

Zeitschrift: Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique
Herausgeber: Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique
Band: 35 (1990)

Artikel: Herodotus on Thracian society and history
Autor: Asheri, David
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660931>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 21.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

V

DAVID ASHERI

HERODOTUS ON THRACIAN SOCIETY
AND HISTORY

Herodotus is the prototype of the historian who teaches philosophy by examples. His Persian kings, Greek statesmen, his wars and peoples—even his rivers and mountains—are often paradigmatic or fulfil some symbolic function. Thrace, as Egypt, Persia or Scythia, is just one example of Herodotus' dealing with the elusive realities of a non-Greek people, and of his trying to fulfil the conventional requirements of a faithful reporter without losing an opportunity of transmitting a moral message and of entertaining his audience with fiction. Accordingly, this paper is more an examination of Herodotus' fields of interest, of his sources and thinking, than a contribution to Thracian studies. The problem of why and how Herodotus wrote as he did interests us more than the task of confirming or refuting his statements by a comparison with other sources. And since completeness is beyond achievement, we shall try to get a look at Herodotus' frame of mind by help of a substantial choice of his Thracian material.

Had Herodotus written a continuous composition based on the material he had collected he eventually would have called it *Θρηκίοι λόγοι*. It seems, however, that he never entertained such a plan, and hence the material remained

scattered all over his work. The main relevant sections are as follows: 1) A twofold Thracian *logos* (V 2-10; 12-16), inserted between the story of Darius' retreat from Scythia and the outbreak of the Ionian Revolt (chronologically, between *ca.* 513 and 500 B.C.). Megabazus, left by Darius in Europe with the task of conquering Thrace (V 2, 2, in direct continuation of IV 144, 3), provides the link between the main narrative of the Scythian campaign and the first, ethnographic, section of this *logos* (V 3-10). He reappears in the second section as the organizer of the mass-deportation of the Paeonians to Phrygia (V 11-15). This second section forms an integral part of the main narrative, though an ethnographic chapter on the non-deported Paeonians (16) is appended to it. In its entirety, this twofold *logos* is a good example of almost perfect integration of digressive material into the framework of the main historical narrative. 2) A brief Getan *excursus* (IV 93-96), appropriately inserted in the story of Darius' march through the Getan country from the banks of the Tearus to the Istros (and properly referred to in the main Thracian *logos*: V 4,1). The obstinate resistance of the Getans, the first Thracian people whom Darius had to subdue by force, demands an explanation; and since Herodotus' explanation seems to be a religious one (see below), this short but extremely important account of how the Getans did come to believe in 'immortality', appears to be both from the point of view of narrative and from argumentation in its right place. 3) The story of the two Miltiades in the Chersonese between *ca.* 548 and 493 B.C. (VI 33-41): this section is an integral part of Herodotus' Athenian *logoi*, though dealing with Thrace; and 4) the Thracian tracts of Xerxes' march (VII 59; 105-127) and retreat (VIII 115-120) in 480 B.C. form a part of the main historical narrative of the Persian Wars (though, as often, interspersed here and there with some digressive material).

The coastal Greek cities of the Thraceward and Hellenepontine districts of the Delian League were easily accessible

to a wandering inquirer like Herodotus. His detailed description of Xerxes' route from Doriscus to Therme (VII 108-127) shows a better knowledge of the coastal strip than of the immediate inland belt, of which he apparently had neither personal experience nor maps. As D. Müller has noticed,¹ Herodotus' account of the Persian army advancing in three bodies (two of which pursuing inland tracks: VII 121)—a combined operation topographically feasible only on certain tracts of the route—is somewhat schematic. There is therefore no reason whatever to doubt his implied or avowed autopsy of the Samothracian mysteries (II 51, 2-4) or of the mines of Thasos and Skapte-Syle (VI 46-47; cp. II 44,4), and what he calls “Sesostris' stelae” in Thrace (see below) may well have been some pillars of unknown origin which he actually noticed somewhere on the Aegean or Pontic coast. His personal knowledge of some Thracian cult practices (IV 33, 5 f.) and garments (*ibid.*, 74) may well be acquired by direct observation either in a Greek or Hellenized town of the Thraceward district or at Athens. As to ἀκοή, Herodotus' informants on Thracian things must have been, as a rule, Greeks or bilingual μιξέλληνες living on the coast or in the immediate hinterland. On the other hand, there is no reason whatsoever to believe that he ever ventured beyond the outer boundaries of the Thracian Hellenized belt. The famous Salmoxis' story he heard from Greeks dwelling on the shores of the Hellespont and the Pontus (IV 95, 1), not from the Getans themselves, and from “the Thracians” (V 9, 1; 10, 1) he heard what allegedly was going on beyond the Istros. Herodotus could collect a great deal of information on Thrace even without leaving Athens, where a thriving Thracian community, with all its cults and traditional customs, was already established in his time. As to written sources, Herodotus

