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CHAPTER TWO

Principles of Charity:

Some strategies of demarcation

Now you’re telling me you’re not nostalgic
Then give me another word for it,
you who are so good with words
And in keeping things vague
JOAN BAEZ, “Diamonds and rust”, (1975)

I

MAGINE someone handing you a set of keys. Being a social animal you unconsciously assume that these keys mean something. But what do they mean? What message does the giver intend to convey? You, a social animal, would probably agree that this depends on who this person is (let us call him P) and on the type of relation that you have with his person. One can think of a host of scenarios:

(i) P is a lock smith and you are a customer. P has just made a copy of your apartment keys and expects you to pay for his services and the product. P does not expect you to appeal to his faith that you will reciprocate the favor at some indeterminate point in the future. At this point, you do not know whether you will need P’s services again in the future. You both tacitly assume that it is very probable that you will never meet again in the future.

(ii) P is a real estate agent and you are his client. The two of you are at the notary’s office where you have signed a deed of sale and a mortgage deed. P expects you to accept the keys as they are now your legal property; what is more, the keys represent the possession of your new apartment. P will send you a bill for his services in due course.
(iii) P is a close friend of yours who will leave for a business meeting in Zürich for a week. You have promised him to take care of his cats. He expects you to take the keys and to keep your promise to take care of his cats in his absence. You do not suppose that taking the keys means becoming the legal owner of his apartment; you assume that P will want his keys back after his return. You are willing to do him this favor just as he has helped you filling out your tax forms a couple of weeks ago.

(iv) P may be your partner, as you have been dating P for the last couple of months. Up to this point, neither you nor P has “said the word”, but implicitly you are pretty confident that P and you are on the right track. P expects you to take the keys and to understand that he trusts you enough to give you free access to his apartment. “His house is your house”—well, that is, not legally in the sense of property rights, but in the use of the apartment. You understand that P has made a gesture to confirm that you have arrived at a point in your relationship where you are practically living together. P is your partner now and is willing to “make it official”.

In everyday practice the theoretical availability of different forms of exchange rarely gives rise to serious misunderstandings. And so you immediately grasp the meaning of the situation: you know who and what P is to you, and there have been events prior to the allocation of the keys that guide you towards the socially desirable response. Being a social animal, you are socially competent: you have implicit, or “tacit”, knowledge of how to read such situations and what script to adopt.¹

From a material point of view, however, the events (i) to (iv) are identical: all four of them involve the same object. From a social point of view however, these events are distinct giving rise to distinct expectations,² depending on their

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¹ Tacit knowledge is challenged the moment new forms of exchange arise; e.g. when new commodities enter the market (“education”, “art”, “health”, “sex”). See Chapter Four.

² To give an example, the first two exchanges may be labeled “discrete”, in the sense that the primary and immediate purpose of the transaction is to obtain the counterpart value; in contrast, exchanges (iii) and (iv) are “partial”, in the sense that they can only be understood in the context of the “entire transaction”, i.e. the long-term chain of favors and obligations, containing reference to the relationship between partners A and B. KOPYTOFF (1986), 69 for the terminology of “discrete” and “partial” transactions.
exchange context\(^3\) and the alternative forms of exchange that are culturally available. Underneath the overt economy of visible exchanges lies a moral economy in which people constantly re-value each other, negotiate expectations and loyalties towards one another and redefine their relationships. Most of the times, such negotiations can be conducted in a tacit and implicit manner: if P fears rejection, he may leave it deliberately vague whether he has scenario (iii) or (iv) in view. It is up to you to decide whether you will give back the keys when P returns from his business trip.

Sometimes, however, negotiations are made explicit. It is in these situations that we find people trying to express their tacit social know-how in explicit rules. In the previous chapter we have tried to get a grip on the implicit rules of competence that the Greeks of the 5\(^{th}\)-and 4\(^{th}\)-century apply when they attempt to engage in successful χάρις-exchanges or when they dismiss bad friends as ἀχάριστος. In this chapter we shall explore how this implicit knowledge is translated into grammar rules: prescriptive statements about who is, and who is not, entitled to χάρις. As we have seen in the previous chapter, most of the times people feel no need to talk about the norms they live by. It is only in crisis situations, when norms cease to be self-evident, that the rules of social competence are made explicit.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, χάρις-exchanges are potentially isomorphous with market exchanges: different types of exchanges can involve a reciprocal allocation of goods and services, but take place on different premises. In a world with a changing repertory of exchanges, isomorphisms yield the danger of ambiguity. It is in these situations of perceived ambiguity that people are prompted to express, reaffirm and articulate the implicit rules of exchange and social interaction in relation to the world of commerce. In the previous chapters we have seen some of these reactions: sometimes the isomorphism between market transactions and χάρις-exchanges is recognized and

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\(^3\) Cf. APPADURAI (1986), 3-16, for the argument that the distinction between gift and commodity lies in a distinction in modes of exchange. This model allows for the same thing to be both gift and commodity, its meaning shifting with the ideology attached to the situation of exchange. For a similar point, see KOPYTOFF (1986), 64: “Such shifts and differences in whether and when a thing is a commodity reveal a moral economy that stands behind the objective economy of visible transactions.”
acknowledged, but often it is implicitly dismissed or explicitly abhorred. Underlying these normative statements there is a number of conceptually possible positions:

(1) **Reductionism**: in the end, χάρις-reciprocities are market economical exchanges. χάρις can be subsumed under the logic of market reciprocity. Perceptual differences are demystified as only apparent.\(^4\)

(2) **Immunization**: χάρις-exchanges (or the χάρις-aspects of exchanges) are kept distinct from pure market exchanges:
   (a) **conjunction**: χάρις-exchanges and market exchanges involve different aspects of one and the same exchange: an exchange can encompass both a market component and an element of χάρις as an immaterial “extra” to transactions that are otherwise purely commercial (e.g. as the “customer relation maintenance” of the sophists).
   (b) **antagonism of objects**: χάρις-exchanges and market exchanges involve different types of objects (e.g. an allocation of money cannot be a gift of χάρις; a χάρις-exchange can only involve special things);\(^5\)
   (c) **antagonism of circumstances**: the same objects can be exchanged on different premises and principles (χάρις is hostile to accounting; χάρις is all about timing);
   (d) **antagonism of subjective experiences**: the same exchanges can be distinguished on the grounds that they involve different internal experiences: emotions (χάρις is a “happy” exchange), expectations (conferring χάρις means not expecting a return, a gift is essentially one-sided), intentions (a gift of χάρις is primarily/exclusively motivated by the desire to benefit the other as opposed to oneself), deliberations (χάρις requires choice, hence it is not compatible with compulsion).

Position (1) is the Grumbler’s who, by reducing χάρις entirely to debt, removes the χάρις from the exchange altogether and exposes it to be an illusion—a position that is characteristic for a social misfit or for anyone who, for other

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\(^4\) E.g. in an erotic context χάρις may *look* different from commercial sex, but “that is only a fancy name for something that the persons concerned are ashamed of.” (Aristoph. Plut. 158-9) . Cf. Chapter Five.

reasons (e.g. objectifying analysis), detaches himself from socially functioning action, an extreme position that the present chapter will not be concerned with.

Position (2a) sublimates (and arguably marginalizes) χάρις into a non-material (and hence irreducible) quality attached to some exchanged, the social “icing on the cake” of material transactions. Theoretically speaking, position (2b) is perhaps the most obvious strategy of demarcation: exchanges that involve coined money are market exchanges; exchanges that involve other types of objects that are not easily translated into monetary value units, e.g. precious metals or garlands, are χάρις-exchanges. However, in reality there are many situations in Classical Athens where the material nature of the object is not decisive for its status as a χάρις-object or a commodity: with the exception of objects that circulate at some top-rank occasion (weddings, victories), almost any object can be construed as both a χάρις-object or a commodity with monetary value. Moreover, although coined money is by its very nature closer to the absolute side of the commodity scale because of its ready quantifiability, even a sum of money can be constructed as a χάρις (e.g. as a friendly loan). Hence, for a large range of objects, their status as either a commodity or a χάρις-object is a matter of discursive construction, dependent upon the mode of reciprocity, not on their material identity.

Strategies of antagonism and conjunction are typically embedded in larger moral, social and political issues: e.g., in the demarcation of erotic χάρις from commoditized sex not only moral judgments but also issues such as citizenship are at stake; the demarcation of Socratic conversation from the commoditized education of the sophists involves larger discursive struggles over cultural capital. Some of these larger issues will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

At present we shall subject to scrutiny contexts where both the concept of χάρις and the idea of money are activated—comparable to the three cases of isomorphism we have seen in the previous chapter—and proceed to analyze some basic strategies that people use to demarcate χάρις-exchanges from the

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8 E.g. the line of attack in the trial against Timarchus was that his alleged self-prostitution impaired his ability to speak at meetings of the assembly. See Fisher 2001, 36-52.
9 See Sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 of Chapter One.
seemingly isomorphous market exchanges. As we will see, a range of strategies is put into use to demarcate χάρις from the paradigm of commerce, finance and banking. We shall see how the development of a commercial paradigm provides the terms and tools with which the grammar of χάρις can be articulated. Depending on the context, χάρις comes to be conceptualized as the moral icing on the cake of commercial transaction, as something above and beyond the call of duty, as an overwhelming force hostile to counting and quantification, as an incalculable quality incomprehensible to a shopkeeper-king, or as risky exchange behavior of mothers who make extremely insecure investments in children.

1. **Debt vs. χάρις**

1.1 **The most binding of obligations**

Occasionally, the isomorphism between “commercial” transactions and φιλία-exchanges is exploited for purposes of analysis: prescriptive statements about the economy of χάρις are cast in an vocabulary of monetary exchange where obligations can be quantified and objectified. Especially in didactic contexts, the unambiguous terminology of banking and commerce often serves to articulate and objectify the far more implicit and “vague” obligations within long-term φιλία-relationships, the stock example being the relationship between parents and children:

The theme of the most binding of obligations owed by children to parents is a recurring theme in Plato's *Laws*: 869a-c, 930e-32d. In didactic and theoretical discourse, the parent-child relationship is, in turn, exploited as a model for philia. In Hes. *W&D* 182-188 the breakdown of family ties and the refusal to give θρεπτήρια (the reciprocation of care for rearing) to parents are symptomatic for the moral bankruptcy of the Iron Race.
In this text, the duty to respects one’s parents is motivated according to a so-called Debtor Paradigm of Obligation. The child-parent bond is framed as a debtor-creditor relationship, in which parental care is reduced to a loan (a δάνεισμα), while the filial obligation to care for one’s parents is formulated in terms of a debt (a χρέος) and of “repaying” (ἀποτίνειν) “what is owed” (ὀφειλήματα). The most binding of all family obligations is “expressed as a loan transaction, complete with security and repayment.”

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11 “After these will come private shrines legally dedicated to ancestral deities; and next, honors paid to living parents. For to these duty enjoins that the debtor should pay back the first and greatest of debts, the most primary of all dues, and that he should acknowledge that all that he owns and has belongs to those who begot and reared him, so that he ought to give them service to the utmost of his power—with substance, with body, and with soul, all three—thus making returns for the loans of care and pain spent on the children by those who suffered on their behalf in bygone years, and recompensing the old in their old age, when they need help most.” (Transl. R.G. Bury).

12 This terminology is coined and explored by CARD (1988).

13 In 4th-century Attic Greek δανείζειν is the most common verb for “to lend”. Modern lexica, including LSJ and CHANTRAINE (1968-80, s.v. δάνος), identify δανείζειν and cognate terminology as having the specific sense of lending at interest—as opposed to lending on a “friendly” basis, which is commonly denoted by κίχραναι. KORVER. 79-84; BOGAERT (1986), 22n.22. Cf. MILLET (1991), 28-9 for the qualification that the verb δανείζειν, and its associated nouns δανειόν and δάνος, possibly originally denotes giving and gifts; however the basis for this reconstruction (supported by CHANTRAINE who links δάνος with the root of δίδωμι) consists in relatively late sources (Etymologicum Magnum, the third-century poet Euphorion fr. 90) and a first century B.C. grammarian Tryphon.

14 Similar analyses of the parent-child relationship can be found elsewhere in Plato (Rep. 538B-C; Laws 869A-C, 930-931A; Symp. 207A-209E) and in Aristotle (e.g. EN 1163b12-122).

15 MILLET (1991), 133.
Within the Debtor Paradigm, fulfilling obligations is a matter of settling accounts, and ethics becomes a matter of moral bookkeeping in a moral economy. It provides a powerful tool to objectify moral concepts such as obligation, duty and guilt, as well as the mechanisms of positive reciprocity, for it is capable of encapsulating a longer time-frame. Especially in cases where the time-span between original favor and the favor done in return is extremely long, as in the case of parents and children, the Debtor Paradigm provides a transparent and formalized analogy that makes a moral and causal connection between the two events objectifiable: one has the duty to take care of one’s parents because one has received care earlier in life from one’s parents.

