity called a "satrapy", above all because we do not know how to precisely define such an administrative entity. All that we can do is study how it was organised and how it worked, and how the Persian local government functioned, *moreso* in the western regions; look at the political and ideological concepts of the administration of the territories under Persian military control; study the kinds of governing bodies that existed at that time, the obligations the local peoples had towards the central government, and who was responsible that they were carried out; and finally, check whether any of this, anything at all, has been accounted for in Thrace and Macedonia, or in the kingdom of the Argeadai. This, it would seem, is the only way to place in context Herodotus' information, which ignited

⁴⁷ Hdt. 3.120.2; 3.126.2.

⁴⁸ Hdt. 6.33.3.

⁴⁹ Thuc. 1.129.1.

⁵⁰ Hdt. 3.128.3: "all the hyparchs have scribes, who answer to the King"; Hdt. 7.26.2, "who among the hyparchs received the promised gifts from the King as reward for bringing in the best equipped army, I cannot say."

⁵¹ Hdt. 5.27.1: "Those [from Lemnos] that survived, had the Persians appoint them as their hyparch Lycaretas, son of Maeandrius, brother to the King of Samos"; Hdt. 7.194.1: "Those regions were ruled by the hyparch of Cyme in Aeolis, Sandocus, son of Tamasius"; Hdt. 7.105: "After that conversation, Xerxes appointed Mascames, son of Megadostes as governor of Doriscus, relieving of his duties the governor appointed by Darius"; and, especially the continuation of the story in the next chapter, 7.106.1: "Hyparchs were appointed in Thrace as well, and everywhere in Hellespont, even before that campaign".

⁵² Accordingly, Hdt. 7.106.1 8 2.164.2.

the whole discussion, and to see whether he really does claim that there was any kind of a “satrapal organisation” in Persian Europe.

5. The peace and prosperity in an Empire covering such a vast territory, and inhabited by such a mixed population, may have only been a result of careful planning and introduction of a new, original form of political organization. Before forming an Empire, the Persians lived in a kind of tribal union, which might have been fitting for establishing government over Persia strictly speaking, yet was outright unsuitable for setting up a vast administrative organization. Scholars habitually claim that this change in the administrative model of the Persian state should be attributed to Cyrus the Great, who is mentioned as the first Persian ruler who thought up and developed a system of political organisation for the conquered lands.⁵³ For example, towards the end of the Lydian campaign, Cyrus appointed a governor in Sardis, who most probably controlled not only the Lydians, but also the Greeks in Asia.⁵⁴ The Babylonian chronicles state that Cyrus appointed a governor (actually, a “government representative”) named Gobryas (Gubāru), who then appointed other, lower ranking government officials in Babylon.⁵⁵ It is almost certain that Cambyses briefly reigned as “King of Babylon” even before he ascended to the Persian throne, and that the territory of the former Babylonian Empire was organised as a single territorial entity, whose ruler answered directly to the Persian King.

Nothing indicates that, during the reign of Darius, the basic concepts of Persian administrative rule were modified or suspended. Even if he had introduced different organisational measures and modified the structure of government within the Empire, he nevertheless reigned in Babylon as the legitimate representative of Marduk, and in Egypt as a descendant of the pharaohs. This type of reign – retaining supreme, central sovereignty based on local political traditions⁵⁶ – may have undergone some changes during the time of Xerxes as a consequence of the rebellions in Egypt and Babylonia. Still, we have

⁵³ Cuyler Young, 1988: 103.

⁵⁴ This refers to Tabalus, appointed in approximately 546 BC; v. Hdt. 1.153-4.

⁵⁵ Cuyler Young, 1988: 121-128.

⁵⁶ Cf. the comment by Briant, 1982: 476, which provides an excellent summary of the situation: „L'unification des territoires ne fut jamais complète. Bien des pays échappent à l'emprise de l'administration directe... L'Empire inclut plusieurs pays qui ont conservé une très forte spécificité. En bref, le Grand Roi règne partout, mais son pouvoir ne revêt pas partout la même force et ne s'exerce pas selon les mêmes modalités, quelles que soient par ailleurs les mesures qui contribuent à la progression de l'intervention centrale (extension du système satrapique et tributaire, réseau de routes impériales etc.)”.

no irrefutable proof that Xerxes completely changed the philosophy of government practiced at the time, nor do we have any facts that indicate that the Achaemenids abandoned this rather tolerant way of reigning over the conquered lands.

The general political tendencies the Persians upheld in their behaviour towards the conquered peoples may be more important than the forms of government that Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius inherited (or thought up), due to the fact that it was those very tendencies that provided the foundation and the framework for the administration.⁵⁷ The language, religion, customs and the common laws of the conquered were respected to the utmost, as long as they did not conflict with the laws and the interests of the Court. In many cases, local rulers were allowed to remain in power, as long as they ruled in accordance with the general Persian interests.⁵⁸ There are many reasons for this kind of behaviour, and they can be discussed from various points of view – but it is clear that this had nothing to do with some inborn political lenience, but was rather was due to the concern about the welfare and prosperity of the Empire. The Persian Empire united so many different lands and peoples that, with the military and political methods that were in power at the time, it was nearly impossible to establish a unified government, founded on unified political principles, over the whole territory. In this case, Persian tolerance was a fully acceptable Realpolitik, and it is almost certain that no other policy would have been so successful.⁵⁹ Besides that, there is one more thing that should be taken into account: retaining the local, traditional institutions and forms of government in the Empire, as well as avoiding the complete unification and political absorption of the local government, might have had the goal of keeping the conquered peoples well away from one another, turning them not towards their neighbours,

⁵⁷ Cuyler Young, 1988: 41.

⁵⁸ An excellent example of this are the Greek *poleis* in Asia, which retained the local autonomy they had had during the Lydian Empire – not counting the initial Persian support that was given to the aristocratic option of the local political scene, which the Persians soon gave up on, taught from the experiences from the Ionian revolt.