¹ “Von Doriskos nach Therme. Der Weg des Xerxes-Heeres durch Thrakien und Ostmakedonien”, in *Chiron* 5 (1975), 1-11 (mit Tafeln 1-10); cp. N. G. L. HAMMOND, *A History of Macedonia* II (Oxford 1979), 100, and *CAH* (1988), 537-40.

quotes an inscription of Darius on a pillar near a source of the Tearus, in an area said to be a two days' journey from both Perinthus and Apollonia Pontica (see below): however, unless the inscription was bilingual with a Greek translation, its purported contents must have been reported to Herodotus orally by an improvising Greek-speaking erudite from Perinthus or Apollonia, and should therefore be considered in that case as an oral, not a written, source, even if he saw the inscribed pillar with his own eyes. Hecataeus, of course, included Thrace in his Περίοδος γῆς and mentioned in it many more toponyms and ethnics than Herodotus needed for his own purposes; but it still remains to be proved whether a historian could at all draw any useful information, beside names and distances, from what essentially was intended to be an ancillary index to a map.

As far as information is concerned, reliance upon Herodotus should therefore be rated relatively high. Thrace, after all, is not India or Ethiopia: it lies near at hand, part of it even open to all Greeks to come and check. Athenian ex-servicemen and Greek-speaking resident Thracians could even attend Herodotus' famous lectures. He must have been rather circumspect concerning things known to many. Interpretation, of course, is always his own or his informants'. Only beyond the Haemus range do things become more misty. Concerning the Getans, therefore, the gap between faithful reportage and imaginary fiction broadens considerably; but then he could always manage fairly well using his usual pretext that he is merely *relata referens*, that his duty is just to report all that is said but not to believe it, etc. And indeed, the book deserves to be read by us according to his author' wishes.

I. Ethnography

There can be little doubt that, as in many other cases, Herodotus collected on Thrace and the Thracians much

more material, and knew considerably more, than he actually inserted into his book as we have it today. Therefore, Thrace offers an excellent opportunity to reflect upon the variety and selectivity of his interests. Generally speaking, his favourite subjects include, as K. E. Müller summarized years ago,² what in our departmentalizing jargon we use to call 'geography', 'demography', 'social anthropology', 'Religionswissenschaft', and 'history'.

1) The land, first of all.³ To Herodotus' mind, Thrace (as well as Scythia: IV 101,1) was a four-sided figure surrounded in the south and east by two seas, the Aegean and the Euxine, and in the north and west by two great rivers, the Istros between Thrace and Scythia (IV 99, 1-2) and the Strymon between Thrace and Macedon (V 17, 2); the north-western boundary remains ill-defined. It is not by mere accident that rivers are chosen as ethnical and political boundaries by Herodotus, a man to whom trespassing on divine, natural and legally accepted limits is normally taken as an act of *hybris*, and hence of moral and theological consequences. Leaving aside the Istros, the greatest river on earth known to Herodotus (IV 48,1) and much more relevant to his geographic vision of the world than to his vision of Thrace, the main rivers in the said area are of course the 'Big Three': the eastern strong stream Hebrus in the Doriscus plain, the Nestos in the middle (the eastern limit of European lions) and the great Strymon on the west. Some fifteen lesser streams are mentioned besides, mostly in relation to Xerxes' march through Thrace; some of them are dry in summer, others run into lakes or are tributaries of one of the 'Big Three'. Many flow through tribal areas, e.g. the Arteskos flows through the country of the

² *Geschichte der antiken Ethnographie und ethnologischen Theoriebildung*, I: *Von den Anfängen bis auf die byzantinischen Historiographen* (Wiesbaden 1972); on Herodotus: pp. 101-31.

³ See now D. MÜLLER, *Topographischer Bildkommentar zu den Historien Herodots*, I: *Griechenland* (Tübingen 1987), 29-119 (only on Thracian sites between the Hebrus and the Strymon); and, of course, Chr. M. DANOV, *Altthrakien* (Berlin/New York 1976).