1.2. The law of gratitude

The conceptualization of filial duty in terms of debts and repayment is common in our Athenian sources from the Classical Period and may strike us as self-evident, as in anthropological studies, the mother-child bond is almost universally held to be a paradigm-case of generalized reciprocity: the mother suckling the babe may in some cases expect a return only after a maximum span of time, i.e. at the end of her life when she has reached the age of dependence.

\[16\] CARD (1988), 115.
\[17\] An extreme example is deontological ethics where being in debt is “the paradigm ethical relationship.” CARD (1988), 115. In Germanic languages the lexeme for moral guilt, Schuld, incorporates the debtor’s paradigm. Cf. NIETZSCHE (1968), 498-501.
\[18\] CARD (1998). Cf. CARD (1988) for a distinction between a “debtor’s paradigm” and a “trustee’s paradigm” of duty and obligation.

\[19\] Cf. See Chapters Four and Five for Socrates’ larger strategy to demarcate short-term and passive requital from long-term active reciprocity.
\[21\] In a recent study on the Dutch welfare state, it is observed that the recent retreat of the welfare state is premised on the existence of family ties that guarantee the care of the elderly. In the Netherlands, however, due to all sorts of culturally specific causes, the notion of reciprocity of care between parents and children is relatively weak. Dutch parents are supposed to endow their children with absolute freedom when they reach adulthood and move out of the parental house. Dutch parents usually feel very inhibited in asking their children for assistance: they “do not want to be a nuisance”, or impede their children’s absolute freedom. See RIJSIEUW (2005).

\[22\] Chapter One Section 3.2.
\[23\] SAHLINS (1972), 193-4. Cf. WILK & CLIGGETT (2007), 162: “The most common example of generalized reciprocity is what goes on in households: parents provide for children over years
Whereas it is uncontroversial among anthropologists to label the mother-child bond as a paradigm-case of “generalized reciprocity”, the precise ideological motivation is culturally variable and subject to discursive negotiation and construction.\(^{24}\)

For instance, this type of analysis of filial duty has also struck modern readers by its alleged “remarkable lack of any mention of love”, as it “reads painfully like a balance sheet”.\(^{25}\) As we have seen, in 5th- and 4th-century Athenian discourse too, a tension was felt between the format of a balance sheet with its objectifiable and quantifiable obligations on the one hand, and the subjective first-person experience of commitment on the other hand: keeping a balance sheet of φιλία is either taboo behavior characteristic of a social misfit or a symptom that something is seriously wrong in the relationship.\(^{26}\)

Hence, there are also alternative analyses of the parent-child bond that avoid the Debtor Paradigm when explicating the obligations of children towards parents, and emphasize the element of χάρις instead: the element of gratuitousness and of acting without external coercion and without security of return. These elements are central in Xenophon’s construction of the χάρις owed to parents. In the dialogue with Lamprocles,\(^{27}\) in which Socrates reproaches his son Lamprocles for ἀχαριστία towards his mother, the mother-child relationship is elevated to a paradigmatic status: a mother is a super-φίλος, one’s φίλος par excellence\(^{28}\) and the ultimate test for a person’s capability to maintain healthy reciprocal relationships.\(^{29}\) To Socrates, the paradigmatic

\(^{111}\) and years, giving food, clothing, birthday parties, and paying for school. Parents usually expect nothing tangible at the time; they may hope for love, affection, and care later in life, but that’s something unmeasured and certainly a long time away.” On the perception of life as a series of exchanges, see SCHIEFFELIN (1980), STRATHERN (1988), 1-31, DAVIS (1992).

\(^{24}\) Cf. the starting point of the general introduction in ROSEN & SLUITER (2010), here on notions of “fairness” and “trust”: “Although there is an evolutionary rationale for such norms, their expression in specific value terms and concepts is culturally embedded” (2).

\(^{25}\) STEVENSON (1992), 428.

\(^{26}\) See Chapter One Section 4.1.

\(^{27}\) See also Chapter One Section 3.1.

\(^{28}\) Xen. Mem. II.i.13: τὴν δὲ μητέρα τὴν πάντων ἁλιστά σε φιλούσαν οὐκ ὁμ ὁδίν θεσπενεν. See Section Six for some of the ideological consequences of the paradigmatic status of the asymmetrical parent-child bond (and gods).

\(^{29}\) By displaying ἀχαριστία towards one’s mother, one’s φίλος par excellence, one disqualifies oneself as a citizen (II.i.13.3-9). For failure to perform one’s filial obligations is the only manifestation of ἀχαριστία formally recognized in the city’s legislation (cf. Arist. Ath.Pol. LV.3;
status of the mother is grounded in χάρις. Failure to reciprocate a favor
(ἀποδιδῷ χάριν) is an offense, the more heinous in proportion to the benefits
received: as our parents are our greatest benefactors, it is to them that we owe
the greatest obligation imaginable.

Thus far Socrates’ strategy resembles Plato’s use of the Debtor Paradigm: the
child is framed as the indebted party for he is born into a web of obligations.
However, the approaches differ over the nature of the indebtedness. Whereas
Plato takes recourse in the formalized discourse of banking, Socrates frames the
child’s obligations consistently in terms of χάρις, for the didactic goal is that
Lamprocles recognizes the χάρις bestowed on him, i.e. that he “knows the
favor” (χάριν εἰδέναι). This difference is ultimately a difference in perspective:
Plato’s analysis of filial obligation takes the external perspective of the lawgiver,
Xenophon’s Socrates gives his son instructions from an internal point of view of
a relation that can still be fixed.

Socrates substantiates this claim by vividly describing the hardships and
pains endured by parents, especially by the mother, in bringing up a child: parents
give the greatest gift (the gift of life, the one we never give up
voluntarily), with great carefulness (men select women who are likely to

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RHODES (1981) ad loc: one who is guilty of ἀχαριστία towards parents is deemed unfit to
perform sacrifices on behalf of the polis—a responsibility premised on one’s ability to maintain
reciprocal relationships. A central term in the description of morally legitimate and religiously
sanctioned behavior is ὁσίη/ὁσιος. See PEELS (in preparation). In Xen. Mem., the idea of
punishment is conceptualized as distinct from codification: the real punishment for breaches in
reciprocal relations is not codified in written law, but grounded in the nature of friendship
itself: you will end up without friends; no one will care to invest in you by doing you a favor
(χάρις), if you even refuse your own parents return of favors (II.ii.14). This idea is repeated in
Xen. Mem. IV.iv where Socrates and Hippias discuss the divine law of reciprocity. This too
reflects a strategy of demarcation: calling the duty to reciprocate the good treatment by one’s
parents an “unwritten law” is an attempt to objectify the social practice of reciprocity in
legalistic terms and to appropriate a formal notion of “rules”. At the same time the metaphor of
the unwritten divine law serves to demarcate reciprocity as distinct from legalized exchanges
by privileging the “unwritten divine law” over the written laws that regulate commerce. On the
(1990 [1980]), on the use of the “vocabulary of the rule, the language of grammar, morality
and law, to explain a social practice which obeys quite different principles” (102).

Xen. Mem. II.ii.3. Cf. HUME (1959 [1739/40]), 16: “Of all crimes that human creatures are capable
of committing, the most horrid and unnatural is ingratitude, especially when it is committed
against parents, and appears in the more flagrant instances of wounds and death.”

Xen. Mem. II.ii.5.
produce the best offspring). The moment selection has taken place, a chain of care and sustenance is put into operation: men sustain their wives and provide their future children with things that will benefit them later in life; women carry the burden of pregnancy, go through labor, risk their lives, share food; both parents share with their children all knowledge they have and spend money to sent them off to good teachers.

But how does one initiate a relationship based on χάρις? Taking a closer look at Socrates’ representation of the mother as the φίλος par excellence, we see how this maximum commitment is manifested: not only by giving the greatest gift, but also in the way of giving:

(2) Xen. Mem. II.ii.5-6

ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ὑποδεξαμένη τε φέρει τὸ φορτίον τοῦτο, βαρυνομένη τε και κινδυνεύουσα περὶ τοῦ βίου και μεταδιδοῦσα τής τροφής, ἢ και αὐτή τρέφεται, καὶ σὺν πολλῶν πόνω διενεγκοῦσα καὶ τεκοῦσα τρέφει τε και ἔπιπελεῖται, οὔτε προσπεπονθυῖα οὔδὲν ἀγαθὸν οὔτε γιγνῶσκον τὸ βρέφος ὑφ' ότου εὖ πάσχει, οὔτε σημαίνειν δυνάμενον αὐτῇ τε συμφέροντα καὶ τὰ κεχαρισμένα πειρᾶται ἐκπληροῦν, καὶ τρέφει πολὺν χρόνον καὶ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς ὑπομένουσα πονεῖ, οὐκ εἰδυῖα εἰ τινὰ τούτων χάριν ἀπολήψεται.

The mother’s conduct is explicitly constructed as a shot in the dark, an investment in an insecure future: she starts taking care of the child long before the child is capable of recognizing his benefactor, acknowledging the χάρις involved, let alone reciprocating χάρις—long before she can have any indication if there will ever be a return of χάρις. As we shall see in Chapter Five, to Xenophon’s representation of Socratic philosophy, this notion of “paying it forward” is of central importance to good friendship: being a good friend requires “active partnership”, i.e. not only avoiding being ἀχάριστος,

32 “The wife conceives and carries this burden, bearing the weight of it, risking her life and giving up a share of her own nourishment; and after all her trouble in carrying it for the full time and bringing it to birth, she feed and cares for it, although the child has never done her any good and does not know who his benefactor is. He cannot even communicate what he wants; his mother’s attempts to supply what will be good for him and give him pleasure depend upon her powers of guessing. And she goes on rearing him for a long time, putting up with drudgery day and night, without knowing whether she will receive any gratitude.” (transl. TREDENNICK & WATERFIELD).
but also taking initiatives and investing in the relationship, thinking along with
and guessing the needs of the other—just as a mother tries to guess her infant
child’s needs. When it comes to φιλία, the mother’s exemplary status is not
only due to the magnitude of her “gift”, but also to her taking the initiative, the
fact that her generosity is not a mere reaction to a preceding gift or favor;
moreover, there are no expectations of return in the short run and the future of
the relationship is as a whole insecure.\textsuperscript{33} In other words, mothers display risky
exchange behavior.

Taking initiatives, thinking along with someone, guessing the needs of the
other—these are social competences that serve to sustain \textit{méconnaissance}, to
construct a consensual “fiction” that we are acting for the sake of the other;\textsuperscript{34} or
formulated alternatively, to keep the χάρις, the grace, pleasure and gratitude, in
the exchange. “Risky exchange behavior”, “investments” in an insecure future,
signals goodwill and trust—all the more so when other types of exchange
behavior are available that are more reactive or restitutive in character:
transactions in the context of commercial or contractual relationships. In effect,
the idealization of “risky exchange behavior” is part of an ideology that aims to
demarcate Socratic φιλία from transactions, obligations and expectations that
are premised on legal backing, framed in a paradigm of commercial debt.\textsuperscript{35}

Hence, the language of χάρις can be seen as an alternative to the Debtor
Paradigm of Obligation. Both models serve to articulate and explain long-term
obligations, but involve different perspectives on the exchange between parents
and children. Xenophon’s Socrates, however, carefully avoids legal discourse
and financial terminology in favor of a discourse of goodwill, generosity and

\textsuperscript{33} Cf. \textsc{Gigon} (1956), 93: “Die Leistung der Eltern ist um so grösser, als keine Vorleistung des
Säugling vorangegangen ist und auch eine Gegenleistung im Augenblick nicht in Frage kommt
und in der Zukunft ungewiss bleibt.”

\textsuperscript{34} Cf. \textsc{Davidson} (2007), 41: “Altruistic \textit{charis} is simply a more extreme version of the reciprocal
\textit{charis}, the most charitable, the furthest from necessity, the freest kind of giving.”

\textsuperscript{35} This explains why Socrates characterizes Lamprocles’ mother as εὔνους, a qualification that is
sometimes felt to be a Fremdkörper in the portrayal of Xanthippe. E.g. \textsc{Gigon} (1956), 115 on
II.iii.16 (the conversation with Chaerecrates): “Die Versicherung, Chaerephon sei φιλότιμος und
ἐλευθέριος, überrascht allerdings genau so sehr wie in 2,9 die Behauptung, die Mutter sei dem
Sohne gegenüber εὔνους. Weder hier noch dort sind wir auf diese Charakteristik im mindesten
vorbereitet. Die Vermutung stellt sich ein, Xenophon habe eben aus einem reicheren und
differenzierteren Porträt der beiden komplizierten Gestalten Xanthippe und Chaerephon so viel
weggestrichen, dass nur noch inkohärente, ja sich widersprechende Einzelzüge übrigblieben.”
gratitude—the language of χάρις. Once participants are in a relationship that can be characterized as φιλία, the relationship is sustained by χάρις, a mutual conferring of benefits, favors and gifts in response to antecedent expressions of generosity. χάρις serves as the moral memory of a relationship, incorporating the past in the construction of reciprocal friendship. χάρις-reciprocity is more than requital. The consequence of seeing filial obligation in terms of χάρις is that one has to acknowledge that nothing you do can ever be enough to compensate for the biggest χάρις of all, a mother’s χάρις. Debts are redeemable. χάρις creates lasting bonds of indebtedness.