⁵⁹ For example, the Assyrians, who controlled a smaller territory, made use of rigid methods of central political control and a reign of calculated terror, held public slaughters of captured enemies, and deported whole groups of people from one end of the land to another, but these methods in no way improved either the cohesion or the stability of their state. If we take into account the initial successful functioning of the Empire of Alexander III, we would conclude that the great Empires at that time had no other choice but to make use of tolerance as a basic tendency in the political activities.

but rather towards themselves, thus decreasing the likelihood of a general uprising aimed against the central government.⁶⁰

Proof that this Persian tolerance was, in fact, a strictly controlled social experiment lies in the fact that the King, his Court, and his highest government officials were supported and helped by a thoroughly professional bureaucratic machine at a local level. The key units of financial administration, as well as political control over the Empire, were the so-called royal treasuries.⁶¹ Apart from the fact that they fulfilled their primary function as troves of jewels, bullion and coins, these treasuries also functioned as administrative offices in the management of state finances and the planning of state and local expenses.⁶² Such treasuries (and the corresponding administrative services) are mentioned as existing everywhere that was of importance in the Empire, among other places in Babylon, Sardis and Memphis.

These offices/treasuries were linked to the local satrapal authorities, but it is also significant that they could function along other systems of government as well – for example, along the traditional governing bodies, which had been inherited from the conquered peoples.⁶³ Even if the satrapies made up the main units of the territorial organisation of the Empire, not everyone that was under the rule of the King (or at least recognised his supremacy) belonged to a satrapy. The Ethiopians and the Arabs are a good example of this. They gave “gifts” on a regular basis, as is testified to in the lists of *dahyāva* – but they were not part of any defined administrative entity as taxpayers.⁶⁴ On the other hand, one cannot say they were completely

⁶⁰ A good example of this is the behavior of the Phoenicians and, with some exceptions, that of the ethnically heterogeneous population of Asia Minor during the Ionian revolt; cf. the analysis of Grundy: 1901, 42 sqq., in which he concludes: “to use a modern *simile*, the provinces were converted, insofar as possible, into compartments fireproof against the flame of insurrection.”

⁶¹ Cf. Cuyler Young, 1988: 83 sqq. The administrative documents from the treasury in Persepolis, as well as the so-called fortification tablets, throw light on how such an entity functioned; besides that, they show that the administration of the Empire demonstrated tolerance and a dose of “tranquility” on paper, but in reality had complete control over absolutely everything that took place on its territory.

⁶² If one is to judge by the documents from Persepolis, the warehouses and the treasuries where such goods were stored were actually located elsewhere, in locations that were convenient and accessible for transport and delivery.

⁶³ Cf. Cuyler Young, 1988: 87 sqq., with appropriate examples.

⁶⁴ Herodotus (3.91) claims that the Arabians were not taxed and that they enjoyed special status; what is interesting is that, from the point of view of the Persian administration, there was no difference between their gifts and the taxes collected from the other peoples, who were part of the Empire’s administrative system. More details about the Arabians and their position during the Achaemenid Empire can be found in Eph’al, 1982: 192–214.

excluded from the Persian administrative sphere: even though they were not taxed outright or under the rule of a satrap, they were still bound by military service towards the Persian King, and had to provide manpower for the Persian army, just like everyone in the satrapies. And there is more – according to historical accounts, the Persian territory housed so-called “independent” states, such as Cilicia. The Cilicians had no tax obligations, nor a defined military service towards the King; yet, it is beyond doubt that they had to have had some kind of a working relationship with the royal administration, as well as some position within the territorial organisation, which so far we cannot determine with any certainty.⁶⁵

6. Actually, insisting on straight taxation and imposing revenue obligations upon the individual satrapies – as presented by Herodotus⁶⁶ – may be one of the bigger misconceptions in the modern image of the Persian Empire. In truth, the Persian government had at its disposal a variety of ways of collecting revenue, which could be applied based on three main levels. The first, and highest level of collecting revenue was, of course, that of straight taxation of the subjects: some of the conquered peoples were made to pay a yearly tax without any concealment, and that was considered part of the regular fiscal duties of the satraps and the local councils. The second level, in which the state administration took part at a local level, involved several wise fiscal novelties introduced by Darius and some later kings, who filled the state treasury without any forthright payment of “state” tax. State land was rented out, various fees were paid in the form of obligations, and on the basis of trade with real estate and other goods, there were customs charges and sales taxes that were collected.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ At first, the satrapal duties in Cilicia were carried out by the local dynast, known as *syennesis*, whose power came from before the rise of the Persian Empire; cf. Hdt. 1.28, 1.74; Xen. *Cyrop.* 7.4.2, 8.8.6. His palace (*basileia*) was located in Tarsus, which was a large and thriving town during the time of the Achaemenid Empire; see Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.23, while, on husbandry 1.2.2, 1.2.27 and 1.3.14. The status and the honour of the Cilician *syennesis* were revoked by Artaxerxes II, who was the first to appoint a satrap of Cilicia; cf. Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.20–21; *Hell.* 3.1.1; Diod. 14.20, as well as Hornblower, 1994b, 209. Xenophon (*Hell.* 4.8.5) describes Temenos, a town to the north of Smyrna in Aeolis, in the exact same way, as a “place in Persian Asia where one can live, without having to be a royal subject”, a fact that quite clearly describes the nature of the Persian rule in Asia Minor at the beginning of the 4th century BC.

⁶⁶ Hdt. 3.90–96.