Odrysians (IV 92), the Strymon through Paeonia (V 1, 2 etc.) and three southern tributaries of the Istros pass through the country of the Krobyzian Thracians (IV 49, 1). More often than not, something unusual happens to Herodotean rivers or in their vicinity. The Lisos, for instance, failed to furnish water to the Persian army on its way to Stryme (VII 109, 1)—not a good omen, indeed. The Strymon, the ‘sacred’ and miraculous river of Aeschylus’ *Persians* (495 ff.), had to be crossed by bridges, white horses were sacrificed near-by by the Magi, nine local youths and as many maidens were buried alive by the Persians in honour of the toponym Ennea Hodoi (VII 24; 113, 2; 114, 1), and five years later the Persian commander of Eion, Boges, flung into the river all his gold and silver before leaping into the fire (VII 107, 2). Our impression is that this great river, marking the western boundary before entering Greece, fulfils a symbolic, or theological, function in Herodotus’ mind, comparable to that of the Halys, the Araxes or even of the Istros itself. The Tearus, finally, is said to be the most healthful of all streams and capable of curing scab and other diseases; but Herodotus’ reference to the arrogant tone of Darius’ inscription left by him near one of its thirty-eight sources, comparing the excellence and beauty of the river to that of the “best and most beautiful of men, Darius, the son of Hystaspes, King of the Persians and of the whole continent” (IV 91, 2), implies a moral warning. Nothing in the Thracian landscape attracts Herodotus’ attention more than its rivers, neither the famous lakes in the vicinity of Maronea, Dikaia and Abdera (VII 109, 1), nor the vast, salty and full-of-fish lake near Pistyros, which the Persian beasts of burden drained dry; neither the plain and beach of Doriscus (VII 59, 1), nor the lofty mountains of the Satrai, clothed with forests of different trees and capped with snow (VII 111, 1). The gold and silver mines of Thasos and Skapte-Syle⁴ as well as those

⁴ V 23, 2; VI 46, 2-3; 47, 1-2; VII 112; IX 75.

of Mount Dysoron (V 17, 2), are mentioned either for their extraordinary income or as a bone of contention between rival powers, never as wonders of nature.

2) Whereas physical geography essentially pertains to Herodotus' world of marvels, human geography seems to him directly related to historical events. The number of the Thracians and their social organization are a good case in question: "The Thracians are the most numerous nation of all mankind, next to the Indians" (V 3, 1). He is here referring the reader to a parallel passage in Book III (94,2), in which the Indians are said to be "more numerous than any other people with which we are acquainted" — a statement accepted, for once, by Ctesias (*FGrHist* 688 F 45[2]), but not by Thucydides, who puts the Scythians first on the list (II 97,5-6), nor by Pausanias, who puts the Celts (I 9,5). Herodotus did not even try to calculate the number of the Thracians, as he somehow did in the case of the Scythians (IV 81). It is of course legitimate to assume that he knew the number of Sitalkes' army in 429 B.C. (150.000 men according to Thuc. II 98,3) and that he jumped to the conclusion that, out of several tens of Thracian tribes, the Odrysian tribe by itself was about half a million strong. Herodotus, however, was not consistently the "Vater der Empirismus".⁵ Seeing the Thracians, like the Indians, as a frontier people, living on the fringe of the *oikoumene*, their numbers, like their lands, seemed *a priori* to be limitless.⁶ Herodotus is significantly troubled by the huge number of the people and its potential might (cp. I 136, 1: τὸ πολλὸν δὲ ἡγέαται ισχυρὸν εἶναι): "If they were ruled by one man, or were of one mind, in my opinion they would be invincible and by far the mightiest of all nations" (V 3, 1). Herodotus presumes that for sheer number to become a political power,

⁵ D. MÜLLER, "Herodot — Vater des Empirismus?", in *Gnomosyne. Festschrift W. Marg* (München 1981), 299-318.

⁶ Cp. G. I. KAZAROW, in *CAH* VIII (1930; repr. 1965), 535. It still remains unexplained why the Thracians, and not the Scythians, are the first on Herodotus' list.