2. Cleaning the Pebbles or Washing Them Away

In Pindar’s epinician poetry χάρις is a prominent theme expressive of a range of reciprocal ties that sustain the long-term order: the relation between community and athletic victor, between community and the gods, between athlete and the gods, between poet and victor. “Charis unites the group, the victor and the poet in a community of gratitude.” Within this worldview, carefully constructed by the poet, praise poetry itself becomes a χάρις—an object circulating in an economy of goodwill and gratitude, a gift of the Charites, that enhances the χάρις of the victor.

However, in Pindaric poetry there is also frequent use of terminology originating from the field of disembedded economy (long-distance trade, markets, contractual labor) and retribution (recompense, compensation).

36 That Xenophon is deliberately avoiding financial terminology is plausible given the abundant use of commercial analogies and metaphors in the rest of Mem. II and the Oec. See Chapter Four.
37 See Section Six.
38 See Kurke (1991), 15 ff. for the theme of the athletic victor’s reintegration into society.
39 For the notion of athletic victory as a χάρις bestowed on the victor by the gods or the Charites: e.g. O.7.10-11, O.2.49-50, O.6.76, P.5.102, N.10.30, I.2.9.
43 E.g. O.10.94, N.7.75, I.3.8, I.4.72.
Occasionally, this terminology is applied to express obligations and expectations between poet and victor: poems are owed (they are a χρέος, object of ὀφείλειν), as recompense (ἀποινα), that the poet ought to repay (ἀποτίνεσθαι); conversely, songs demand compensation as well and poets claim their fee (μισθός). The use of this terminology has raised discussion about Pindar’s so-called Mercenary Muse—named after Pindar’s own remark in his Second Isthmian Ode that the Muse has become a “gainlover” (φιλοκερδής) and a “hireling” (ἐργάτις). The discussion revolves around the question whether the explicit mention of the patron’s generosity and the poet’s obligation to deliver a song implies that epinician poets wrote their poetry on commission, i.e. on a contractual basis and for mercenary motives, rather than on a more informal and voluntary basis within the framework of ξενία.

Whereas the historical reality behind this question is still a matter of controversy hard to establish by direct evidence, the prominence of the vocabulary of χάρις and gift-giving in Pindaric poetry at least reflects a concern on the part of the poet to embed his persona and his art in the larger order of things. “Charis more than any other word in Pindar signifies the multiple embedding of poet and patron in the fabric of their society.”

Moreover, the imagery used by Pindar to express his obligation towards victor/patron suggests a degree of negotiation over the precise nature of the obligation and the relationship between poet and victor:

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48 Literature on the question whether the epinician poets worked for hire is extensive. For arguments against the commission/fee model, see e.g. Woodbury (1968), Pelliccia (2009), 245-7; for arguments in favor the commission model, see Gzella (1969-70a), (1969-70b), (1971); Gold (1987), 26-8, Hornblower (2009), 41. For a reading of the “mercenary muse” theme in terms of social negotiation and representation, see Kurke (1991), 225-240, Nagy (1989), (1990), 151, Von Reden (1995b). Both Kurke and Von Reden point out that Pindar’s use of the language of money and commerce is not always derogatory and critical, but rather exploiting ambivalences.
49 Pelliccia (2010), 247.
50 E.g. I.1.42-6; song as κούφα δόσις.
51 Kurke (1991), 234.
(3)  Pindar, O.10.1-12

Τὸν Ὀλυμπιονίκαν ἀνάγνωτέ μοι Ἀρχεστράτου παῖδα, πόθι φρενός ἔμις γέγραπται· γλυκὺ γὰρ αὐτῷ μέλος ὀφείλων ἐπιλέλαθ’ ὁ Μοῖσ’, ἀλλὰ σὺ καὶ θυγάτηρ (3) Ἀλάθεια Διός, ὀρθὰ χερί ἐρύκετον ψευδέων (5) ἐνιπὰν ἀλιτόξενον.

The first strophe and antistrophe of this ode, celebrating Hagesidamos the Olympian victor, are pervaded with commercial imagery: the poem due is a χρέος (7), a debt, that is owed (ὀφείλων, 3), but that will be paid by the poet (τείσομεν, 12) with interest (τόκος, 9). Moreover, the imagery of reading and writing (ἀνάγνωτε, 1; γέγραπται, 2) “in the mind” effectively expresses the idea of mental bookkeeping, the “accounts” from which the song has somehow escaped.55 The debt-imagery is suited, for it expresses the “lateness” of the ode: the poet has forgotten about it (ἐπιλέλαθα) and asks the Muse and Truth (Ἀλάθεια) with the correcting hand to restrain rebukes of harming a ξένος.56 Here we see the motive of the forgotten obligation, with its immanent threat of

52 “Read me the name of the Olympic victor, the son of Archestratus, where it is written in my mind, for I owe him a sweet song and have forgotten. O Muse, but you and Zeus’ daughter, Truth, with a correcting hand ward off from me the charge of harming a guest friend with broken promises. For what was then the future has approached from afar and shamed my deep indebtedness. Nevertheless, interest on a debt can absolve one from a bitter reproach. Let him see now: just as a flowing wave washes over a rolling pebble, so shall we pay back a theme of general concern as a friendly χάρις.” (transl. RACE (1997)).
53 Reading ὁράτω (with FENNELL) instead of the manuscripts’ (unmetrical) θνατῶν.
54 τίνειν here expresses restoration of social equilibrium. MACLACHLAN (1993), 108.
55 NASSEN (1975), 221; KROMER (1976), 423-5; KÜRKE (1991), 234n.21.
56 The poet presumably here activates the etymological connection between ἀλάθεια and ἐπιλέλαθα: Truth will help the poet in fulfilling his forgotten obligation by composing the song that will preserve Hagesidamos from oblivion. On this “oral” notion of ἀλήθεια, see NAGY (1990), 60-66, DETIENNE (1973), 29-50 and COLE (1983).
social disintegration, and the idea that time is working against the poet for it aggravates the debt that by now can only be made up for by means of τόκος, interest.

Up to this point, the poet’s obligation towards Hagesidamos is framed in bookkeeping imagery that suggests an objectifiable indebtedness—a suggestion that is further enhanced by the mention of Ἀτρέκεια in the next strophe, the personification of strictness who is said to rule the city of the Western Locrians. Not before line 12 do we find the first occurrence of the term χάρις, in the collocation φίλαν... χάριν, the χάρις that is a token of φιλία, embodied by the κοινὸς λόγος that the poet will “pay” with (the λόγος is aimed at (ἐς) χάρις). This line is preceded by a remarkable simile: the poet will pay his χάρις, like a flowing wave washes over (κατακλύσσει) a rolling pebble (ψᾶφον ἑλισσομέναν). As has been noted by several commentators, the pebble, ψάφος, refers to the use of pebbles in money-calculations. To “wash over the rolling pebble” appears to be a variation of the expression “clean pebbles” (καθαραὶ ψῆφοι) that expresses the idea of balanced accounts.

Whereas the opening of the poem seems to characterize the overdue song as a debt in commercial terms, the image of the wave that deluges the exactly calculated debt suggests a χάρις that transcends precision, punctuality and calculation—a song that abundantly makes up for the lateness, a profuse τόκος that turns a shameful debt into a beautiful favor again and hence restores social relations. Given the overall prominence of the motive of time (χρόνος) in the

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57 Cf. the motive of the χάρις that sleeps in I.7.16-24.
58 In antiquity the Locrians were famous for their exceptionally law-abiding nature. KROMER (1976), 428; 422 for the complication that the Locrians probably did not use money at this point in history. For Ἀτρέκεια as a “businessman’s virtue”, see MEZGER (1880), 428-9, PÖHLENZ (1937), 197-8.
59 GOLDHILL (1991), 132 interprets κοινὸν as referring to the community at large (the λόγος is of general interest); NASSEN (1975), 222n.8, following FARNELL (1932), interprets κοινὸν as referring to the two partners of the exchange, the poet and Hagesidamos (“I will pay an account agreed upon between us”).
60 KURKE (1991), 233 notes that the use of λόγος as referring to “account” may be evoked here. In fourth-century prose, λογίζειν and λογίζεσθαι are common in usage to keep books containing deposits, expenses and interests (e.g. Thuc. 5.26, 6.31; λογισμός, “computation, account”, Thuc. 3.20.3, 4.122.3). BOGAERT (1968), 379. Cf. HUART (1968), 328-32 on λογισμός as both “calculation” and “deliberation”.
poem, the significance of the wave-simile lies not so much (or not only) in the implicit claim that the value of the poet’s song transcends the quantification of pebbles (which reflects concern with demarcating the value of poetry from monetary value that recurs in other poems); the power of the simile is that it also captures the crucial effect of time in social obligations from a participant’s point of view: as time goes by, χάρις turns into shameful debt that can only be transformed into grace again by a gulf of generosity embodied in Pindaric poetry—a gulf that makes one stop counting. The ode is represented not only as more than just a piece of labor on commission, but also as more than just a redemption of debt: by its profuseness it has regained the status of a favor.

3. **Alternative Commerce**

3.1. **Short- vs. long-term**

A recurring feature used to distinguish χάρις-exchanges from other exchanges is the element of time. Even in situations in which participants explicitly come to collect the χάρις due, χάρις-exchanges can be imagined as distinct from ephemeral commercial exchanges, by insisting on the longer time-frame they encapsulate and the relationship they have created.

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63 See Kromer (1976) on the value of time in this ode.

64 E.g. Kurke (1991), 234, who interprets the wave as expressing the idea of the “embedded economy subsuming the narrowly economic concern with accounting.” As for efforts in demarcating the value of poetry from monetary value, Kurke (1991), 228 makes the observation that e.g. the term κέρδος, gain, never refers to the poet. At most, in the rare instances when it is used metaphorically and with positive value (I.1.51, 5.27), it refers to the victor who profits from the power of song. Similarly, pay (μισθός) only applies to the poet in a transformed form (as fame, N.7.63, I.1.50-2). Woodbury (1968), 539. When applying terminology of the disembedded economy to the value of poetry, Pindar seems eager to transcend the realm of disembedded economy: “Pindar may speak the language of a disembedded economy, but he does so only in the service of its opposite.” (Kurke (1991), 229). Cf. Nagy (1990), 151.

65 Both my reading and the one proposed by Kurke (1991), 234 can be harmonized with Kromer’s interpretation (1976) according to which in this ode Ατρέκεια is contrasted with, and eventually superseded by, Ἀλήθεια: accuracy is a businessman’s truth, but not the whole truth. For a less antagonistic view on the relation of ἁτρέκεια to ἁλήθεια (ἁτρέκεια as a modifier for ἁλήθεια in collocations) see Cole (1983); I am not convinced by his contention that in the context of his ode ἁτρέκεια signifies punctiliousness rather than precision.
For instance, in a model ambassadorial oration, aimed at dissuading Athens from an impending attack upon Cos, the speaker (purportedly Hippocrates’ son Thessalus) enumerates all the benefits (εὐεργεσίαι) conferred on the people of Athens by himself, his father and their mythological ancestors. The enumeration of benefits culminates in the last one: Hippocrates has sent his son Thessalus to Sicily to join Alcibiades’ expedition—the epitome of generosity and benefaction, according to the speaker, aimed at establishing long-term relations and obligations:

(4) Ps.-Hippocrates, Presbeutikos (Ep. 27) 213

ηπίστατο γὰρ χάριτα χάριτι μετρεῖσθαι, καὶ μὴ οἰόν περὶ τὶ ὁμεμένοισιν ἐκ χειρὸς εἰς χεῖρας συναλλάξας ἀπαξ ἀπιέναι.

Hippocrates, according to the speaker, knew how to χάριτα χάριτι μετρεῖσθαι, “how to measure out one favor against another favor” as opposed to someone who makes a commercial transaction and leaves (ἀπιέναι) after having performed a one-off ready money transaction (ἐκ χειρὸς εἰς χεῖρας συναλλάξας ἀπαξ). Here we see an implicit opposition between the short-term economy of buying and selling where the cooperation between exchange partners dissolves immediately after exchange and the long-term economy of χάρις that, it is suggested, works on different terms. As the opposition with a ready money transaction suggests, the repercussions of a χάρις-transaction and the claims based on it extend further into the future.