⁶⁷ Two new administrative concepts, appearing for the first time in Persian Babylonia, may serve as an example of the circumspection and complexity of this fiscal system. The matter in question is the introduction of a central economic register (known as *karammari*, *kalammari* or *karri ammaru*, probably from the Persian **kārahmāra*), which was recording state reports concerning sales of mobile goods,

The third level, which is the most interesting for us, depended almost fully on the local forms of government. This type of “taxation” was carried out according to the legal and fiscal tradition of the conquered peoples. The tradition had still neither been forgotten, nor revoked – for the reason that it was carried out by the local rulers, who in most cases were neither Persian, nor served in the royal administration. Earlier we mentioned the “gift-bearing” Ethiopians and the Arabians. Regardless of the fact that they were not part of a satrapal administration, and that the historical accounts mention neither royal treasuries or offices, nor any other form of Persian administration on their territory – somebody must have, nevertheless, been responsible that the people carried out their yearly financial obligations to the Persian King (i.e. the collection of the “gifts”), as well as gathering and preparing an army in order to fulfil their military duties. That, it would seem, was left to the rulers/government of the said peoples, while the Persians were only concerned whether the duty had been fulfilled. An even better example of this are the undertakings of Aristagoras to further tax the Milesians, first, in order to equip his army, and then, to fulfil his duties to Artaphernes; in due course, this income ended up in the Persian state treasury, but the Persians were not openly involved in the taxation itself, which was left to the political savvy of the Milesian tyrant.⁶⁸

So, as demonstrated above, everyone who recognised the supreme power of the King had to fulfil his duties to the Empire in one way or another; however, there were various ways in which this could be done, as they were founded and carried out on the basis of various legal norms, with various, or even no involvement of the Persian administration. In that sense, what Herodotus writes on the alleged “taxation” of the Macedonians⁶⁹ is on shaky ground, since we have no facts that would specify the type of taxation that is being referred to, let alone by whom and for how long it was carried out.

7. We will surely get back to this later; but, at this point it needs to be mentioned that the Persian government was in no way just a “tax

in most cases, slaves, and on the basis of which the partakers in these transactions were taxed. Some time later, this register grew into a strictly defined state institution (*bīt mīksu ša šarri*, “a royal house for mīksu-tax”) which housed detailed state reports concerning changes in the subjects’ land holdings, with the aim to take “the part that belongs to the King”, either from the property or from the sale. All of these demands made by the state were made lawful by being announced through royal proclamations (*dātu*), and an official called *dātābara* was responsible that they were carried out. Concerning this, *see esp.* McEwan, 1982, 44–47, with appropriate examples.

⁶⁸ Cuyler Young, 1988: 96.

⁶⁹ Hdt. 7.108.

collector”. There are plenty of accounts from Persian Ionia that show that the Empire greatly supported husbandry, production and trade over its whole territory. Regardless of whether the Achaemenids were aware of the economic advantages of a large, common market on the territory of the whole Empire, it is quite obvious that the royal administration cared deeply about the economic welfare of the state; the starting point for the robust economy being agricultural production.

Most of the fertile land remained in the hands of the local population; nevertheless, we have enough data to support the claim that the Persians (and, most likely, other Iranians) had large holdings of land in various parts of the Empire, while the most widely accounted for are those in Babylonia, Egypt and in western Anatolia.⁷⁰ Should one take into consideration the small number of high government officials as compared with the size of the property they controlled, it becomes clear that most of the land was under the control of previously appointed managers, and that in view of the economic aspect, it was very difficult to make the distinction between controlling one’s own land and that of governing state property. Still, there are accounts of men owning small and medium-sized plots of land, received by orders of the King either as a reward or as payment for some kind of service performed in the satrapal administration. These are of greater significance for us, because the Persian religious and cultural influence in the satrapies expanded more through the government officials who were permanent residents of the area, than through the landowners from the upper social classes.⁷¹

This Persian diaspora is almost never mentioned in the narrative sources; nevertheless, the archaeological excavations in Sardis and Daskyleion support the claim that such a diaspora really did exist, above all in the satrapal centres and in the towns housing Persian administrative offices and archives. If truth be told, the excavations in Sardis provide less information than would be expected,⁷² but that

⁷⁰ Thanks to the Aramaean papyrus scrolls, we have a clear idea of the property and assets of Arsames (Aršāma), the satrap of Egypt during the reign of Darius II, who owned lands in Egypt and Babylonia. see Ctes. *Pers.* fr. 63-67, 78-79 and Polyaen. *Strat.* 7.28: cf. Bresciani, 1958: 132-134, 142-146.

⁷¹ Cf. Mellink, 1988: 218 sqq., who analyses the situation in Lydia, even though most of the materials date back to the time following the reigns of Darius and Xerxes. Herodotus (5.102, cf. 5.116) writes that in 499 BC the Persians who had land holdings west of Halys came to the aid of the troops in Sardis; this must refer to the noblemen Dauris, Hymaeus and Otanes, probably joined by lesser noblemen, who owned smaller pieces of land. Nevertheless, Briant (1996: 352) remains skeptical and points out that while the original materials are in fragments, the issues must not be proclaimed to have been “definitely resolved”.

⁷² Mellink, 1988: 218-219.

is most likely due to the long administrative tradition the Lydian Empire had already developed. However, the second satrapal centre in Asia Minor – Daskyleion,⁷³ where the administrative part of the satrapal residence was located, provides much more information.⁷⁴ The thorough excavations in the residential areas in the town, as well as the fortuitous discoveries in the necropolis, have yielded broad information from the 5th century BC, mainly tombstones. We shall briefly focus our attention on some “Greco-Persian” tombstone steles, discovered in 1965, secondarily used in a Byzantine tomb.⁷⁵ On one of the steles, with an inscription in Aramaean, the person in the grave is identified as Elnap, son of Ashi.⁷⁶ This stele of Elnap shows that the administration in Daskyleion employed officials from other regions in the Persian Empire, which means that their family also had to move with them, and, of course, receive appropriate landed property. The artistic style of this stele is typical for the western regions; in this specific case, the burial traditions are of Anatolia – meaning, the traditional combination of a funeral procession and feast – which proves that these steles were made by local craftsmen.⁷⁷ Still, many of the steles in Daskyleion show the deceased wearing Persian clothing, and one stele even depicts a Persian ritual where two men in Persian clothing are standing in front of what resembles a tomb.⁷⁸ This religious detail may be the most direct proof of the existence of a Persian diaspora in the west – moreso if it is put together with the information about the Persian cult of Zeus Baradates in Sardis, and that of Anahita in Hypaipa and Hiera Kome. This information refers to the 4th century BC, but supports the presence of Iranian religious practices in Lydia⁷⁹ that, according to the order of things, is most probably a consequence of the prior ongoing relocation of Persian