there is need of unity, provided either by a king (or tyrant), or achieved through a common purpose. But, as far as the Thracians are concerned, he comfortably assures, “this is impossible and not even capable (ἀπορόν σφι καὶ ἀμήχανον) of ever being brought about”⁷—not a superfluous remark within the historical context of Megabazus’ operations, and possibly still a relevant one to an audience in Pericles’ Athens. He does not explain why, nor does he show in this passage any political or moral preference for ‘tyranny’ or for ‘common purpose’ (this last being the way Greeks might willingly attain unity: cp. VII 103-104). Perhaps he had in mind the mountainous nature of the land, which enabled the Satrai never to be brought under the rule of any one and “to continue to my own days a free people” (VII 111, 1); but the Satrai are an exception (μοῦνοι Θρηίκων). He rather reflected, possibly, upon the strength of individualism and tribal solidarity among the Thracians. As a matter of fact, the Thracians never attained throughout their history to a stable, united, kingdom. We have no stemmata of legendary or early ‘Kings of Thrace’, as we have for Macedon or Epirus. The first historical chiefs who made an attempt to carve out a larger empire in Thrace belong to the decades following the Persian evacuation of Europe. Olorus and Sitalkes, though both styled by Herodotus Θρηίκων βασιλεύς (VI 39, 2; VII 137, 3), were actually tribal chiefs, respectively of the Dolonci (?) and the Odrysians; and though the Odrysian state extended in Herodotus’ time from the Strymon to the Euxine, and even included part of the Getans and other tribes north of the Haemus range (Thuc. II 96-97), it soon disintegrated, Macedon and Athens doing their best to keep the people disunited by giving support to one tribal chief against another. In a sense, then, Herodotus had seen the future.

⁷ Reading ἐγγένηται PDUSV, Stein, Hude, Legrand; ἐν γένηται ABC (“of ever being united”?). Cp. the famous Aristotelian *dictum* on the Greek people, *Pol.* VII 6, 1327 b 32.

‘Θρῆικες’ is therefore a generic and rather loose ethnic to denote collectively more than fifty known tribes, about half of them mentioned by Herodotus.⁸ Some of the tribes receive a sociological or moral characterization. For instance, the Chersonesite Dolonci are described as a civilized people, normally ruled by βασιλέες (VI 34, 1; cp. οἱ δυναστεύοντες, 39, 2), friendly to the Greeks and with connections with Delphi; they happily take part in a joint colonial enterprise with Athenian settlers under the lead of the elder Miltiades as formal οἰκιστής. Herodotus’ Athenian sources are clearly responsible for this favourable bias towards the Dolonci, while their traditional enemy, the Apsinthians, dwelling to the north-west of the Chersonese, receive for the same reason a pejorative description: they are aggressive, tend to trespass on their neighbours’ land by crossing the narrow neck of the peninsula, and practise human sacrifices of war-prisoners to their god Pleistoros.⁹ The Brygoi and the Edones are also mentioned unsympathetically on account of their murderous attacks on Greeks and Persians;¹⁰ and the king of the Bistonian and Crestonian districts deserves mention on account of his ‘frightful’ deed, the blinding of his sons (VIII 116, and cp. Aelian. *VH* V 11; the mythical model of a cruel king of Bistonia is, of course, Diomedes: Pind. Fr. 169 Snell², etc.); on the other hand three particular tribes, the Getans, the Trausi and “those living beyond the Crestonians”, are picked out (πάντες – πλήν: V 3, 2, a formula implying comparison) rather favourably due to their customs and beliefs (see below). Some tribes are peripheral with respect to Thrace, both geographically and ethnically: the Paeonians, for

⁸ See W. TOMASCHEK, *Die alten Thraker. Eine ethnologische Untersuchung* (SB Wien 1893), and the partial lists of B. LENK, “Thrake (Stämme)”, in *RE* VI A 1 (1936), 404-7; J. WIESNER, *Die Thraker* (Stuttgart 1963), 13-23; B. VIRGILIO, *Commento storico al quinto libro delle ‘Storie’ di Erodoto* (Pisa 1975), 45-46.

⁹ VI 34, 1; 36, 2; 37, 1; IX 119, 1.

¹⁰ V 124, 2; 126, 2; VI 45, 1-2; IX 75.

instance, who consider themselves of “Teucran descent” (V 13, 2), living in “towns” but in separate tribal districts between Thrace proper and Macedon, and stereotypically idealized as an exceedingly industrious northern-European people (by Mediterranean standards: V 12-13); the ‘Asiatic Thracians’ (cp. Pherecydes, *FGrHist* 3 F 27; Xen. *Anab.* VI 4, 1-2) who, according to their own tradition, were once called “Strymonians” but changed their name into “Bithynians” after crossing into Asia (VII 75, 2); and two peoples living beyond the Istros—the Agathyrsi, a Scythian tribe whose customs approach those of the Thracians (IV 104: τὰ δὲ ἄλλα νόμαια Θρήξι προσκεχωρήκασι: again, a formula of comparison), and the mysterious Sigynnai, said (by the Thracians?) to be of Median descent (see below).