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66 NELSON (2005) on the problem of authorship of the Presbeutikos. SMITH (1990), 1, 6-7 and RUBIN-PINAULT (1992), 3 on problems of historicity of the oration and its place in the biographical tradition about Hippocrates.
67 “For he knew how to measure for himself one χάρις against another, and not, as is the case with buyers, to once and for all pass it from hand to hand and go away.”
68 I follow SMITH in reading ὁμεμένοισιν, but not in understanding the participle as neuter plural.
69 The infinitive-construction probably has a normative ring, as ἐπίσταμαι with infinitive is generally a dynamic construction (“know how”) as opposed to ἐπίσταμαι with participle (“know that”). The second part of the sentence, with the negation μὴ (instead of οὐ) seems to confirm that the entire clause depending on ἠπίστατο is dynamic (Cf. KÜHNER-GERTH (1904), II.2. 69.6; SMITH (1920) §2106, 2139). I understand the subject of middle voice μετρεῖσθαι (“to measure out for oneself”) to be coinciding with the subject of the main clause (ἠπίστατο, the speaker’s father) instead of χάριτα in an passive accusative-with-infinitive-construction (“that one χάρις is measured out against another”).
3.2. The fuzzy mathematics of the long-term

Such long-term repercussions of χάρις-exchanges are frequently thematized in Herodotus’ Histories. In book III,\(^70\) the ultimate reason (αἰτίη (139.1)) for Darius’ conquest of Samos is traced back to the exchange of a gift. The story is interesting not so much for an explicitly prescriptive content, as well as for its implicit and subtle depiction of a breach of norms—and its far-reaching repercussions. At the time that Darius was still a nobody (λόγου οὐδενός κω μεγάλου), he attempted to buy (ὠνέετο) a magnificent cloak from a man named Syloson, brother of Polycrates and exiled from Samos. Syloson, however, by a stroke of divine fate (θείῃ τύχῃ χρεώμενος), decides to give him the cloak:

[(5) Hdt. III.139]\(^71\)

«Ἐγὼ ταύτην πωλέω μὲν οὐδενὸς χρήματος, δίδωμι δὲ ἄλλως, εἰ περὶ σοῦ ὑπὲρ δεὶ γενέσθαι πάντως τοι.» Αἰνέας ταῦτα ὁ Δαρεῖος παραλαμβάνει τὸ εἴμα.

Phrased in an emphatic opposition, Syloson tells Darius that he is not selling the cloak (πωλέω οὐδενὸς χρήματος), but that he “gives it away just like that”, i.e. “for free” (δίδωμι δὲ ἄλλως).\(^72\) This gift will turn out to be the fateful gift that instigated the course of events turning Samos into a vassal of Persian power.

At first, Syloson conceives of his gift in terms of a “loss” (ἀπολωλέναι (140.1)) out of his foolish good nature—evaluating the encounter with the norms of market rationality. However, years later, it turns out to be a stroke of luck as Darius succeeds Cambyses to the throne. Syloson travels to the king’s palace to collect his reward, claiming that he is the king’s welldoer (εὐεργέτης (140.1)). However, king Darius turns out to have forgotten about the initial gift: he cannot think of any debt (χρέος οὐδέν) to a Greek.\(^73\) Syloson is brought in

\(^{70}\) Hdt. III.139ff.

\(^{71}\) “I will sell this for no money, but I give it to you free if you must have it so much.” Enthusiastically Darius accepted the garment.”

\(^{72}\) A similar opposition between selling and giving is made by the fisherman who offers the fish that contains the ring to Polycrates. III.42.

\(^{73}\) Hdt. III.140.3.
and reminds Darius of the cloak. Darius responds (ἀμείβεται) with what seems to be a proper reaction:

(6) Hdt. III.140.3

Ἀμείβεται πρὸς ταῦτα Δαρείος· «Ὦ γενναιότατε ἀνδρῶν, σὺ κεῖνς ἐις ἐμοὶ οὐδεμιὰν ἔχοντι κω δύναμιν ἐδωκας, εἰ καὶ σμικρα, ἀλλ’ ἂν ἤση γε ἡ χάρις ὡμοίως ὡς εἰ νῦν κοθέν τι μέγα λάβομι. Ἀντ’ ὁν τοι χρυσὸν και ἄργυρον ἀπλέτων δίδωμι, ὡς μή κοτέ τοι μεταμελήσῃ Δαρείον τὸν Ὑστάσπεος εὐ ποίησαντι.»

Darius acknowledges Sylosos’s gift (ἐδωκας) and the χάρις of the gift, in reaction to which (ἀντ’ ὁν) he promises to respond with a gift (δίδωμι) in turn of “gold and silver boundless”. At this point, Sylosos makes his request: instead of gold and silver, he asks to get the island Samos back without bloodshed; Darius grants him the request.

At first sight, this story of virtue rewarded almost has fairy-like qualities: Sylosos giving away a beautiful cloak in a stroke not of stupidity but of supernatural luck, for which he is rewarded years later when the nobody has become the king of Persia. However, the story has a most sinister outcome: the massacre of Samos, in spite of Sylosos’s request.

The portents of the disastrous repercussions of the exchange, a kingdom for a cloak, are present in the exchange scene in the palace—a scene that is emphatically represented as a somewhat clumsy exchange. The exchange purports to be a χάρις-exchange, but rather seems an ill-starred attempt at χάρις as Darius fails on several grounds to actually live up to ideals of generosity and gratitude. First, Darius fails on the level of memory: χάρις-exchange revolve around social memory and recognition, but after an initial enthusiastic reaction (αἰνέσας), Darius forgets about the gift and has to be reminded of it by Sylosos: he cannot imagine himself to be indebted to any Greek—conceiving of benefactors as collectors of debt (χρέος). Moreover, he

74 “‘Most generous man,’ replied Darius, ‘it was you who gave me a present when I had as yet no power; even if it was a small one, my χάρις is just as big as it would be now if I receive something big. In return, I give you gold and silver in abundance so you may never be sorry that you did Darius son of Hystaspes good.’”

75 For the extremely complicated and ironical course of events featuring all sorts of perverted or aborted exchanges, see Van der Veen (1995) and Kurke (1999), 121-9.
belittles the gift in the presence of its giver, by saying that it actually was no big deal (εἰ καὶ σμικρά)—to apply some sort of mathematical “correction” to it: because it was given to him at a time that he did not have any power himself (ἐμοὶ οὐδεμιᾶν ἐχοντί κω δύναμιν), the χάρις is similar (ἰση) nonetheless to the one he would have received if he had received a great gift (τὶ μέγα).

Here we see the Darius κάπηλος, the Shopkeeper-King, who elsewhere in Herodotus is said to have turned the empire into a shop,76 trying to comprehend the economy of χάρις and to wash over the pebbles of his debt with a wave of generosity. He displays some rudimentary awareness that gift-exchange obeys a distinct logic by accounting for the relative status of the exchange partners in the value of the gift and the counter-prestation: a small gift to a little man is proportionately equivalent to a big gift received by a big man. Now that Darius is a “big man” he decides to respond to the small gift in quantitative terms, i.e. with a return-gift that exceeds size (χρυσὸν καὶ ἄγυρον ἄπλετον)—catalyzing a series of exchanges on Samos that are completely out of proportion. However, in his attempt to do justice to the qualitatively distinct nature of χάρις, Darius still reveals himself as a shopkeeper in making the terms explicit and calculating its size.

In an emphatic opposition with buying and selling, we see a couple of features of χάρις highlighted. One feature that is thematized in this narration is the drawback of the long-term economy of χάρις:77 had Syloson sold his cloak instead of giving it away, the fate of Samos might have been radically different. Another feature that comes to the fore is the fact that in χάρις-exchanges, unlike in cases of buying and selling, not only does the value of the exchange objects matter, but also the “value” of the exchange partners, the subjects of exchange: Darius clearly feels that a quid pro quo-reaction on the gift of the cloak would be insufficient and that he has to take into account that at the time of the gift he himself was still a nobody. A related feature that may be thematized in the palace scene is the “fuzzy mathematics” inherent in χάρις-exchange: what is ridiculed here seems to be Darius’ attempt to calculate the due size of the return on emphatically non-commercial grounds.

76 Cf. Hdt. III.89.
77 On a different kind of drawback, see Section 6 below.
4. **NECESSITY VS. ΧΑΡΙΣ**

4.1. Above and beyond the call of duty

Monetary payment and graceful exchange are by no means necessarily an exclusive disjunction. In general, when demarcating different types of exchange, the crucial question within Athenian society seems to be not so much whether money comes into play, but rather on what terms the exchange takes place. Monetary exchanges can be qualified as morally good exchanges by framing them in terms of χάρις. This framing aims to qualify the exchange (even if it is a one-off transaction) as taking place within a larger social or metaphysical order. In forensic oratory, for instance, we see performers of liturgies referring to their contributions to the public good in terms of δωρεά, a donation, or of χάρις. At times, this mentioning goes with a clear, and often explicit, expectation that the audience will respond duly to this enumeration with χάρις in the context of court, i.e. with a favorable verdict. χάρις-terminology allowed both litigants and defendants to negotiate their claims within the framework of their relations to the polis.

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78 Cf. this chapter’s introduction above.
79 Cf. Section Six.
80 In the fourth century, claims to charis for the performance of public service seem to be confined to forensic contexts. Davies (1981), 96-8, Christ (1990), 155n.35. But see Strauss (1986), 13-4 for some exceptions.
82 Both litigant and defendant appeal to χάρις; according to Johnstone’s quantitative analysis (1999), 102, defendants ask for χάρις more than five times as often as prosecutors. Prosecutor: Isocr. 16.35, 18.58-67; Lys. 21.25, Isae. 7.38-41; defendants claiming χάρις from the audience: Aesch. 2.171, Andoc. 1.146-50, Isocr. 16.15, 35, 38, Lys. 18.23, 26, 27, 20.30-1, 33, 21.17-19, 25, 25.11-13. Defendants appealing to χάρις from the prosecutors: Dem. 21.28, 23.93, 45.85, Isae. 7.41, Isocr. 18.58-67. Prosecutors admitting that χάρις is an appropriate response by juries to public services (but not in the case of the defendant in casu): Dem 21.148-9, 160, 25.67-78, 38.25-6, 42.24-5; Din. 1.17; Isae. 5.35, 43-6; Lyc. 1.139-140; Lys. 6.36, 46-7, 12.38-40, 30.1, 26-7.
83 Conversely, victors in property trials could also be imagined as owing χάρις and the duty to εὖ ποιεῖν to the demos for their right to retain property. Cf. Isae. 5.37, Dem. 28.24. See Ober (1989), 246-7 for the idea that the ideological system of χάρις-obligations of politicians and the χάρις-privileges granted to them in return safeguarded relative social equilibrium in Athens by sustaining popular tolerance towards inequalities in wealth.
Although there may have been relative consensus among citizens that “some amount of gratitude” (χάριν τινα)\(^{84}\) was due to benefactors,\(^{85}\) there was considerable debate over the question what form it should take. Occasionally, this debate raised questions about the very use of χάρις-terminology: to what extent could wealthy men base their claims on χάρις if all they had done was what was required of them? The underlying notion is that the allocation of wealth only counts as an exchange in a χάρις-economy, i.e. as generosity that provokes gratitude, if it is an act of free will:

(7)  

Dem. 21.156\(^{86}\)

“Well, is there anything else? He has once equipped a tragic chorus; I have furnished a band of male flute-players; and everyone knows that the latter involves much greater expense than the former. Moreover my service is voluntary: his was only undertaken after a challenge to exchange property. Therefore no one could justly allow him any χάρις for it.” (transl. MURRAY).

In order to discredit Meidias’ claim to the jury’s χάρις, Demosthenes embarks on a comparison between the exact content of Meidias’ public service and his own. The first consideration is purely quantitative: facilitating a band of flute-players takes an expenditure (ἀνάλωμα) far higher than equipping a tragic chorus as Meidias did. The second consideration concerns quality, i.e. the spirit of the exchange: Demosthenes was a volunteer (ἐθελοντής),\(^{87}\) whereas Meidias was only brought to expenses “after an ἀντίδοσις-procedure”\(^{88}\) —i.e. after being coerced to perform liturgy by a challenge made by the man originally

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\(^{84}\) Dem. 38.25.  
\(^{85}\) However, opponents frequently threw doubt on the relevance of one’s liturgical record in the forensic context. E.g. Ant. 2.3.8, Lys. 12.38, 26.3, Dem. 21.169, 225, 25.76-8, 54.44, 59.117. CHRIST (2006), 182; CHRIST (1990). Moreover, there was a perceived tension between the prevalence of χάρις-claims in politics and strict adherence to the laws of the city. E.g. Lys. 14.40. Moreover, orators (e.g. Isocrates) frequently discredited their opponents for doing or saying things πρὸς χάρις, i.e. with the intention to capitalize upon the jurors’ χάρις. E.g. Is. 9.7, 8.10, 5.14, 12.133, 12.140, 12.271.  

