



Armies and navies

FINANCING THE NAVY

Fleets and ships

Sources and Evidence

- ▶ The vast majority of our knowledge of how poleis financed navies comes from Athens.
- ▶ However, although there is evidence that systems similar to the Athenian existed elsewhere, it is probable that most poleis had other systems.
- ▶ The Athenian system was based upon the democratic expectation that the rich should shoulder greater financial contributions to the state than the poor.

The liturgies

- ▶ The liturgy (*leitourgia*, ‘work for the people’) is an institution known particularly from Athens, but attested elsewhere (**Mytilene**, Antiphon 5. 77; **Siphnos** , Isocrates 19. 36), by which rich men were required to undertake work for the state at their own expense. It channelled the expenditure and competitiveness of rich individuals into public-spirited directions, and was perhaps felt to be less confiscatory than an equivalent level of taxation. OCD³ s.v. liturgy

Types of liturgies in Athens

- ▶ Trierarchy: Captain and pay for the expenses of a trireme for a year.
- ▶ Choregia: Produce a chorus for a festival
- ▶ Gymnasiarchy: Produce a team for an athletic festival.
- ▶ Hestiasis: Provide a state banquet
- ▶ Architheoria: Provide for a delegation to a foreign festival.

Rich men and Liturgies

- ▶ In regard to the counts of the accusation, gentlemen of the jury, you have been sufficiently informed; but I must ask your attention also for what has yet to be added, so that you may understand what kind of person I am before you give your verdict upon me. I was certified of age in the archonship of Theopompus : appointed to produce tragic drama, I spent thirty minae and two months later, at the Thargelia, two thousand drachmae, when I won a victory with a male chorus; and in the archonship of Glaucippus, at the Great Panathenaea, eight hundred drachmae on pyrrhic dancers. [2] Besides, I won a victory with a male chorus at the Dionysia under the same archon, and spent on it, including the dedication of the tripod, five thousand drachmae; then, in the time of Diocles, three hundred on a cyclic chorus at the Little Panathenaea. In the meantime, for seven years I equipped warships, at a cost of six talents. [3] Although I have borne all these expenses, and have faced daily peril in your service abroad, I have nevertheless made contributions--one of thirty minae and another of four thousand drachmae--to special levies. As soon as I returned to these shores, in the archonship of Alexias, I was producing games for the Promethea, and won a victory after spending twelve minae. [4] Then, later, I was appointed to produce a chorus of children, and spent more than fifteen minae. In the archonship of Eucleides I produced comic drama for Cephisodorus and won a victory, spending on it, with the dedication of the equipment, sixteen minae; and at the Little Panathenaea I produced a chorus of beardless pyrrhic dancers, and spent seven minae. Lysias 21.1-4

Trierarchy

- ▶ The trierarchy was applicable to the richest members of the liturgical class, since it was considered to be the most expensive liturgy.
- ▶ The state provided the ship, the equipment and the pay for the crew.
- ▶ The trierarch had to captain the trireme and provide the costs for maintenance and repairs.

Sharing the trierarchy

- ▶ After 411, probably due to the financial difficulties created by the Peloponnesian War, the trierarchy started to be shared between 2 men.
- ▶ At the same time, it became possible for a trierarch to hire a captain for the trireme and thus not go to war personally.
- ▶ From 357/6, the trierarchy came under a symmory system.

The symmoria

- ▶ The symmoria was a group of men initially liable for the payment of a special tax called the eisphora.
- ▶ The symmoriai system was extended to the trierarchy from 357/6.
- ▶ Probably the symmoriai of the trierarchy were different from those of the eisphora.

The trierarchic symmoriai

- ▶ The 1200 richest citizens were divided into 20 symmoriai.
- ▶ Through the 20 symmoriai the cost of the trierarchy for the Athenian fleet was divided each year between the 1200.
- ▶ The system was problematic from its inception and reforms were proposed in 354 by Demosthenes. A large part of them were in place by 340 but the problems of financing the fleet continued.



Crews

One obol more...

- ▶ The ambassadors thanked him, and urged him to make the wage of each sailor an Attic drachma¹ a day, explaining that if this were made the rate, the sailors of the Athenian fleet would desert their ships, and hence he would spend less money.² [5] He replied that their plan was a good one, but that it was not possible for him to act contrary to the King's instructions; besides, the original compact ran in this way, that the King should give thirty minae³ per month to each ship, whatever number of ships the Lacedaemonians⁴ might wish to maintain. [6] Lysander accordingly dropped the matter for the moment; but after dinner, when Cyrus drank his health and asked him by what act he could gratify him most, Lysander replied: "By adding an obol to the pay of each sailor." [7] And from this time forth the wage was four obols, whereas it had previously been three. Xen. Hell. 1.5.4-7

Slaves and free men



- ▶ This we should scarcely be able to do, even if we had plenty of ships to spare, and were freed from our present necessity of exhausting all our strength upon the blockade. For it is already difficult to carry in supplies past Syracuse; and were we to relax our vigilance in the slightest degree it would become impossible. [2] The losses which our crews have suffered and still continue to suffer arise from the following causes. Expeditions for fuel and for forage, and the distance from which water has to be fetched, cause our sailors to be cut off by the Syracusan cavalry; the loss of our previous superiority emboldens our slaves to desert; our foreign seamen are impressed by the unexpected appearance of a navy against us, and the strength of the enemy's resistance; such of them as were pressed into the service take the first opportunity of departing to their respective cities; such as were originally seduced by the temptation of high pay, and expected little fighting and large gains, leave us either by desertion to the enemy or by availing themselves of one or other of the various facilities of escape which the magnitude of Sicily affords them. Some even engage in trade themselves and prevail upon the captains to take Hyccaric slaves on board in their place; thus they have ruined the efficiency of our navy. Thuc. 7.13

Democracy and navy

- ▶ First I want to say this: there the poor and the people generally are right to have more than the highborn and wealthy for the reason that it is the people who man the ships and impart strength to the city; the steersmen, the boatswains, the sub-boatswains, the look-out officers, and the shipwrights -- these are the ones who impart strength to the city far more than the hoplites, the high-born, and the good men. This being the case, it seems right for everyone to have a share in the magistracies, both allotted and elective, for anyone to be able to speak his mind if he wants to. Old Oligarch 1.2