3) Such broad ethnic characterizations lead us directly to Herodotus’ Thracian ethnography. As elsewhere, his main classification of human settlements is twofold: inland and shore. The Thracians of the inland parts (τὴν μεσόγαιαν οἰκέοντες) served the Great King on foot, while those who dwelt by the sea (παρὰ θάλασσαν) furnished ships (VII 110; 115, 2). Topography overlaps sociology. Some of the inland tribes dwell amid mountains, as do the Satrai of the highlands between the Strymon and the Nestos (VII 111, 1-2) and the tribes of the Rhodope range (VIII 116, 1); others live in pile-villages, as the Paeonians of Lake Prasias (V 16)¹¹: both mountaineer and lacustrine people manage to remain free and unconquered (an advantage of social marginality). As other Herodotean *mirabilia*, the lacustrine habitat of Prasias is

¹¹ It has been variously identified with the little lake of Butkova, with lake Karkinitis, or lake Dorian (where remains of pile-dwellings seem to have appeared). See B. SARIA, “Πρασιάς λίμνη”, in *RE* XXII 2 (1954), 1698-9, and D. MÜLLER, *op. cit.* (at n. 3), 89-90 and 192. Aristeas’ ἄνδρες ὅδωροι ναίουσιν (5 = Fr. 7 Bolton) are not likely to be lake-dwellers. For an alleged allusion to lacustrine dwellers in Aeschylus’ *Persians* (869 ff.) see H. D. BROADHEAD’s commentary (Cambridge 1960), *ad loc.* and L. BELLONI’s (Milano 1988), pp. 228-9. A pile-village in the marshes of the Phasis is mentioned by the contemporary author of *Airs, Waters, Places* (15).

granted an exceptionally detailed and vivid description (almost betraying autopsy), and is the earliest of its kind in ancient literature. It is a mixture of realism and idyllic utopianism. What we have is in fact a picture of a happy folk, living "far away from the busy haunts of men" like the Phaeacians of the *Odyssey*. Since they were connected with the mainland by a single bridge, their village resembled an island, and being practically inaccessible, even Megabazus apparently was unable to conquer them. As many other utopian societies, they once enjoyed the delights of 'primitive communism'; but Herodotus' curiosity was stirred up mainly by their transition from a former 'collective' stage of fixing piles and platforms to a later stage of 'individualism'.¹² They are fish-eaters, a common feature of many semi-legendary Herodotean *Naturvölker* living on the fringes of the civilized world. Feeding on natural produce, either by the sea, lakes and rivers, or of wild trees (cp. e.g. III 114), as well as having at hand all sorts of boiled meat brought forth by the earth itself (e.g. the famous Ethiopian "Table of the Sun", III 18), is also a well-known feature in conventional descriptions (ancient and modern) of Cockaigne. In Lake Prasias, even horses and yoke-animals were fed on fish (V 16, 4).¹³ We should not, however, let ourselves be impressed excessively by Herodotus' fondness for marginalities: as we shall see, the social group he usually describes, in Thrace as elsewhere, is the aristocracy, a class that aims at differentiating itself from the common people externally, and through its peculiar customs, cults and mentality.

4) Herodotus is often struck by the physical appearance of his exotic peoples (real or imaginary). The Ethiopians, for instance, are said to be the tallest and most handsome men on earth—and their skin is black, of course. On the Thracians he

¹² Cp. the famous case of the Lipari community in Diod. V 9, 4-5.

¹³ Cp. Athen. VIII 345 e (on the 'Thracian' city of Mossynos). For an utopian idealization of a lacustrine nest of pirates cp. Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* I 5-6.