\(^{86}\) “Well, is there anything else? He has once equipped a tragic chorus; I have furnished a band of male flute-players; and everyone knows that the latter involves much greater expense than the former. Moreover my service is voluntary: his was only undertaken after a challenge to exchange property. Therefore no one could justly allow him any χάρις for it.” (transl. MURRAY).  


appointed to perform it. Meidias, according to Demosthenes, deserves no credit for having performed a liturgy that he was forced to do. His strategies is to deny the exchange the status of χάρις because of his opponent’s lack of free will and deliberate choice.\footnote{Elsewhere in the speech, Demosthenes stresses the importance of the spirit of the benefaction: whether a politician is entitled to public χάρις depends on the motivation behind his “gifts”. When motivated by φιλοτιμία, χάρις is due; when motivated by ὑβρίς, obviously not (21.160). A similar strategy to invalidate claims to χάρις can be found in a speech written by Lysias against Nicomachus (30.15-16), where Nicomachus’ exile is dismissed as a ground for the jury to be grateful (χάριν εἴσεσθε) as he underwent his exile against his will. For details on the case, see Rhodes (1991) and Todd (1996).}

This rhetoric of merit and responsibility suggests that in the forensic and political arena too, no matter how manipulatively χάρις-terminology was used, χάρις-claims were felt to be more convincing and reasonable when they met some of the basic conditions of a χάρις-exchange: χάρις circulates in an economy of voluntary benefits. It is against this background, that we should understand the recurring claims of benefactors to have done more than was strictly required of them.\footnote{E.g. Lys. 7.31, 19.63, 21.1-5, 25.13, Isae. 7.38, Isoc. 15.145. Christ (2006), 182; Ober (1989), 241-2. As Ober points out, the 4th-century tendency for liturgies to become state-mandated and legally required made χάρις more difficult to obtain by wealthy individuals. “The individual who gave only what was demanded by the state, and then grudgingly, was not deserving of the demos’ charis.” (242).}

A related negotiation about the question whether a politician was entitled to χάρις we find in Demosthenes’ defense of Ctesiphon. One of the offences Ctesiphon was charged with by Aeschines, was the fact that he had proposed to crown Demosthenes as a reward for bestowing a private donation on the city to repair its defensive walls; at the time of Ctesiphon’s proposal, Demosthenes was still holding public offices and thus had not yet undergone audit at the end of his term, whereas a statute prohibited to crown magistrates who were still subject to audit.\footnote{Aesch. 3.9-31.}

In defense of Ctesiphon, Demosthenes unravels the nature of his contributions to the public good, insisting on a clear-cut distinction between the services done by him in his capacity as a magistrate (using money from a public fund) and the benefits he bestowed on the city in his capacity as a private citizen (using his own money). The former category is to be subjected to audit, the latter deserves gratitude:

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80
(8) Dem. 18.111-112

τοσούτου γὰρ δὲω λέγειν ὡς οὐκ εἴμι ὑπεύθυνος, ὃ νῦν οὕτως διέβαλλε καὶ διωρίζετο, οὕθ' ἀπαντα τὸν βίον ὑπεύθυνος εἶναι ὁμολογῶ ὡν ἡ διακεχείμει' ἡ πεπολίτευμαι παρ' ύμιν. ἀν γ' ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ἐπαγγελλάμενος δέδωκα τῷ δήμῳ, οὐδὲν ὑπεύθυνος εἶναι ὁμολογῶ ὧν ἢ διακεχείρικ' ἢ πεπολίτευμαι παρ' ὑμῖν. ὧν μέντοι γ' ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ἐπαγγελλάμενος δέδωκα τῷ δήμῳ, οὐδὲν ὑπεύθυνος εἶναι ὁμολογῶ ὧν ἢ διακεχείρικ' ἢ πεπολίτευμαι παρ' ὑμῖν. ὧν μέντοι γ' ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ἐπαγγελλάμενος δέδωκα τῷ δήμῳ, οὐδὲν ὑπεύθυνος εἶναι ὁμολογῶ ὧν ἢ διακεχείρικ' ἢ πεπολίτευμαι παρ' ὑμῖν.

The money spent by Demosthenes on the reparation of the walls is a private donation from his private purse (ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας), which was at the time also earmarked as such: he had openly declared it (ἐπαγγελλάμενος) as a gift (δέδωκα). Such voluntary private gifts, claims Demosthenes, are unrelated to his acts as a magistrate, and should therefore not be subjected to audit (ὑπεύθυνος).

(9) Dem. 18.112

τίς γάρ ἐστι νόμος τοσαύτης ἀδικίας καὶ μισανθρωπίας μεστὸς ὥστε τὸν δόντα τι τῶν ἰδίων καὶ ποιήσαντα πράγμα φιλάνθρωπον καὶ φιλόδωρον τῆς χάριτος μὲν ἀποστερεῖν, εἰς τοὺς συκοφάντας δ' ἄγειν, καὶ τούτους ἐπὶ τὰς εὐθύνας ὧν ἔδωκεν ἐφιστάναι; οὐδὲ εἷς. εἰ δέ φησιν οὗτος, δειξάτω, κἀγὼ στέρξω καὶ σιωπήσομαι.

The consequence of Aeschines’s argumentation would be that someone who makes a private gift (τὸν δόντα τι τῶν ἰδίων) and who does a work of philanthropy and generosity (ποιήσαντα πράγμα φιλάνθρωπον καὶ

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92 “I am so far from saying that I am not accountable, as he falsely tried to define the term, that I profess that I am accountable for the whole of my life for my administration of your affairs and my political measures. However, for what I have given voluntarily to the people from my private purse, I deny that I am accountable for a single day (Do you hear, Aeschines?); nor is anyone else, not even if he happens to be one of the nine archons.” (transl. Usher).

93 The verb ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι is a technical term for openly declaring in the Assembly that one is willing to make a voluntary contribution to a public good. See WANKEL (1976), 600-601.

94 The pair διακεχείρικα and πεπολίτευμαι covers two types of public accountability: the audit undergone by magistrates who handled (διαχειρίζω) public funds vs. the accountability demanded of politicians for their policy recommendations. See HANSEN (1991), 220-4; WANKEL (1976) ad loc.

95 “For what law is there so full of injustice and inhumanity that, when a man has made a gift from his private funds, an act of kindness and generosity, it deprives him of χάρις and brings him before false accusers, appointing them as auditors of what he has given? Surely none! If he says so, let him show it, and I shall rest content and be silent.” (transl. Usher).
φιλόδωρον) is robbed from χάρις, his gifts (ὦν ἐδώκεν) being subjected to inspection by sycophants. This cannot be the spirit of the law:

(10) Dem. 18.113*

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ἄνδρες Ἀθηναίοι, ἀλλ' οὗτος συκοφαντῶν, ὅτι ἐπὶ τῶν θεωρικῶν τότε ὄν ἐπέδωκα τὰ χρήματα, ἄτιμον φησίν ὑπεύθυνον ὅντα· ὥς περὶ τῶν γε οὐδενὸς ὄν υπεύθυνος ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐφ' οἷς ἐπέδωκα, ὡς συκοφάντα· ἀλλὰ καὶ τειχοποιῶν ἠσθα. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὁρθῶς ἐπηνομένη, ὅτι τάνηλωμέν' ἐδώκα καὶ οὐκ ἐλογιζόμην, ὦ συκοφάντα. ἀλλὰ καὶ τειχοποιῶν ἦσθα. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὀρθῶς ἐπηνομένη, ὃ μὲν γάρ λογισμός εὑρίσκεται, τῶν ἔξεταονταν προσδεῖται, ἡ δὲ δωρειά χάριτος καὶ ἐπαίνου δικαία ἐστί τυγχάνειν.

Demosthenes contributed money as an additional gift (ἐπέδωκα τὰ χρήματα)—above and beyond his duties as theoric commissioner; the praise proposed by Ctesiphon concerns not the things for which Demosthenes owes the polis accountability, but the things he gave the city in addition (ἐπέδωκα). Moreover, the fact that Demosthenes at the time of his donation served as superintendent of walls (τειχοποιῶν) does not incriminate him nor diminish the merit of his philanthropy: his expenditure on the wall was a private gift (ἐδώκα) that was not a charge to the public account (οὐκ ἐλογιζόμην). His expenditures from the public account requires audit; his gift (ἡ δωρειά)

96 “None exists, men of Athens, but the prosecutor himself is a false accuser when, because I gave some of my own money when I was in charge of the Theoric Fund, he says “He praised him while he was still subject to audit”. Not for any matters for which I had an account to render, slanderer, but for those on which I had spent my own money. “But you were also a superintendent of walls”. Yes, and for that reason I was justly praised, because I paid the expenses and did not charge them to the state. Such a charge requires auditing and men to investigate it, but a gift deserves to receive χάρις and praise.” (transl. Usher).

97 This passage has been misunderstood (e.g. by [Plut.] X orat. 846a) to imply that on top of the 100 minas for the walls, Demosthenes made another epidosis, i.e. to the Theoric fund. The point that Demosthenes makes is rather that although his epidosis (to the wall) occurred during his term as theoric commissioner, it falls outside the scope of his accountability in his capacity as commissioner because it concerned an additional gift of private money. This should be read as a reply to Aesch. 3.24-6 where the financial responsibilities of the theoric commissioners are stressed (in order to make evident that a commissioner cannot be proposed for a crown before undergoing audit). Cf. Yunis (2001), 177.

98 Wankel (1976), 601 supposes that in this passage ἐπιδιδότα has and διδότα are used interchangeably. However, there is some rhetorical efficacy in the distribution of the verbs: ἐπιδιδόναξ is to be used here when it concerns additional gifts in contrast to the calls of duty; διδόναξ is used to convey the idea of a private gift as opposed to expenditure from state money.
deserves gratitude and praise (χάριτος καὶ ἐπαίνου).

χάρις is the appropriate response to something given above and beyond the call of duty. Whereas the audit of politicians is regulated by law, the bestowal of χάρις is consistently presented as a gesture (whether material or not) that, although sometimes restricted by legislation, is a matter of morality. In the case of Demosthenes, the χάρις due consisted of a symbolical recognition of a supererogatory gift from a politician: a crown.

4.2. “χάρις abhors intolerable necessity”

The idea that χάρις is to be performed on a voluntary basis implies that there are two basic types of motivations that make people do the thing they do—compulsion and voluntary cooperation induced by χάρις:

(11) Xen. Cyr. 4.2.12

οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι πάντες φαιδρῶς καὶ προθύμως ἐξωρμῶντο, ἅτε οὐκ ἀνάγκη ἀλλ’ ἐθελούσιοι καὶ χάριτος ἑνεκά ἐξιόντες. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐξω ἦσαν, πρῶτον μὲν πρὸς τοὺς Μήδους ἐλθὼν ἐπήνεσε τε αὐτούς καὶ ἐπηύξατο μάλιστα μὲν θεοὺς αὐτοῖς ἱλεως ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ σφίσιν, ἐπεὶτα δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς δυνασθήναι χάριν αὐτοῖς ταύτης τῆς προθυμίας ἀποδοῦναι.

Cyrus’ followers join their leader on a campaign, not out of compulsion (οὐκ

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99 In the next paragraph (18.114), Demosthenes announces to demonstrate that the procedure he is adhering is laid down “not only in the laws, but also in your moral principles” (οὐ μόνον ἐν τοῖς νόμοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὑμετέροις ἤθεσιν), covering both the legal procedures concerning audit and crowning as well as moral principles. The moral principles alluded to probably consists in rules such as “repay favors to your benefactors”, “Dank abzustatten ist ein (ungeschriebenes) moralisches Gesetz” (WANKEL (1976, 620). Cf. [Anaximenes] Rhet. ad Alex on unwritten customs. The antithesis written law/unwritten law recurs in 18.275.

100 Cf. Aristotle’s conception of τιμή as a reward for the ἀρετή displayed by a generous donor. Chapter Three Section V.

101 Cf. the opposition between compelling followers by means of coercion (ἀνάγκη) and “persuasion of the willing” (τὸ ἐκόντας πείθεσθαι) (Xen. Cyr. 1.2.21); and the opposition between serving out of compulsion (ἀνάγκη) vs. out of goodwill and friendship (εὐνοία καὶ φιλία) (Xen. Cyr. 3.1.28). See Chapter Five.