⁷³ Daskyleion has been identified without a doubt at Hisartepe, on the southeastern coast of Lake Mania (Dascylitis), near the village Ergili; see Kent, 1953, *DSf*; Vallat, 1971, 53-59. The site, or more precisely, the location of the palace and the garden is in complete accordance with the Persian “flavour” of such like, shown in Xenophon (*Hell.* 4.1.15-16).

⁷⁴ A general description of the preliminary findings in Akurgal, 1956; cf. the analysis of the collected materials in Akurgal, 1961, 171 sqq.

⁷⁵ See, Akurgal, 1966; Borchhardt, 1968, 171 sqq.

⁷⁶ The inscription is published by Cross, 1966.

⁷⁷ A hunting scene, known from other monuments, may be added to the general picture; cf. the stela from Sultaniye, east of Lake Mania, published by Schwertheim, 1983.

⁷⁸ Borchhardt, 1968: 201-203.

⁷⁹ Cf. Hanfmann, 1978: 33.

emigrants and government officials – in large enough numbers to reflect on the religious life in the Sparda satrapy.⁸⁰

8. We finally come to the “protector of the royal authority”, the head of this local system of government. We will not try to analyse his power or his methods of reign, or even seek to pinpoint his position in the Persian royal administration to see how close his relationship with the Persian court was. On the contrary, we will be exploring the utterly opposite – how independent the satrap was from the central administration, how much freedom he had, and how independently he could reign. Again, as many times up to now, it seems as though the image that the Greek sources present is not quite in agreement with reality.

The first claim from the Greek sources that deserves attention is the claim that there was a particular dichotomy between the civil and the military government in the satrapies. Xenophon makes a clear distinction between the military and the satrapal levels of authorisation, and claims that King Cyrus wanted the men in charge of the garrisons to obey only his orders, and no one else’s;⁸¹ Isocrates also writes about a regular, standing royal army.⁸² Xenophon mentions that the control in the satrapies was divided up in such a way as to encourage the rulers to spy on each other and to tell on each other to the King,⁸³ and he also explains that the troops appointed by the King had a duty to be aware of everything that was going on and to protect his interests from potential governors-turned-rebels.⁸⁴ In brief, by keeping the military and the civil government separate within the satrapy, the King managed to keep it under his control, as well as to reign in the authority of the satraps themselves.

This may sound reasonable, but does it match the truth? Of course, the historical accounts talk about several garrisons that answer directly to the King; but, if we look at their positions in more detail – on the Persian royal road,⁸⁵ at the Cilician gates⁸⁶ – it becomes clear that those units were deployed either at strategically important locations, of utmost significance for the security of state communications,

⁸⁰ The most recent and, up to now, the most detailed overview of confirmed Persian personal names, as well as cults and religious practices, can be found in Mitchell, 2007; see also Gates, 2005.

⁸¹ Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.1; cf. Briant, 1996: 352.

⁸² Isocr. 4.145.

⁸³ Xen. *Oec.* 4.11.

⁸⁴ Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.6.1; cf. Hornblower, 1982: 145 sqq.

⁸⁵ Hdt. 5.22.

⁸⁶ Xen. *Anab.* 1.4.4.

or at large forts, at places where various military operations were taking place. On the other hand, there are many examples where the satrap is in charge of the troops in his, or even in someone else's satrapy; even in the 4th century BC, when one would expect a more rigorous control by the central government, Pixodares himself appoints the head of city garrison in Xanthos.⁸⁷ Thus, there is no reason to believe that the satrap was limited in his deeds by some kind of a military control, let alone speculate that this was a usual political means used by the court to hold back his freedom.

In terms of the civil, administrative control – according to the theoretical parts found in the works of Xenophon, as well in the notes of Isocrates, it is believed that the central government had at its disposal various institutional control mechanisms in order to monitor the activities and doings of the satraps. Various travelling overseers are mentioned, with practically “police-type” authorisation,⁸⁸ then “royal scribes”, responsible for keeping the court informed as to everything that was going on in the satrapy,⁸⁹ and, finally, the infamous “royal eyes” and “royal ears”, allegedly the most important instrument with which the central government controlled everything that was happening in the satrapies. But, the truth is that, in the whole enormous body of archival and administrative documents, out of all these functions, only the “royal ears” have been confirmed, and even that not completely.⁹⁰

But let us say for the moment that all of those systems of control did truly exist, regardless of the fact that they have not been confirmed in the historical accounts. In that case, those facts are opposed by the very behaviour of the satraps, which, in the very same accounts, indicates no sign of fear or apprehension; actually, the satraps very often make autonomous decisions. Diodorus, for example, claims that “the satraps consulted the King about everything”,⁹¹ but Oronas, Abrocomas and Tiribazus organise military activities without notifying the King,⁹² Pharnabazus frequently carries out onsets against the rebels in Mysia without mentioning this to King,⁹³ while the Karduchi from south

⁸⁷ *SEG* XXVII 942, 337 BC

⁸⁸ Xen. *Oec.* 4. 16.

⁸⁹ Hdt. 3.128.3.