does not comment, although he was well acquainted with the Greek stereotype (already known to Xenophanes) of the blond and blue-eyed northern Europeans (see on the Budini: IV 108,1). He has something to say on Thracian dress, an habitual item on his ethnographical agenda, as the Babylonian, Egyptian and Persian examples sufficiently show. “The (Asiatic) Thracians wore the skin of foxes upon their heads, and about their bodies tunics, over which was thrown a long embroidered cloak; their legs and shins were clad in fawnskins, and held javelins, small shields and short swords” (VII 75, 1). This is an ordinary rubric in the Persian military catalogue; and from what we know from other sources, the European Thracians wore a similar costume, albeit suited to the colder climate of their country.¹⁴ We are told furthermore that the Thracians made garments of hemp (κάνναβις) while the Scythians used it as a drug (IV 74; 75, 1), and that beyond the Istros the Sigynnai wore Median dress (V 9, 1); and that is all he has to say on this matter. It was Thracian ‘tattooing’, much more than their dress, that draw Herodotus’ curiosity, for the simple reason that, at first sight, its social meaning appeared to be the reverse of the one prevailing among other people (Greeks included, of course): among the Thracians, “to be branded (τὸ ἐστίχθαι) is a mark of noble birth, and not to be branded (τὸ ἀστικτον) a mark of low birth” (V 6, 2). Elsewhere in Herodotus branding is actually a mark of slavery.¹⁵ For the sake of his paradox Herodotus is evidently putting on the same level both tattooing for ornamental (or magic) purposes and branding as a mark of slavery or as a penalty, which are in fact two totally different things (albeit denoted in Greek by the same verb στίζειν). The Thracian paradox, however, belonged to a repertoire. It was included

¹⁴ Cp. Xen. *Anab.* VII 4, 4; K. ZIMMERMANN, “Die Thrakervase von Sozopol”, in *ACD* 17/18 (1981/82), 73-81; J. BORCHHARDT, in *Studia in honorem Chr. M. Danov* (Serdica-Tirnovi 1985), 337-42.

¹⁵ II 113, 2; V 35, 3; VII 35, 1; VII 233, 2.

by the author of the *Dissoi Logoi* in a collection of ethnological examples illustrating relativism of social conventions, but with a difference (τοῖς δὲ Θραξὶ κόσμος τὰς κόρας στίζεσθαι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις τιμωρία τὰ στίγματα τοῖς ἀδικέοντι *Vorsokr.* 90 Fr. 2,13 = II 13 Robinson), which in my view should suffice to exclude the possibility, in this case, of direct derivation from Herodotus or even of a common source. Centuries later, Dio Chrysostom mentioned in his cynic vein the Thracian case, as a proof that there is nothing to prevent even a queen or a king from being branded (*Or. XIV* 20).¹⁶ Ethnological relativism is of course omnipresent in Herodotus' mind, as the famous confrontation of Greeks and Indians at Darius' court (III 38, 4) sufficiently shows, though limited by his acknowledgement of the absolute rule of custom within each culture; in the Thracian *logos*, however, he does not elaborate: 'tattooing' is merely one item in a list of social conventions or prejudices typical of that people.

5) Another Thracian social prejudice is contempt of manual work and the honour attached to the warrior class and military life: "To be idle (ἀργὸν εἶναι) is accounted the most honourable thing, while to be tiller of the soil (γῆς δὲ ἐργάτην) the most dishonourable; to live of war and plunder is the most honourable" (V 6, 2). In another, much more important passage, deserving to be quoted in full, he argues that "whether the Greeks acquired this too [i.e. the prejudice

¹⁶ Cp. Artemid. *Onirocr.* I 8 (an example of ἴδιον or ἐθνικὸν ἔνδος). According to Clearchus (Fr. 46 Wehrli), an original mark of shame was later transformed by the Thracian women into a kind of ornamentation. Alternatively, the custom was explained variously as a punishment on Thracian women for the murder of Orpheus (Phanocles, *ap.* Stob. IV 20, 47, p. 461 f. Hense; *Anthol. Pal.* VII 10; Plut. *De sera num. vind.* 12, 557 D). Evidence from Greek vases: J. E. HARRISON, in *JHS* 9 (1888), 143-46 and pl. VI. Ornamental tattooing was attributed by later sources to other peoples as well (among them, to the Agathyrsi, the Illyrians and the Mossynoeci: Mela II 10; Strab. VII 5, 4, p. 315; Xen. *Anab.* V 4, 32). See P. WOLTERS, Ἐλαφόστικτος, in *Hermes* 38 (1903), 265-73; P. PERDRIZET, in *BCH* 35 (1911), 110-16; etc. The Agathyrsi coloured their hair blue, while the Dacians painted their body; see G. I. KAZAROW, *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Thraker* (Sarajevo 1916), 67 ff.