102 “But all the rest hastened out cheerily and enthusiastically, for they came not from compulsion but of their own free will and out of χάρις. And when they were out of the camp, he went first to the Medes and praised them and prayed the gods above all things graciously to lead them and his own men, and he prayed also that he himself might be enabled to return the χάρις to them for this zeal of theirs.” (transl. MILLER).
ἀνάγκῃ), but willing (ἐθελούσιοι) and “for χάρις”—which is ambiguous between prospective (“for the sake of future χάρις from Cyrus”, i.e. “in order to obtain χάρις from Cyrus”) and retrospective (“because of χάρις towards Cyrus”, i.e. “because they have received χάρις from Cyrus”). Cyrus’ reaction is in keeping with their χάρις: he prays that he may be able to return the favor (χάριν ἀποδοῦναι) of their readiness (προθυμία). There is an effective contrast between ready and willing behavior that yields χάρις and the idea of compulsion, a disjunction between moral obligations and enforceable obligations. Actions performed out of compulsion cannot be qualified as acts of χάρις and do not deserve to be reciprocated with χάρις. As in a fragment attributed to Empedocles, χάρις “abhors intolerable necessity”.

5. The moral icing on the cake

Occasionally, we find monetary compensation mentioned in juxtaposition with χάρις. In these cases, the “objective” obligations are met in monetary payment on the basis of precise equivalence: fees are paid, purchases are paid for and loans are paid back. But above and beyond these objectifiable compensations, there is an “additional” χάρις, material or symbolical, that adds a moral or social dimension to the exchange at hand. An example that we have seen in the previous chapter is the Grumbler who resents the fact that a friendly loan not only requires a restitution of the money (τἀργύριον ἀποδοῦναι), but also imposes the debt of gratitude upon him (χωρὶς τούτων χάριν ὀφείλειν).

5.1. Interest-free credit

This is a common way of understanding the social mechanisms of interest-free credit in Classical Athens, as has been analyzed by Millett. Litigants

103 Empedocles fr. 116 (=Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, 745D): ἄμουσον γὰρ ἡ Ἀνάγκη μουσικὸν δ’ ἡ Πειθώ, καὶ Μούσαις † φιλοδαμοῦσα πολὺ μᾶλλον ο ἶμαι τῆς Ἐμπεδοκλέους (fr. 116) Χάριτος ’στυγέει δύστλητον Ἀνάγκην.’ On the role of the voluntariness of χάρις in the construction of erotic seduction (πείθειν) (as opposed to βία, forcing oneself on one’s object of desire), see Chapter Five.

104 Chapter One Section 1.3.

frequently charge their defaulting debtors not only non-payment but also reproached them with not displaying the gratitude due:

(12) Dem. 49.1-2

considerable sum of money. Instead of displaying gratitude (Τ 12 οὐκ ἀπέδωκε χάριν; Τ 13 χάριν ἀποδούναι) for the trust that Pasion had put in him (Τ 12 ἐπιστεύθη), he thought it necessary to rob Pasion and his son of the principal (Τ 13 τὰ ἀρχαῖα, Τ 12 τὸ δοθέν). 108

The element of trust (ἐπιστεύθη) refers to the fact that the loan was granted without security and witnesses (Τ 12 οὔτε ἐπʼ ἐνεχύρῳ (lit. “not on security”) οὔτε μετὰ μαρτύρων): “copper was not put down as a pledge” (Τ 13 οὔτε ὁ χαλκὸς ὑπετέθη). 109 Lending money without security requires a leap of faith, trust, because return of loan is insecure and the creditor runs a serious risk of ending up with empty hands (Τ 12 ἀπώλλυτο... τὸ συμβόλαιον). As Apollodorus presents the case, the proper reaction of a debtor to a creditor’s trust would be gratitude (χάρις).

There is some discussion over the question whether Pasion charged interest for his loan to Timotheus: 110 κατεχρήσατο suggests an informal interest-free loan, 111 as also does the emphatic mentioning of gratitude (χάριν ἀποδοῦναι)—not only in the passage quoted above, but throughout the entire speech there are lavish references to χάρις and to the personal nature of the relationship between Pasion and Timotheus, 112 a relationship that suggests informal interest-free loans rather than commercial “professional” loans. 113 On the other hand, throughout the speech it is clear that the loan, unlike personal non-professional loans, was contractual (Τ 12 τὸ συμβόλαιον). 114

108 ἀποστέρειν is a common term for failing to repay a loan. Aside from the places quoted above, it occurs seven times in Dem. 49 (12, 16, 21, 41, 45, 61, 68). Cf. Dem. 21.44, 32.5 (contrasted with ἀποδούναι τὰ χρήματα), 33.24, 34.27, 56.4 (contrasted with τὰ χρήματα ἀποδίδωσιν). See COHEN (1983), 18-22.

109 Aside from land as security for a loan, pledges sometimes consisted of high-value items, such as jewellery or mass of copper. MILLETT (1991), 77.

110 MILLETT (1991), 286n.27 for an overview of the diverging positions: “The problem could be resolved by assuming that although interest was charged, Apollodorus wanted to mislead the jury into thinking that the loans were interest-free. But it is probably impossible to penetrate Apollodorus’ rhetorical posturing, and the question of an interest charge must remain open.” See MILLETT (1991) on the nature of χάρις in formal and informal credit-transactions.

111 κατεχρήσατο is probably put in opposition with ἐδανείσατο that is a technical term in the 4th-century for interest-bearing formal loans.

112 MILLETT (1991), 125-6, 213-5.

113 MILLETT (1991), chapters VI, VII and VIII explore and analyze the distinction between different types of loans in 4th-century Athens.

114 MILLETT (1991), chapter VI.
Moreover, the division within the debt of Timotheus between the χάρις owed and the principal to be returned essentially leaves open the option of interest: the idea is either that Timotheus’ behavior towards Pasion (e.g. his refusal to pay back his loans) falls short of displaying gratitude to a friendly creditor ready to accommodate a loan without security, or that Timotheus was expected to display χάρις in a material sense on top of return of the loan. In the last case, the χάρις in play would materially amount to interest on the loan and Apollodorus would apparently had reason to frame the history of loan transactions of Pasion to Timotheus in terms of friendship and χάρις.

Either way, it is significant that the failure to display χάρις (being ἀχάριστος) is a flaw of a different kind than the failure to repay a debt (which amounts do being ἀδικώτατος, most unjust). In both quotations there is a build up in the charge from the moral flaw of failing to display gratitude (Τ 12 οὐ μόνον ἀχάριστον εἶναι, Τ 13 ἀντὶ δε τοῦ χάριν ἀποδοῦναι) to the legally more objectifiable offense of non-payment of debt (Τ 12 ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ δοθὲν ἀποστερεῖ με; Τ 13 οἴεται δεῖν καὶ τὰ ἀρχαία ἀποστερῆσαι). The formal charge is focused around the “hard” obligation of repayment (failing to do so equals theft);115 the rhetoric also makes an appeal to the “softer” and more “voluntary” obligation to display χάρις (be it material or not) as a reaction to the creditor’s voluntary gesture of displaying trust in a debtor.

5.2. Customer relation maintenance

The juxtaposition of payment and gratitude occurs frequently as a colloquialism. King Oedipus promises anyone who will inform him about the identity of the killer of Laius by “paying him gain and storing up gratitude besides” (κέρδος τελῶ 'γὼ χἠ χάρις προσκείσεται).

Moreover, professional teachers, despite the fact that they charge money for their lessons, are prone to

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115 COHEN (1983), 18 on Dem. 32.5: “Here, as is commonly the case, aposterein is used in connection with apodounai, and describes a failure or refusal to repay what one is legally obliged to repay, the obligation arising out of the contract of which the loan was a part.”

116 Soph. OT 232. The preverb πρόσ- conveys the idea of gratitude above material reward; the simplex verb κεῖσθαι contains a metaphor from deposits of money. E.g. Ar. Ran. 624, Soph. Ant. 485, P. I. 5.18. κείμενα as deposits: Hdt. 6.86, Thuc. 1.129. Cf. JEBB (1887), ad loc., referring to Pl. Ep. 346c as an example. For the metaphor of friends as deposits of wealth, see Chapter Four.
represent their relations with their students as more than a purely commercial transaction: the sophists (according to Plato’s ironical representation) are people whose help you can ask by paying money and putting down χάριτες (χρήματα ἐκείνως τελοῦνται καὶ χάριτας κατατιθέμενον),\(^{117}\) who convince the young to pay money (χρήματα διδόντας) for their associations and be grateful in addition (χάριν προσειδέναι);\(^{118}\) Isocrates reports how the parents of his students not only pay him (χρήματα διδόασιν), but also react very positively (χαίρουσιν) to their children’s education.\(^{119}\) Immaterial χάρις is an additional asset, above and beyond the payment of a teacher.\(^{120}\) A professional teacher is more than a business man, mercenary or prostitute.

6. **INDEBTEDNESS ENGINEERING AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE**

6.1. Irredeemable χάρις and χάρις gone bad

As we have seen in several examples, exchanges of gifts and χάρις are expected to initiate and sustain lasting relations of solidarity. Although the element of mutual autonomy is often deemed central in the understanding of long-term reciprocity, relations based on this reciprocity need not be on a perfectly

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\(^{117}\) Pl. *Crat.* 391b10. Here the plural suggests that χάριτες should be taken to be material manifestations of χάρις; however, material or not, the χάριτες are mentioned separately from χρήματα, which suggests an additional reward outside a payment that is agreed upon in advance. Cf. Socrates on the appropriate response to those who try to help him escape: Pl. *Cri.* 48d (χρήματα τελοῦντες (…) καὶ χάριτας).

\(^{118}\) Pl. *Apol.* 19e-20a.

\(^{119}\) Is. 15.241. The verb χαίρειν may evoke the χάρις-rhetoric in the rest of the speech where Isocrates consistently characterizes his education as a form of civic service. (Cf. *Toö* (1995), 109-110, (2008), 6-7). The χάρις-terminology serves to characterize the exchange between teacher and pupil as not entirely commercial or socially detached; the education offered by Isocrates not only involves long-term bonds between teacher and the students’ parents but also participates in the long-term social order of the city.

\(^{120}\) In a passage in the Platonic *Theages*, very similar to *Apol.* 19e-20a, the young men who are persuaded by sophists are said to “pay down beside a large sum of money as fee, and to be grateful in addition” (προσκατατιθέντας ἀργύριον πάνυ πολὺ μισθόν, καὶ χάριν πρὸς τούτοις εἰδέναι. (127a6-7)). On the variety of conceptualizations of the teacher/student-relation in 5th- and 4th-century Athens, see Chapter Three and Four. There has been considerable attention in scholarship for the preoccupation with money remuneration in the representation by the Socratic authors of the sophistic movement. *Blank* (1985), *Corey* (2002), *Fredal* (2008), *Tell* (2009). However, the recurring juxtaposition of payment and χάρις is neglected.
symmetrical and equal basis.\textsuperscript{121} Some of the examples that we have seen suggest that long-term exchanges start off, reinforce and legitimate asymmetrical relations that involve power: piety is distinct from the art of traffic, because no human χάρις can be a sufficient return for the good done to us by the gods;\textsuperscript{122} it is impossible to honor one’s parents according to merit (κατ’ ἀξίαν), for a mother is the φίλος par excellence,\textsuperscript{123} to whom one can only reciprocate according to ability and to whom one will always remain indebted—\textsuperscript{124}even when (and here the Lamprocles story takes a nasty twist) she is quite unreasonable and one should, like actors in a tragedy, learn to listen to her without being annoyed.\textsuperscript{125} The economy of the long-term, where gifts and χάρις circulate, tends to be conservative towards power-relations: existing hierarchies and asymmetries are more easily preserved and reproduced in long-term exchanges.\textsuperscript{126}

Moreover, long-term exchanges can be exerted to establish inequalities. In the previous chapter we have seen how Aristarchus’ workplace becomes a success and restores the χάρις within the family—but the story ends with a twist, as the second part of Socrates’ advice to Aristarchus is that he should assert his position as head of the household and make sure his female relatives do not mistake mutual cooperation and χάρις for equivalence: Aristarchus alone has the right to eat the bread of idleness.\textsuperscript{127} Aristarchus is advised to represent his position as the donor of the primordial gift: without him, the women would have had no life and work in the first place. Consequently, they are in a position of irredeemable debt, no matter how much they contribute to the household.\textsuperscript{128}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Gouldner (1960) even goes as far as to consider the reciprocity of equal benefits as only an exceptional part of the larger class of unequal exchanges.
\item E.g. Xen. \textit{Mem.} IV.iii.15 Cf. Chapter One Section 1.2. Similarly, a son can never disavow his father like a father can disavow his son, for adequate compensation can never be rendered to parents. See e.g. Ar. \textit{NE.} VIII.xiv (1163b14-22); cf. Chapter Three Section 2.1.
\item E.g. Xen. \textit{Mem.} II.ii. See Section 1.
\item E.g. Ar. \textit{NE} IX.i (1164b6).
\item Xen. \textit{Mem.} II.ii.8-9.
\item Generalized reciprocity is traditionally linked to social stability. See Narotzky & Moreno (2002). Cf. Weiner’s work (e.g. 1992, 1980) on the role of circulation of wealth on the social reproduction of inequalities.
\item Xen. \textit{Mem.} II.vii. Chapter One Section 4.1.
\item Along the same lines, as we shall see in the next chapters, benefactors who give more than their
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Unlike commercial transactions, χάρις- and gift exchanges do not aim at immediate equivalence and hence allow for more flexibility—an elasticity that can turn into situations of permanent indebtedness and asymmetries. Asymmetry, hierarchy formation and power struggles influence and change patterns of linguistic negotiation over constructions of reciprocity: in such situations, the vocabulary of long-term reciprocity serves to misrecognize not so much the balance in relationships, but rather the imbalance in asymmetrical relations.