⁹⁰ The “royal eyes” are mentioned only in the Hellenic sources; see Aesch. *Pers.* 980; Hdt. 1.114.2; Aristoph. *Acharn.* 92–93. The “royal ears” are documented somewhat better; nevertheless, cf. the discussion in Oppenheim, 1968, with an overview of the opinions expressed.

⁹¹ Diod. 15.41.5.

⁹² cf. in Hornblower, 1982: 146 sqq.

⁹³ Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.13.

Armenia negotiate not with the Persian court, but with “the satrap from the valley”.⁹⁴ Indeed, based precisely on this kind of satrapal behaviour, modern researchers coined the term “peripheral imperialism”, so as to describe the authority of the person in charge of a given area, who, due to the nature of the land (or the conditions) does not have the opportunity of ongoing communication with the distant central government.⁹⁵

Then, how can one explain the information from the Greek sources? Excluding mean intentions and political partisanship, in which we have no cause for doubt, the possibilities that remain are that either the Greeks were in no way able to understand the Persian administrative system, or that our sources were aware of the state of things in only a handful of satrapies, and projected that as how things were in the whole Empire. Hornblower proves this, showing that Xenophon made wrong generalisations just because of the state of things in Lydia, where there really are traces of the control mechanisms that he mentions.⁹⁶

This is especially important for us, because it proves that if we were to believe the Greek sources, we would simply get a glimpse of a satrap “à la grecque”, as he was seen and understood by Xenophon and Isocrates. However, the satraps were appointed by the Persian King, and their existence could be explained only within the framework of the Persian state; this means that we would only find useful a description of a satrap “à la perse” – but we have no such description. Judging by the actions and behaviour of the satraps as attested in the historical accounts, we get the impression of a relation that can, to some extent, be called “feudal”, and which allows the satrap great freedom in his actions in exchange for his allegiance, military service and help.⁹⁷ This system did not depend on any kind of formal control, but rather on the loyalty and dedication of one man towards the King, who, in return, rewarded him with land and riches. Briant fittingly notes that all of this would be incomprehensible to the Greeks from the Classical period, and that their ancestors from the 7th century BC would have likely been better able to grasp the whole thing – so it

⁹⁴ Xen. *Anab.* 3.6.15.

⁹⁵ cf. the analysis by Richardson, 1986: 177, with an overview of significant bibliography.

⁹⁶ Hornblower, 1988: 234.

⁹⁷ An excellent analysis in Briant, 1996: 350 sqq., and everywhere else that deals with the relationship between the King and the central government with the local officials, especially according to the data in Near Eastern sources.

comes as no surprise that the narrative sources describe a condition which is almost completely out of touch with reality.

If we were to perceive the satrap in this way, then it also becomes easier to understand the position of the so-called “domestic satraps”, who were not Iranian, but still ruled in their native lands. Such an example is the case with the Hekatomnides, who in the 4th century BC had complete control as satraps of the new satrapy Caria, even though they had previously ruled in the town of Mylasa as local dynasts within the satrapy of Sparda.⁹⁸ When writing about this family, the historians, as a rule, avoid using the term “satrap”, possibly because the status of the Hekatomnides was truly unusual – yet, they themselves used this term on a regular basis in their inscriptions.⁹⁹ From all this we can conclude that the Hekatomnides, first and foremost, protected the interests of the Persian Empire and the Persian King in the regions they controlled, and that they most certainly recognised the Persian supreme power and authority; however, this does not mean that their lands routinely belonged to the first level of the royal administration, and that they were wholly subjugated and integrated territories, taxed annually. Just as a ruler could be linked by a *xenia*, or be the *proxenos* of a state, and remain ruler – he could most likely become a Persian satrap, and remain ruler, or a *dynast*, in his native land.

9. It is quite worthy of note that all of this can be perfectly applied to the hypothetical setting which Amyntas I and Alexander I found themselves in. Moreover, it seems that we can finally glimpse the beginnings of the solution as to their status within the Persian royal administration. However, there is another issue that needs to be carefully dealt with first – namely, how certain is the claim that it is the Macedonians that are depicted on the Persian monuments.

We already mentioned the *dahyāva* lists at the beginning, while looking at their importance as a primary source of information regarding a technical concept. Now we need to get back to them once again, in order to take a closer look at the nature of the information they contain, and check whether at all, and to what extent, this information corresponds to what we know as a definite historical fact.

⁹⁸ Cf. Hornblower, 1994b: 215 sqq. Caria is traditionally treated as a satrapy in the true sense of the word; the author supports this point of view, as opposed to the theories that the Hekatomnides managed to get away with usurping the status from the powerless Persian government. Concerning the problem with the status of Caria, as well as its transformation into a “real satrapy”, see. Petit, 1988.

⁹⁹ For example, *SIG*² 573 (= Hornblower, 1982: 365); *SIG* 167 (= Tod 138, 170), and some others. Pixodares is called a “satrap in Caria and Lycia”. As opposed to this, as is noted by Petit (1988), in the narrative and the literary sources, only the terms *epistathmos*, *tyrannos*, *arkhon* and *dynastes* are used, never *satrapes*.