against manual work] from the Egyptians, I cannot say for certain, seeing (όρων) that the Thracians, the Scythians, the Persians, the Lydians and almost all other barbarians, hold the citizens who practise trades (τέχνας), and their children, in less repute than the rest, while they esteem as noble (γενναιούς) those who keep aloof from handicrafts, and especially honour such as are given wholly to war. These ideas prevail throughout the whole of Greece, particularly among the Lacedaemonians; Corinth is the place where mechanics (χειροτέχνας) are least despised" (II 167). This is a masterpiece of ancient comparative sociology in the field of class-*mentalités*, and one of the most unambiguous examples of methodological analogism in Herodotus.¹⁷ His implicit major premise may be that 'diffusionism' cannot always be the right answer. However, he does not look for a definite social structure common to all the peoples of his list which eventually might explain the recurrence of comparable social prejudices, although he obviously quite understands that τὰ ἐς πόλεμον and menial τέχναι (and their respective social classes) are opposites common to most societies of his time, as for instance the Egyptian, in which the warrior class had special privileges (II 168, 1), and of course the Thracian. It is important to realize that Herodotus, when writing for example about the Thracians, is thinking comparatively, but without disregarding peculiar traits: though making comparisons, he is nevertheless culturally predisposed, in our case, to reassert the bellicose character of the Thracians, by merely following an ethnic stereotype already well-established in Greece, and particularly in fifth-century Athens.

6) A regular issue of comparative anthropology prominent in Herodotus are marriage and family *mores* and institutions. All he says about the Thracians fits into one of his systems or patterns of human family-life. The Thracians keep

¹⁷ See A. CORCELLA, *Erodoto e l'analogia* (Palermo 1984), esp. 68 ff.

no watch on their unmarried daughters, and allow them to have intercourse with any man they please, while their 'women', namely their married wives, purchased from their parents for large sums of money (thereupon becoming the property of their husbands), are strictly guarded (V 6, 1). It is essentially the same pattern as with the Lydians, who allow their daughters to prostitute themselves freely until they get enough money for their marriage-portions (I 93, 4), the only difference between Thracians and Lydians in this respect being the difference between 'marriage by purchase' and 'marriage by dowry'.¹⁸ This pattern is not only meant to exhibit notions radically opposite to the Greek virtues of maidenhood and premarital chastity, but it is also sharply differentiated from other, mostly non-Greek, institutions, as the religious prostitution of Babylonian type (I 199), the ritualized promiscuity of the Massagetae (I 216, 1) and the Nasamones (IV 172, 2) and, of course, from copulation in public 'like cattle' as practised by certain Caucasian and Indian tribes (I 203, 2; III 101). Polygamy is of course part of the Greek stereotyped image of the Thracians (V 5, 1),¹⁹ like that of the Persians, for instance; but it is viewed more as a neutral mark of diversity than as a sign of inferior civilization. Marriage by purchase, however, was the rule, according to Aristotle, among the early Greeks themselves, when their laws were "very simple and barbaric" (*Pol.* II 8, 1268 b 40), and it is highly probable that Herodotus' views on this subject were essentially the same. The high number of purchased wives in Thrace was clearly a sign of wealth and social status. Among the lacustrine Paeonians, he insinuates, it was pos-

¹⁸ On Thracian marriage by purchase cp. Xen. *Anab.* VII 2, 38, and Mela II 21 (with P. PARRONI's commentary [Roma 1984]). On Thracian polygamy and its social aspects see Menander, Fr. 794-795 Körte, and Heracl. Lemb. *Exc. polit.* 58 Dilts. For a mythical aetiology of it: Arrian, *FGrHist* 156 F 62. On marital customs in Herodotus see M. ROSELLINI — S. SAÏD, in *ASNP* S. III 8 (1978), 949-1005.

¹⁹ Cp. e.g. Eur. *Andr.* 215 ff.; Menandr. Fr. 795 Körte; Heracl. Lemb. *loc. cit.*

sible to estimate the number of wives living in the village simply by dividing by three the number of piles bearing up the platforms (V 16, 2)²⁰: it is the reverse of what takes place among the North-African Gindanes, where it is the number of male lovers that can be calculated by counting the anklets each woman wears on her legs (IV 176). As to the peripheral Agathyrsi, a tribe extremely "effeminate" (ἀβρότατοι) and fond of wearing gold—a serious note of censure by Herodotean standards—they practised a form of apparently unlimited promiscuity, which is still a primitive stage of culture: Herodotus however, almost anticipating Plato, merely comments that "they may be all brothers, and, being members of one family, they may never envy nor hate one another" (IV 104), a piece of conventional, rationalistic, idealization of the 'noble savage' type. Yet realities are harsher, especially economic ones. For all their supposedly happiness in family life, "the Thracians sell their children ἐπ' ἔξαγωγῇ" (V 6, 1; cp. Philostr. *VA* VIII 7, 42, on the Phrygians), namely to slave-dealers for exportation abroad. Athens, in fact, is known as a major importer, either by buying children in the way here described or by capturing prisoners of war. Herodotus is perhaps implying that in Thrace the sale of children was normally forbidden, or held as shameful, if practised within the boundaries of tribal land, as was the case with debt-slaves in pre-Solonian Attica and in wide areas outside the sphere of Attic law even in Herodotus' time. In this respect, the Thracian practice is put on the same moral level as that of many contemporary Greeks.