An extreme example of asymmetrical exchange is the case of Alcestis where the long-term character of χάρις not only yields a “fuzzy” economy, but even worse: an impossible economy. Alcestis’ ultimate gift, the gift of her life for her husband’s, establishes an “economy of excess”, as no grace, favor or gift can be a sufficient response to the gift of life:

beneficiaries can ever return gain τιμή; the beneficiaries only reciprocate κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν. E.g. Ar. NE VIII.xiv (1163b12-15); see Chapter Three Section 5. Cf. for the principle of reciprocating κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν, Xen. Mem. I.iii.3. Being friends means being engaged in a constant combat de générosité, attempting to win the competition of active partnership, a perfectly equal friendship is the exceptional situation in which there is a tie between two equally active partners. E.g. Xen. Mem. II.iii.17-19, III.xi. See Chapter Five Section 1. According to AZOULAY (2004a), the example of the two brothers is the only instance of φιλία in Xenophon’s œuvre that does not, at some point, slide into asymmetrical bonds. To AZOULAY, who revives LUCCIONI (1947), Xenophon’s œuvre favors autocracy in an implicit way: by staging χάρις-relations that slip into exploitative relations between rulers and followers. See Chapter Four and Five for an alternative interpretation that attempts to do justice to the importance of ethical individualism and ἐγκράτεια (the principle of Active Partnership) in Xenophon’s Socratic work. Moreover, I do not think that we need to assume irony: in most of these cases, the asymmetry is blatantly present and only problematic on the assumption that friends (and fellow-humans in general) are inhabitants of the Kantian kingdom of ends.

130 See WOHL (1998), 153 ff. and PADILLA (2000) for an analysis of the play as structured by a series of excessive gifts: Apollo’s offer to Admetus (transgression of the life/death-boundary), Alcestis’s gift to Admetus (excessive for it cannot reciprocated), Admetus’s hospitality to Heracles (excessive in times of mourning), Heracles’ gift to Admetus (transgression of the life/death-boundary). Cf. PEARSON (1962), 148-9 for an interpretation of Admetus’ excessive hospitality towards Heracles (“that is no real favour at all”) as an attempt to match or duplicate the excessive gift of Alcestis. Similarly MACLACHLAN (1993) emphasizes that the play’s chain of χάρις was originally instigated by an act of non-χάρις: the failed exchange between Apollo and Thanatos.
Alcestis asks her husband Admetus to “remember the χάρις”—a request that becomes all the more urgent in the prospect of death, as Alcestis will not be able to remind Admetus of her χάρις. Alcestis makes explicit the problem of the situation: she cannot ever ask Admetus for an equivalent return (ἀξία), simply because there is nothing more valuable (τιμιώτερον) than a life. This radical incommensurability of value disrupts the equilibrium between all the characters in the play and eventually disintegrates the social bonds between the characters. As Wohl observes, the chorus and Admetus repeatedly thematize that Alcestis is unique and irreplaceable; moreover, Alcestis actually makes her own irreplaceability a condition for her own death: Admetus may never remarry. Alcestis carefully constructs her χάρις as an absolutely singular object: the unique and irreplaceable gift of her life, a debt that can never be repaid.

131 “Well, then. Remember to show your gratitude for this. I shall not ask you for the return my act deserves (for nothing is more precious than a life), but for what is right, as you will agree.” (transl. Kovacs).

132 Interestingly, at the outset of the play, as Thanatos refuses Apollo χάρις, Thanatos makes plain that χάρις is not in his nature (60-1): χάρις becomes impossible when death is involved.

133 Padilla (2000). A reading along these lines calls for an “ironic” interpretation of the play’s ending. Early studies of the Alcestis have long read the tragedy in terms of a “virtue rewarded” folk tale: the return of Alcestis is a reward for Admetus’ extraordinary hospitality towards Heracles, just as his avoidance of dying is a reward for his earlier hospitality towards Apollo. E.g. Ebeling (1898), 76-81; Jones (1948) 50-55; Burnett (1963), 240-55, (1971), 22-46. Recent studies have been far more critical towards Admetus’ character, e.g. by focusing on his breach of his promises to Alcestis (Beye (1959), 118, Conacher (1988), 35-45), and, arguably more centrally, in terms of dysfunctional exchange behavior by one or more of the characters (Padilla (2002), Wohl (1998); Pearson (1962), 148-51)—calling for a more ironic reading of the play’s ending. E.g. Von Fritz (1962), 312 ff.; Smith (1960).


136 Wohl (1998), 305-16.

137 Wohl (1998), 155 ff. contrasts Alcestis’s valuation of life and χάρις with the “disenchanted monetarism” of Pheres, Admetus’s father. However, the contrast seems to be exaggerated: although there is a profound difference in attitude between Alcestis who chooses to make the sacrifice of life and Pheres who chooses not to, there is little reason to characterize Pheres’s worldview as “monetarism”. Rather, the difference seems to be that although both Alcestis and
6.2. Symbolic violence

The drama of Alcestis illustrates how the most precious exchange objects, such as the gift of life, are typically constructed as singularly unique and kept out of circulation.\footnote{See Godélier (1996) on the importance of “keeping” as a factor of social identity. Cf. Weiner (1992).} Moreover, it is an extreme case of the capacity of gifts and χάρις to create and reinforce extremely asymmetrical relationships.\footnote{A more mundane (and rather grim) example is offered in Korn & Mc Corkle’s (1954) description of the practice of inmates in American prisons to force other inmates to accept cigarettes: they place gifts of cigarettes in the cells of inmates they have selected for personal domination. If these intended victims fail to find the donor and make them take back the “gifts” they are understood to be the personal property of the donor.} Individuals can bring others under their sway by enforcing obligations through gifts, up to the point where it becomes “symbolic violence” to a recipient who is put under a threat to reciprocate the impossible.\footnote{The notion of “symbolic violence”, i.e. “giving as a way of possessing”, is coined by Bourdieu (1977), 5-7, 192ff. Two basic types of power management based on reciprocal relationships may be distinguished: the “big man” and the “chief” (Sahlins (1972), 208 ff.; Van Wees (1998), 42-3). The “big man” is emblematic for personal power is achieved through reciprocity (that serves as a “starting mechanism”), where individuals become leaders by impairing the other’s capacity to discharge debts. The more one frustrates the other’s attempt towards equal reciprocation, the more permanent the control one can exert on the flow of goods. Power develops from control over a single transaction, to repeated asymmetry in control, to permanent control over the flow of goods, to control over people—as in patron-clients relationships. The “chief” represents institutional, ascribed, power is upheld by reciprocity and redistribution: the party in control collects “gifts” of tribute and labor and generously redistributes these resources to his people, e.g. in feasts.} The mutually reinforcing processes of reciprocal exchange and hierarchy formation is well documented in the anthropological field, as e.g. in Whyte’s study about hierarchies in slums and gangs, where the ability to reciprocate has immediate consequences for the hierarchical structure of the group: a leader must always be able to reciprocate; followers have subordinate positions in the hierarchy because they are not equally capable of discharging obligations.\footnote{Whyte (1964), 257-8: “Not all the corner boys live up to their obligations equally well, and this factor partly accounts for the differentiation in status among them. The man with a low status may violate his obligations without much change in his position. His fellows know that he has failed to discharge certain obligations in the past, and his position reflects his past performances. On the other hand, the leader is depended upon by all the members to meet his personal obligations. He cannot fail to do so without causing confusion and endangering his}

Pheres agree that there is nothing more valuable than life, Alcestis chooses to make the most valuable entity a gift, whereas Pheres chooses to keep it for himself.

\footnote{See Godélier (1996) on the importance of “keeping” as a factor of social identity. Cf. Weiner (1992).}

\footnote{A more mundane (and rather grim) example is offered in Korn & Mc Corkle’s (1954) description of the practice of inmates in American prisons to force other inmates to accept cigarettes: they place gifts of cigarettes in the cells of inmates they have selected for personal domination. If these intended victims fail to find the donor and make them take back the “gifts” they are understood to be the personal property of the donor.}
In cases where the exchange of gifts and good turns has repercussions on power relations between parties, the vocabulary of gift-giving and χάρις may serve to legitimize the resulting hierarchy. An example that we have encountered in Chapter One is Pericles’ representation of the Delian-Attic Bond in terms of χάρις:

(15) Thuc. 2.40.4-5
καὶ τὰ ἐς ἀρετὴν ἐνηντιώμεθα τοῖς πολλοῖς· οὐ γὰρ πάσχοντες εὖ, ἀλλὰ δοῦντες κτώμεθα τοὺς φίλους. βεβαιότερος δὲ ὁ δοός τὴν χάριν ὡστε ὀφειλομένην δι’ εὐνοίας ὁ δέδωκε σφέιειν· ὁ δὲ ἀντοφεῖλαν ἀμβλύτερος, εἰδὼς οὐκ εἰς χάριν, ἀλλ’ ὃς ὀφείλημα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀποδώσῃ, και μόνοι οὐ τὸν ἐμφέροντος μᾶλλον λογισμόν, ἀρετὴν ἀποδώσῃ τῷ πιστῷ ἀδεῖῳ τινὰ ὁφειλομένην.

Conspicuous is the ideology of taking initiatives (a principle of “active partnership” propagated by moral philosophers of the Classical Age): the Athenians acquire φίλοι by conferring favors instead of receiving them; they give (δέδωκε) and confer benefits (ὠφελοῦμεν) out of goodwill (εὐνοία); they do so not out of calculation of interest (τοῦ ξυμφέροντος λογισμός), but out of trust (τὸ πιστὸν) in the liberality (ἐλευθερία) of others, i.e. by having confidence that their excellence (ἀρετὴ) will be reciprocated (ἀποδίδωμι) by the other who is indebted (ἀντοφείλαν, ὀφειλομένην). The moral high ground of the virtuous giver results in political superiority: the giver is a βεβαιότερος friend, which not only implies that a giver has proven himself to be the more reliable friend, but also the one in the stronger position. The hapax legomenon position. (…) The leader spends more money on his followers than they on him. The farther down in the structure one looks, the fewer are the financial relations which tend to obligate the leader to a follower. This does not mean that the leader has more money than others or even that he necessarily spends more—though he must always be a free spender. It means that the financial relations must be explained in social terms.”

142 BOURDIEU (1980) sees the difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical reciprocity as only a gradual change “which is the base of political authority” (210).

143 “In ἀρετή we are equally singular, acquiring our friends by conferring not by receiving favors. Yet, of course, the doer of the favor is the firmer friend of the two, in order by continued kindness to keep the recipient in his debt; while the debtor feels less keenly from the very consciousness that the return he makes will be a payment, not a free gift. And it is only the Athenians who, fearless of consequences, confer their benefits not from calculations of expediency, but in the confidence of liberality.”

144 See Chapter Five.

ἀντοφείλων ("owing in return"), that strictly speaking is semantically rather redundant, makes explicit not only the idea of indebtedness, but also of indebtedness as a result of "lagging behind", i.e. of being the reacting party.\textsuperscript{146} What once started out as the League’s common effort and contribution has transformed into a reciprocal relationship between Athens and her allies where Athens claims the upper hand.\textsuperscript{147} The vocabulary of χάρις serves to render Athens’ imperialistic politics as morally legitimate:\textsuperscript{148} it transmutes “overt domination into misrecognized, “socially recognized” domination”, in other words, legitimate authority.”\textsuperscript{149}

6.3. The misrecognition of power

Along similar lines, the Spartan king Agesilaus prefers doing free favors over taking payment for his services:

\begin{quote}
(16) Xen., Ag. IV.iv.1\textsuperscript{150}
εἰ γὰρ ἐπώλει τὰς χάριτας ἢ μισθοῦ εὐεργέτει, οὐδεὶς ἂν οὐδὲν όφείλειν αὐτῷ ἐνόμισεν· ἀλλ’ οἱ προῖκα εὐ πεπονθότες, οὗτοι ἀεὶ ἡδέως ύπηρετοῦσι τῷ εὐεργέτῃ, καὶ διότι εὐ ἐπαθον καὶ διότι προεπιστεύθησαν ἂξιοι εἶναι παρακαταθήκην χάριτος φυλάττειν.
\end{quote}

Selling favors (ἐπώλει τὰς χάριτας)\textsuperscript{151} and doing good for pay (μισθοῦ εὐεργέτει) fail to breed indebtedness (οὐδεὶς ἂν οὐδὲν όφείλειν αὐτῷ ἐνόμισεν).\textsuperscript{152} Only gratuitous (προῖκα) favors make the recipient structurally (ἀεὶ) prone to serve (ὑπηρετοῦσι) the well-doer (and happily so too, ἡδέως).