As was said, the interpretation of the land lists, as well as of the relievos depicting scenes of throne and gift-bearers, continues to cause many problems and to provoke differing analyses.¹⁰⁰ At first glance, it seems that military success, royal supremacy and the appearance of a certain territory in the lists are all explicitly linked. The statue of Darius in Susa has the following inscription: “Here stands the statue that Darius ordered to be built in Egypt, so that everyone who sees it in the future will know that a Persian has hold of Egypt”.¹⁰¹ This is more or less the meaning of the sentences that introduce us into the *dahyāva* lists: “Here are the peoples who, by the power of Ahura Mazda, came to me; they became my loyal servants (*bandāka*), they brought me their tribute (*baji*), and did everything I told them to do, night or day.”¹⁰² Xerxes says practically the same thing: “By the power of Ahura Mazda, here are the peoples whose King I became; I reigned over them far from Persia, and they brought me tribute; that what I said, they carried out; they fell under the rule of my law (*dāta*).”¹⁰³

Nevertheless, there are some non sequiturs in the lists, which cannot be explained away with a loss or gain in territory – for example, why Persis (Parsa) does not appear in four of the five lists, or why Gedrosia (Akaufaka) only appears in the list of Xerxes. In one Akkadian version of the inscription from Susa (*DSaa*), neither Indus (Hinduš), nor Nubia (Kūšiyā) are mentioned, even though the other versions clearly state that ivory was taken from there. In addition, rare and irregular mentions are given to Skudra (Skudra), Libya (Putāyā), Caria (Karka) and the European Scythians (Sakā paradraya). The biggest number of variations can be found at the utmost west (the coast of the Aegean Sea) and the north (central Asia); for example, the nomadic and semi-nomadic northern tribes of *DB* and *DPe* are noted only as Saka, while those of *DSe* and *DNa* are divided into Saka Haumavarga and Saka Tigraxauda.¹⁰⁴

The situation is the same with the relievos, where we face great difficulties, starting with the identification of the royal subjects. First of all, the criteria of ethnic recognition according to physical outsee and style of clothing does not always provide results, but this will be

¹⁰⁰ Especially provoking is the analysis by Briant, 1996: 188-192, whose basic parameters are followed here.

¹⁰¹ *DSa*.

¹⁰² *DB* 1.7.

¹⁰³ *XPh* 3.

¹⁰⁴ Briant, 1996: 190 is convinced that this is a reference to the Orthocorybantes, mentioned by Herodotus (3.192).

referred to later; besides that, it is quite seeming that the composition of some of the relievos depended on the shape and size of the slab available to the artist, as well as on his aesthetic vision of the work of art, and not on the territorial and administrative reality. For example, some historians held the opinion that the importance of a given embassy depends on the number of people it was shown to include. However, as Briant noted, this can never be taken as criteria, as the bigger the animal that the emissaries are carrying, and the more space it takes up, the smaller the number of members that make up the embassy; this is why those embassies that do not carry animals with them have the most members. Then, in the relievos in Egypt, neither Yauna nor Gandāra are represented – and yet they figure in all the lists – simply because there is no room to represent everyone. It is the same with the throne carriers: the Carian (Karka) and the Gedrosian (Maciya) are shown outside the area bordered by the legs of the throne, one on the left, the other on the right.

Thus it becomes quite clear that these descriptions are primarily works of art, not representations of administrative lists providing a realistic picture about the Persian reign at the time of their unveiling. Rather the opposite, indeed: one could say that the lists and the relievos depict the King's desire to represent the states and peoples in the Empire, living in harmony bestowed by King himself. The lists seeks to show the outermost reaches of the Empire – Sardis, Sogdiana, Indus, Nubia; territories on all four sides of the world are represented – in the centre (Elam, Babylonia), on the far west (Sardis, Ionians), on the north (Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia), on the far east (Carmania, Gandara, Indus), as well as on the west and southwest of the Empire (Syria, Egypt and Nubia). On orders of the King, and on the good will of Ahura Mazda, everyone made a contribution of some kind towards the construction of the King's palace;¹⁰⁵ however, the report of that event does not represent a statistical inventory, but rather a Persian "picture of the world", which Darius wanted to leave to his descendants as a testament to his supreme authority.

10. This problem is quite serious, as it hints that the mentions of Sakā, Skudra and Yauna – which should help us decide whether there was a European satrapy or not – are not strong enough to serve as a definite argument. Nevertheless, having come this far, it would be a good idea to examine the problems connected with these three dahyu on the Persian lists.

¹⁰⁵ *DPg ad init.*: "Here are the peoples (or "the lands") that did this, and that are gathered here..."

Four epigraphic documents will serve as the basis of the analysis. Document *DSe*, besides “the overseas Scythians”, mentions Skudra, Yauna, in all likelihood “overseas”, as well as some Yauna tyai drayahya (“of the sea”). Document *DNa*, on the other hand, mentions Sakā, Skudra, some non-defined Yauna, as well as Yauna takabara. Document *XPh* does not mention Sakā, but does mention Skudra and Yauna “of the sea” and “over the sea”. The fourth text is *DPe*, dated quite close to *DSe*, in which there are mentions of “peoples over the sea”, and “Ionians on land and of the sea”.

Sakā paradraya, or “the Scythians over the sea”, are mentioned in two documents – *DSe* and *DNa*. They are listed after the Lydians and the Ionians, completely apart from the two groups of Scythians on the northeastern border, so it would be logical to conclude that those are peoples from the western group.¹⁰⁶ What is interesting is that, having appeared in the two documents, these western Scythians go back to the general parameter for the Scythians (on the stele set in the Suez Canal), or they disappear altogether (there is not a trace of them in *XPh*). Thus, the Persians rule over the overseas Scythians until at least the end of Darius’ reign, and after 486 BC there is no longer any mention of them; there is no way to make sure whether the Persian reign of the Scythians did not correspond to the truth from the very beginning, so it was finally let go by Xerxes, or whether the claim was indeed true, but they were no longer mentioned once they were no longer a part of the Persian Empire. In any case, having these Scythians mentioned does not tell us anything about the potential Persian reign to the north of the Danube; Balcer notes quite correctly that this term can also refer to the Getae, to the south of the river,¹⁰⁷ which once again swings the argument in favour of the alleged European satrapy.

On the other hand, we are practically unable to provide any certain interpretation for Skudra. In terms of iconography, what stands out is that the representatives of Skudra (or those we have identified as such) do not always correspond with each other. The men hold two spears in their hand, wear a cap with earflaps on their head with a flat top, but have no alopekys on, nor are covered with zeira; according to Balcer, these Skudra sometimes look more like Scythians than like Thracians.¹⁰⁸ In terms of the name, the term Skudra has neither been

¹⁰⁶ *Contra* Jacobs, 1996, who sets them in central Asia and (not quite well-founded) identifies them with Daha from *XPh*.

