In Aesch. Persae 163 f., Queen Atossa, Xerxes’ mother and the deceased Darius’ wife, expressed her fear

163 μὴ μέγας πλοῦτος κονίασας οὐδας ἀντρέψῃ ποδί
164 ἀλβον, ἐν Δαρείου ἤρεν οὐχ ἀνευ θεῶν τινός.

Quite obviously, Atossa’s mind is vexed by the apprehension that the great wealth of Persia that now stands at Xerxes’ disposal might call forth a disaster to the effect of overturning the present prosperity which was raised by Darius with a divine assistance. Though the general sense of the passage is clear enough, it is not equally clear what kind of image the phrase κονίασας οὐδας ‘raising a cloud of dust on the ground’ was conceivably intended to evoke in the minds of the Greek audience. How did (and does) this participial phrase contribute to the interpretation of the whole sentence?

Recent suggestions are briefly summarized by Sansone, who proposes to tread an entirely novel path: According to Sansone, κονίασας οὐδας calls up the image of ‘‘great wealth tripping up prosperity and throwing it to the floor of the palaestra amid a cloud of dust’’ (116). The asset of this explanation is that both κονίασας οὐδας and ἀντρέψῃ ποδί are compatible with the metaphor from wrestling; in fact, Sansone’s is the first explanation to assign an unforced functional role to ποδί. However, this sign of virtue is effaced by the following drawbacks: (i) Sansone certainly overstates the regularity with which κῦνις was associated with wrestling; in any case, the verb κῦνις was not associated with wrestling, as far as can be gleaned from positive evidence; (ii) πλοῦτος and ἀλβος do not figure as adversaries in the present context ; (iii) as will become evident below, personifications seem to be incompatible with the selectional properties of the verb κῦνις.

I believe that we have lived with the correct solution for some time, as far as the meaning of κονίασας οὐδας is concerned, although more precisiation and completion is certainly called for. According to a suggestion by Page (noncommittally reported by Broadhead, 72), κονίασας οὐδας must refer to ‘‘the great expedition which the wealth of Persia has set in motion (‘raise a dust’ = ‘be in violent commotion’)’’. This idea is taken up by Gagarin, according to whom κονίασας οὐδας is descriptive of ‘‘the assembling of a military force’’; ‘‘great πλοῦτος has induced Persia to send off the expedition, and this stirring up of the dust may, the queen fears, destroy the Persian οlive’’ (181). Gagarin’s interpretation is attacked by Verdenius, Mn 33 (1980) 189, on the grounds that it ‘‘does not account for the addition of ποδί to ἀντρέψῃ’’. But I suggest that ποδί goes with κονίασας as well (see below).
It is rather pointless to speculate whether οὐδας is an indirect Homerism or not⁵). A more linguistic approach is called for. It is obvious that (the word-family of) κόνις was associated with motion of such a kind as to stir up a cloud of dust. Such mode of moving implies vehemence, hastiness, swiftness, etc., as modal aspects. Significantly often dust is stirred up by a great number of people, horses, chariots, etc. This aspect is lexicalized in the verb κόνιω to raise a cloud of dust (by moving as a group), which characteristically takes as its subject a noun denoting or implying a multitude. Κόνιω can be characterized as a process verb, which means that the activity designated by this verb lacks the controller (the Agent)⁶). As a process verb, κόνιω contracts For(rce) and So(urse) as semantic functions or roles:

\[
/\text{koní} + /v (x₁: \text{multitudinous (x₁)})_\text{Fo} \quad \text{Process} \ (x₂)_\text{So}
\]

The Source function is encoded either by the genitive ("gen. partitivus"⁷) or, as is the case in the Homeric formula κονιόντες πεδίου (N 820, Ψ 372, 449; 6 112), or by the accusative (e.g. Ξ 145 εὐρό κονιόσουν πεδίου). The latter expedient, which involves a kind of morphological neutralization, is natural enough, because Subject(ect) and Object(ect) are prototypical syntactic functions for a two-place predicate verb; and the Object function is typically signalled by the accusative⁸).

The word-family κόνις was apt to call up military associations: EM 528, 35 κόνια, κόνις, μάχη; Hesych. κονί: κόνις, ἀμμος, μάχη, ἀκαθαρσία, σμήνα, σπόδος. E.g., ἄκονιτι ("without dust", "sine pulvere") was synonymous with ἀμαχεί (cf. Thuc. 4, 73, 2-3); ἄκονιτι also belongs to athletics, but athletic terminology largely involves military metaphors. Dust is also an index of an assembling or marching army, like smoke is an index of fire. Aesch. Suppl. 180 ὥρα κόνιν, ἀκαθαρσία ἀγγέλου στρατοῦ is a nice instance of such an indexical relation between κόνις and στρατος⁹). Indeed, by virtue of this indexicality, the inherently multitudinous στρατος is a natural subject of the predicate verb κονιέ: cf. Aesch. Sept. 60 Ἀργείων στρατός χωρεῖ, κονιέ.

On the other hand, πλούτος κονιέ οὐδας violates selectional restrictions of the predicate verb ("πλούτος cannot κονιέ", Housman¹⁰), 318), and so πλούτος must be either corrected, or interpreted as a metaphor. Paleography aside, of the conjectures that have been proposed δαμων, πότμος, πόλος, φθόνος, πλύθος are ruled out by the requirement of multitudinous subject for the predicate verb κονιέ¹¹); whereas στρατός and στόλος (which is paleographically impossible) meet this selectional requirement. If a correction were needed, στρατός (Rauchenstein, Houseman) would be the most probable one. But no correction is needed.

When uttering μέγας πλούτος κονιάς οὐδας, Atossa had certainly in mind the great military force of Persia that had been mobilized for the hybristic expedition. Realizability belongs to the concept of πλούτος: wealth can be put into use in sundry ways according to the possessor’s intentions. Πλούτος can be realized as χρήματα ("money and goods"), but it can also be