Cf. Thuc. 1.32.1 where the Corcyreans insist that the χάρις of a city seeking alliance must remain βέβαιος.

\textsuperscript{146} Allison (2001), 63.

\textsuperscript{147} This change is described in Thuc. 1.99. See Kallet-Marx (1993), 65-6.

\textsuperscript{148} Cf. Mitchell (1997), 28-44.

\textsuperscript{149} Bourdieu (1977), 191-2.

\textsuperscript{150} “For had he been in the habit of selling his favours or taking payment for his benefactions, no one would have felt that he owed him anything. It is the recipient of unbought, gratuitous benefits who is always glad to serve his benefactor in return for the kindness he has received and in acknowledgment of the trust reposed in him as a worthy and faithful guardian of a favour.”

\textsuperscript{151} The plural suggests that χάριτες should be taken to be material manifestations of χάρις. “Xenophon had no need or wish to conceal the solidly material element in Agesilaos’ charites” (Cartledge (1987), 153).

\textsuperscript{152} Azoulay (2004a), 175: “un véritable crime contre l’idéologie de la charis”. 
because these presuppose trust that the recipient will return the χάρις (is a παρακαταθήκη χάριτος, a deposit of χάρις). Without qualms, the authorial voice asserts that non-commercial exchanges (here circumscribed in terms of εὐεργετεῖν, χάριτες) are more effective in inciting others to “serve” (ὕπηρετοῦσι) the well-doer. Accepting compensation by sale or wage would discharge all parties from further obligations to one another. Alternatively, χάρις-exchange and benefactions incite positive emotions in the recipients (ἡδέως) and make them be of service permanently (ἀεί).

Here we see a way of dealing with the isomorphism between commercial transactions and personal reciprocity that resembles the cases we have encountered in previous sections: personal reciprocities sustain relationships between individuals and reproduce a long-term order, whereas short-term transactions (notionally) do not have implications for the longer term. In situations of isomorphism, where the two types of exchange are contrasted, long-term personal reciprocities are morally privileged. Here too, the moral high ground of the obliging benefactor is an instance of méconnaissance—a misrecognition of the symbolic violence that is at play. Hence, the vocabulary of gift-giving and χάρις not only serves to misrecognize the balance in supposedly equal relationships, but also the imbalance in asymmetrical relations. Talking about χάρις and gifts leaves the terms of the exchange open-ended and implicit (and perhaps undecided); in situations where flexibility is desirable, references to asymmetries, dependences and irredeemable indebtedness can be avoided.153 The language of long-term reciprocity may serve as a face-saving strategy for both parties or as a devise of plausible deniability,154 through which a negotiation over relationship types can take

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153 This ambiguity seems to be more acute in the case of gifts (δῶρα), than in the case of χάρις, because of the more tangible nature of the former. MITCHELL (1997), 18. MITCHELL (1997), 20 appears to make a claim opposite to mine: “As dora are tangible and charites are more abstract, so dora are more quantifiable and the value of a charis is more ambiguous and open to interpretation.” However, both claims may be true depending on the perspective: a χάρις that is contested ceases to be referred to as χάρις; a problematic δῶρον still remains a δῶρον but is additionally qualified as bad or dangerous gift.

154 See GOFFMAN (1967), 5-46 for the notion of face as a social commodity. See BROWN & LEVINSON (1978) for the notion of “face-saving” in politeness theory. PINKER (2007) argues that the evolutionary function of indirect speech act is face-saving by preserving an element of plausible deniability in the situation.
place under circumstances that do not call for direct repercussions. The reasons why exchange partners may choose to keep the terms of their exchange vague may vary from politeness (euphemisms)\(^{155}\) to more thick varieties of face-saving that involve status maintenance\(^{156}\) or preventing allies from being openly humiliated and turning into enemies.\(^{157}\)

The common feature of these forms of reciprocity in political life is that “they deny, in effect, that a relation of power exists. Notionally, no one surrenders his autonomy (…); supposedly, everyone gives gifts and performs favours of his own free will.”\(^{158}\) Analogous to the construction of erotic seduction (seduction is only legitimate when there is no compulsion and violence),\(^{159}\) power only

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\(^{155}\) An example of this euphemizing function of the vocabulary of gift-giving may be the terminology for the Persian tax system in Herodotus. Hdt. 3.89 famously states that under the reign of Cyrus and Cambyses there were no rules set for taxation as subjects brought gifts to the kings. Cf. ASHERI (2007), 481, BRIANT (2002), 69, SANCISI-WEERDENBURG (1989), HERMAN (1989), 90. Darius was not so much the first king to impose tribute, but the first to make the terms of exchange explicit (GOULD (1991), 287; cf. BRIANT (2002), 69), which earned him the nickname κάπηλος. Cyrus’ rule is characterized as paternalistic: he is the father who receives gifts from his subjects because of his benevolence. Cf. KURKE (1999), 72-3. Darius makes an official distinction between tax-paying districts and those districts that are exempted from tributes but bring gifts instead. Materially there is no difference in quantity nor quality between the δῶρα mentioned and the taxes. Nor is there any real voluntariness (pace VAN GRONINGEN (1946), 259) to the gifts brought to Darius. The difference may be purely a matter of euphemizing power.

\(^{156}\) E.g. Xenophon’s self-presentation as a φίλος of Cyrus the younger, serving the king not because of wage (οὐκ μισθοῦ ἐνεκα) like the common soldiers do, but, like the other generals, out of φιλία and ξενία and “because of χάρις” (Xen. An. II.v.14). Both motivations amount to the same: they all serve (ὑπηρέτειν) Cyrus. Cf. Xen. An. VII.vi.8: soldiers are promised μισθός by the Thracian prince Seuthes, but their commander Xenophon is promised gifts. As AZOULAY (2004b) has pointed out, the character Xenophon is rarely represented as a recipient of μισθός. Transactions between Xenophon and his patrons are predominantly represented in the language of gift-giving. Whenever Xenophon receives large amounts of money, he immediately redistributes it as μισθός to his men. AZOULAY (2004a), (2004b).

\(^{157}\) The indirectness of gift-exchange also enables participants to save the partner’s face in situations when exchanges are aborted. In Xen. Cyr. V.iv.32 Cyrus prevents his ally Gadatas from losing face by accepting part of the gifts offered by him. Cyrus’ own motivation is that in receiving more than he can return (ἀντιδωρούμενον) he will incur shame (αἰσχύνεσθαι) and will show himself inferior (ἰγτᾶσθαι) in reciprocation. Cyrus is moralizing his reservations against accepting gifts from others in terms of his own loss of face: his intentions and motivations are cloaked in competitive values, whereas the deeper motivation for his refusal of gifts from others is to prevent himself from ending up on the indebted end of the exchange. This moralization is a denial of the dimension of power in the relationship.

\(^{158}\) VAN WEES (1998), 47. “The followers and subjects believe in their own independence, and feel justified in asserting it when leaders and rulers make demands which stretch any pretence of mutual generosity beyond breaking point.”

\(^{159}\) See Chapter Five Section 2.
becomes secure and legitimate with this element of notional free will. Hence, Cyrus is taught by his father that there are two roads to securing obedience: the long road of compulsory obedience (τὸ ἀνάγκῃ ἕπεσθα ι) and the better road, the shortcut, of consensual obedience (τὸ ἑκόντας πείθεσθαι)—a lesson that becomes the basis for his rule, both in foreign relations and in governance, where subjects are more prone to serve out of friendship and goodwill than out of compulsion.

The construction of power outlined here can be seen as extensions of the standard idiom that we have seen throughout this chapter, as power is legitimized and sustained by the same moral principles that serve as demarcation strategies in situations of isomorphism: the importance of mutual free will and autonomy, the moral superiority of the giver over the receiver, the primacy of the long-term over the short-term. These principles, that serve to construct φιλία as morally distinct from commerce, also work well in patriarchal systems were asymmetries are presented as self-evident and legitimate: long-term transactions (φιλία-reciprocities, χάρις-exchanges) underwrite a long-term order (the οἶκος, relations with parents, gods and monarchs) and larger political orders are formed after an analogy with the

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161 LENDON (2006), 92. Cf. TUPLIN (1990), 84.
162 Xen. Cy. 3.1.28.
163 Patterns of linguistic negotiation change once this asymmetry comes to be openly contested. When the standard idiom is contested, some parties may represent exchanges as diversions of long-term resources for short-term individual advantage, i.e. as “corrupt” exchanges. Cf. VON REDEN (1995), 94, SCHULLER (1982), 9-24. Examples are the democratic appropriation of χάρις-terminology by the democratically formalized liturgy-system (see Section 4 above), and the appropriation of μισθός-terminology for redistributive exchanges (see MARKLE (1985), HARRIS (2006), FISHER (2010)). Another case in point is the negative framing of gifts, δῶρα, in Athenian politics, where the acceptance of “gifts” by magistrates is regulated in legislation of δωροδοκία, literally gift-taking (δῶρα δέχεσθαι). Cf. VON REDEN (1995), 94-98, HERMAN (1987), 75ff.; TAYLOR (2001). All three phenomena can be read as attempts to make opaque exchanges transparent, accountable and controllable in a democratic context: whereas in reciprocal exchange that are experienced as “personal” and “social”, vagueness and misrecognition of value and obligation serve to signal the trust and gratitude that reduces transaction costs, in a public realm, where trust is more institutional than personal, the very same vagueness and misrecognition come to be perceived as a threat; in this context, transparency, accountability about the precise value and timing exchanges reduce “transaction costs”. On the notion of “transaction cost”, see Epilogue n.14. Cf. COASE (1988); OBER (2008).
asymmetrical reciprocity between parent and child or husband and wife.\footnote{Cf. Ar. NE 1161a12-18 where the φιλία of a father for his child is said to be similar to that of a king for his subjects, i.e. based on superiority of beneficence (ἐν ὑπεροχῇ).} In Part II of this book two of these moral principles, i.e. the principle of Active Partnership and the dialectics of the Long Term, will be subjected to closer scrutiny.

7. **Concluding Remarks**

The case of χάρις is illustrative for the strategies adopted by participants in diverging cultural fields and interactive contexts to affirm, define and protect social norms. As χάρις is traditionally felt to be a precious value, associated with long-term relations and long-term order, people in 5\textsuperscript{th}- and 4\textsuperscript{th}-century Greece would immediately have grasped that χάρις-exchanges involve norms, interactions, motives and experiences distinct from those involved in exchanges on market principles.

Situations of ambiguity and crisis prompt people to articulate their tacit know-how of dealing with open-ended situations and to capture it as a set of rules for action. Implicit social competence is turned into social grammar rules. Implicitly people are aware that the difference between χάρις-exchanges and the seemingly isomorphous exchanges of the market is perspective-bound: a well-socialized person “ought” to be capable of seeing differences between χάρις-exchange that implies seeing things from the point of view of successful interaction as an ongoing process and not-seeing the isomorphism. When turned into grammar rules, this awareness of perspective issues is translated into an emphasis on the spirit of the exchange (good intentions as opposed to indifference), emotions (positive emotions as opposed to negative ones or none), expectations (no expectations of return as opposed to self-serving calculation), the nature of obligation (moral as opposed to legal)—all factors that are committed to an deeply-felt but implicit understanding that a first-person experience of χάρις is irreducible to a timeless third-person analysis. Demarcations of χάρις from other types of exchanges involve a valuation of the first-person experience.
The variety of possible constructions as well as their context-sensitive nature suggest that some of the scholarly debates on the nature of 5th- and 4th-century φιλία and χάρις are in an important sense misguided in their use of analytical distinctions such as between objective obligations and subjective favors, between instrumental relations and elective affinities, between self-interest and other-regarding behavior. These oppositions cannot be used without qualification for descriptive purposes: the instrumentality of interpersonal relations on the one hand and the presentation of such relations in terms of choice or emotions or other-regarded dispositions on the other hand are aspects that move on different levels of analysis and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Moreover, these distinctions may very well be local constructs, being formed because of a contextual confrontation of χάρις-exchanges and φιλία-reciprocities on the one hand and the seemingly isomorphic exchanges of the market on the other hand. To use such distinctions is to take cultural strategies designed to forge a new difference at face value and to turn a blind eye to the cultural processes that produce these oppositions.