¹⁰⁷ Balcer, 1988: 6.

¹⁰⁸ However, what should also be taken into consideration is the fact that we have no idea how exactly the Thracians represented themselves at that time, as most of the materials used for comparison are of a later date.

etymologically explained, nor has it been interpreted in a satisfying manner. Oftentimes, parallels are drawn with the toponym Skudris in Hellespontine Phrygia; the conjectures go as far as to have Henkelman, on one hand, cite the much later Uskudar and Scutari, whereas Szemerényi claims that Skudra is an old Iranian ethnic name, etymologically connected with Sakā (the Scythians) and Suguda (Sogdiana).¹⁰⁹ In short, the linguistic explanations about the term Skudra are so problematic and complex, that their analysis is of no use whatsoever.

The only thing we know with certainty is that these Skudra are mentioned as workers in the archives in Persepolis, for a rather long period of time, at that, and on the most number of documents – altogether 86;¹¹⁰ they are followed by Turmiriya (the Lycians) on 66 documents, themselves followed by the Babylonians, on 38. Two personal names are also mentioned – Šedda and Karizza; but no relevant conclusion can be drawn from them, first of all because both names are Iranian, and besides that, they tread up at the beginning of a list of workers, so they might have been mentioned in a supervisory capacity and have nothing to do with the ethnic background of the workers. The fact that the documents mention cavalrymen from Skudra is quite interesting, since no such mention is made among the other ethnically marked workers. Again, one can spot a slight shift towards the Scythians, which is not very problematic, since we can neither claim, nor manage to prove that the term Skudra encompassed only the ethnically homogeneous Thracians in Persepolis.

As can be seen, neither the lists, nor the relievos, nor the archive and administrative documents from Persepolis provide anything concrete about Skudra, so the precise ethnic identification of these peoples is still problematic. The most we can say is: that they come from the outermost west reaches of the Empire; that, in all likelihood, they lived in close proximity to the Ionians (of all kind), but were closest to the overseas Scythians; that they were highly valued workers in Persepolis; and, finally, that *it is very likely, but not fully certain* that the Thracians are concealed behind this term.

It is very difficult to overcome the temptation to link Yauna takabara, along with Yauna paradraya, to the Persian military activities in Europe. However, it is a fact that we can only do this if we simultaneously make use of Herodotus. Had we not had the text of

¹⁰⁹ Szemerényi, 1980.

¹¹⁰ The Skudra appear for the first time in the 14th year of the existence of the accounts, and again from the 17th to the 24th year. In comparison, the Turmiriya appear only from the 20th to the 25th year.

Herodotus, and had had to depend only on the material sources, it would have been difficult for anyone to guess that these peoples were located farther than Anatolia, or the Ionian islands. If truth be told, Rollinger still sets the Skudra in northern Anatolia, or even in Georgia.¹¹¹ Recently he has also disputed Yauna takabara,¹¹² claiming that the Akkadian version of their name in no way implies that they wear a kausia or petasos; according to him, it is more probable that it is a reference to “Ionians who bear shields on their head”, which reminds him more of the Lycians. Besides that, according to the same author, the artistic description of these “Ionians” does not give us the right to claim that they wore the headgear we say they did, and with which we explain the word takabara.¹¹³

Still, it would be dangerous to allow the discussion to continue along such a hypercritical vein, as things would then move along in a different direction – as if we really did not have the text of Herodotus. And, in that case, not only the three names we are looking at would lose all meaning, but could then be possibly set anywhere from the Caucasus to Sinai. Yet, the chronological twists and turns and the ethnographic fantasies of our historiographer are not that problematic, so that we should have to entertain such alternative conjectures. Ultimately, the Lycians (Turmiriya) are far too well accounted for and ethnically homogenous for us to separate a distinct group that can be identified according to a different shield.¹¹⁴ Besides that, Tuplin warns that it is entirely possible that the facades may bear a badly drawn kausia by somebody who barely knew what that was or looked like, or an unfitting Akkadian translation for an item of clothing that was neither known, nor typical in the country the scribe came from.¹¹⁵ After all is said and done, we can analyse whether this “accessory” was really so striking for the Persians, and whether they actually could (and wanted to) make the distinction between petasos and kausia.¹¹⁶ In any

¹¹¹ Rollinger, 1998.

¹¹² Rollinger, 2006.

¹¹³ See the discussion in Olmstead, 1920, 94–95 and Eilers, 1977: 153–168; cf. Kent, 1953, s.v. takabara, translated as “wearing the p̄tasos”, as opposed to the translation of the Akkadian term – “who bear shields on their head”.

¹¹⁴ And more than that – in that case it should be explained why these Turmiriya are depicted as Yauna, when they can be simply *Turmiriya takabara. Rollinger, 2006b is aware of this problem, but he attempts to solve it by generalizing the term Yauna; this approach cannot be accepted as convincing, as we are dealing with a term that has been very well accounted for and that has a crystal clear etymology.

¹¹⁵ Tuplin, 2008.

¹¹⁶ Moreso since even today there are controversies surrounding the same issue, for example, concerning the artistic representations on the coins; cf. an excellent

case, it is possible that, in this particular case, it helped them distinguish the Indo-European dwellers in Anatolia from those in Europe, and thus, *there is a reason to believe* that the Macedonians are hidden behind the term Yauna takabara.

11. After all that was said previously, we should for the last time return to the hypothesis concerning the existence of a European satrapy; on the basis of the original facts, comparisons and analyses that were put forward, we should now be able to decide whether such a claim has any logic to it at all.

Hammond and Fol claimed¹¹⁷ that the Persians set up the European satrapy immediately after the end of the military campaigns of Megabazus and Otanes. However, as we saw, the primary sources contain no such *terminus technicus*, while in the Greek texts from that time, it appears only eight times, referring to an administrative entity on only three occasions. This is very important, because without a precise definition of the modality according to which the entire administrative unit works, we cannot explain what exactly “setting up a satrapy” means – whether only appointing a satrap (or hyparch), or a complete application of the Persian administrative and fiscal system.

Guesses concerning the satrap / hyparch of this territory range from Amyntas I and Alexander I, to Artayctes, the Persian ruler of Sestos. As we saw earlier, the terms *nomos* and *hyparkhos*, which are used by Herodotus, cannot acquire a universal meaning of “satrap” and “satrapy”, because in the majority of cases they refer to smaller fiscal entities and rulers of lower rank. Besides that, neither in Herodotus, nor in any other later source is there any mention of a satrap of a satrapy in Skudra, nor any mention of where the capital is, or where, indeed, the satrapal palace and administration is supposed to be located.

This brings us to the administrative workings of Skudra, and, what is more important, of the Macedonians. Contrary to the claim of Hammond and Fol that the political centre of the satrapy was located in the central valley of the River Hebrus, it is a fact that up to now, no Persian archives have been found, no offices, nor a satrapal treasury,

comment by Draganov, 2002: 32: „Спорът относно наименованието ѝ (с. на шапката) е напълно безсмислен, тъй като в литературата и двете назовавания се приемат за равностойни“.

¹¹⁷ All the claims supporting the idea that a European satrapy existed come from Hammond & Griffith, 1979: 60 sqq. and Fol & Hammond, 1988, 246 sqq., as the main supporters of this belief; all the other authors accept or mildly add on to their claims.

let alone any satrapal centre.¹¹⁸ Incidentally, in Europe there are no traces of a diaspora of Persian officials, of land under Persian control or a land registry, nor are there any accounts of Persian religious practices. This serves to show that in whichever way the Persian territories in Europe were governed, it did not include the relocation of government officials from other parts of the Empire – which means that it was probably left to the local authorities, as was the case with the tyrants in Persian Ionia, with the Hekatomnides in Caria, and with the local *syennesis* in Cilicia. The basic political mosaic thus remained almost untouched; the only thing that changed was the final destination of the collected revenues and the general military and political compass, which in no way upholds the idea of any kind of a long-term existence of a European satrapy.¹¹⁹

In addition, it is believed that the satrapy was regularly taxed; that it gave bullion silver, grain, cattle and building material; that in times of war it provided troops, while the conquered islands gave ships as well.¹²⁰ It is difficult to determine what these claims are founded on. The Persians could have received everything that has been mentioned without having to “set up a satrapy”. Even the fact that “subjugated” Macedonia paid a tax to the Persians – bearing in mind that such a tax has been nowhere explicitly defined – could have been, as we saw earlier, carried out in a number of different ways, even without a satrap and without Persian administrative services; in that case, the people did not technically pay tax, but rather, “gave gifts”. In terms of the claim that the Persians looked after the satrapy by improving the road and trade infrastructure, by building roads and bridges and canals – it is enough to point out that such activities are mentioned for the first time relating to the logistics for the last campaign in Europe, which can in no way be presented as “activities

¹¹⁸ A detailed list of all the buildings and infrastructural elements which a satrapal center would be expected to have – from a palace to administrative buildings and the Persian *paradeisos*, to waterworks services and services for the protection of plant and animal life – can be found in Briant, 1982: 450–454. There is no need to emphasise the fact that not one of these elements mentioned by the author has been accounted for in Europe.

¹¹⁹ “Long-term” in terms of what is happening in other places, mainly in Asia Minor. For example, the mentioned tombs in Daskyleion date back to approximately 475 BC, which proves that around 70 years after the fall under Persian rule, there are already Persian officials of varying ethnicity with permanent residence, including families, temples and landed property in Hellespontine Phrygia; if the European satrapy was established around 510 BC, that would mean that in 30 years of its existence not even a basic communication network had been set up, let alone any kind of an administrative and fiscal pyramid.

¹²⁰ Fol & Hammond, 1988: *loc. cit.*

at upkeeping the satrapy”. And finally, to bring everything to a classical *reductio ad absurdum*, we shall mention that Hammond interprets the name of the satrapy as “an old Phrygian word, with which the Phrygians marked the area around Edessa before they moved to Asia Minor, and which was later replaced by the term Thrace¹²¹ – while, as we saw earlier, academic discussions still spin around the mere identification of the pictured subjects, not to mention the etymology of the terms Skudra and Yauna takabara.

If we take all this into account, it seems that the question we need to ask is not “did a European satrapy really exist”, but rather, “what makes us speculate that a European satrapy ever existed”. As things stand, the only fact that all these speculations are based on is Herodotus’ claim that Amyntas and Alexander I were Persian hyparchs. But, if we learned anything at all from the status of the local *syennesis* in Cilicia, from the Hekatomnides in Caria, from the Cypriot *basileis*, and even from the Indians Porus and Taxillas, it becomes clear that the term “satrap” should and can be analysed in only its first, basic meaning – “protector of the King/Empire”, i.e., of the Persian military-political interests of the territory he controls.

If things are set up this way, then there is no reason why Amyntas I and Alexander I could not also be Persian hyparchs or satraps, as representatives of the Persian military and political interests on their territory, with the territory itself not having an official administrative status of a satrapy. This status might have been unusual for the Greeks (and, as we can see, for present-day historians) – but as Tuplin notes, if something is out of the ordinary or unusual, it does not mean that it is impossible. Simply, the information we have at our disposal does not allow any other interpretation.

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¹²¹ Fol & Hammond, 1988: 246; Hammond & Griffith, 1979: 60 sqq.

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