7) Herodotus was aware of the amazing diversity of death and funeral customs and of the variety of beliefs implied by them. Usually he seems more interested in customs than in beliefs; but, contrary to the rule, in his Thracian *logoi* death

²⁰ For a somewhat different interpretation of this passage see G. I. KAZAROW, in *CAH* VIII 539.

customs are not apparently described for their own sake. He has in fact nothing really 'marvellous' to tell about the visible obsequies of the wealthy Thracians: bewailing, lying in state for three days, sacrifices and feasts, are after all common observances all over the world. Even the fact that both inhumation and cremation are customary in Thrace is not a great wonder to him (as it is to many modern scholars, who automatically suggest, in such cases, an ethnically mixed culture). Perhaps the mound (*χῶμα*) the Thracians raised over the grave and the fact that the single combat was awarded the "relatively" highest prize in funeral games²¹ seemed to Herodotus somewhat peculiar (V 8). Nevertheless, all this does not really match the exceptionally exotic rites of the Egyptians or of the Scythian kings. The true 'marvel' of the Thracian way of death are their beliefs in immortality as prevailing, in various forms, in three particular tribes. The most famous case in question are of course the Getans, who are 'ἀναντίζοντες' — a factitive verb meaning simply 'making immortal' somebody. 'Αναντίζουσι δὲ τόνδε τὸν τρόπον: every five years they dispatch a 'messanger' to their *daimon* Salmoxis with the charge of bearing him their requests. The 'messanger' is hurled into the air and transfixed by three spears: if he dies, then he paradoxically does *not* die, according to the Getan belief, but goes to convey the message and to live forever in Salmoxis' company; if he does not die, it is a sign that he has been refused 'immortality' by the *daimon*, and therefore he is liable to be accused by his fellow-Getans of being a wicked man (and thereupon he may be put to 'real' death in this world). A vein of sceptical irony is not lacking in this amusing chapter (IV 94). What Herodotus primarily had

²¹ Κατὰ λόγον (V 8) is variously translated: "proportionately" (J. E. POWELL), cp. VII 36, 3 and VIII 111, 2; "as is reasonable" (E. ABBOTT); "the competitors matched in pairs" (R. W. MACAN); see W. W. HOW — J. WELLS, *ad loc.* Mounds in other cultures: I 93, 2 (Lydia); IV 71, 5 (Scythia); IX 85, 3 (Greek at Plataea). Thracian dolmens of the sixth-fourth centuries B.C.: J. WIESNER, *op. cit.* (n. 8), 96 ff.

in mind was to describe an ingenious device—and a fully convincing one to gullible believers, though rather entertaining to a shrewd observer (no less than the famous device used by Pisistratus on his first restoration to Athens, at a time when the notoriously clever Greeks were in fact no less foolish than most barbarians, I 60, 3-5); or the one which the ‘real’, human, Salmoxis himself had once contrived (according to what Herodotus was told by Hellespontine and Pontic Greeks) to induce his “boon-companions” (*συμπόται*)—at a time when the Thracians lived in a wretched way and were highly unintelligent (IV 95, 2-3)—to believe in his own immortality. The whole story of Salmoxis and his doctrine is frankly presented as a piece of ironic, arrogant and somewhat euhemeristic *interpretatio Graeca*; but Herodotus remains perplexed. He neither accepts nor rejects the story, refutes on chronological grounds the relationship between Salmoxis and Pythagoras and does not dismiss *a priori* the alternative explanation that Salmoxis may have been, after all, a *δαίμων ἐπιχώριος* of the Getans (IV 96, 2). Herodotus was probably amused, yet reluctant to ascribe to his (by now) intelligent compatriots the invention of such foolish contrivances.²²

Belief in immortality is brought by Herodotus implicitly as an explanation of the Getan stubborn resistance to Darius and to their exceptional valour and uprightness (they are *ἀνδριότατοι καὶ δικαιότατοι* of all Thracians: another piece of

²² Cp. W. BURKERT, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft* (Nürnberg 1962), 137 ff. For Salmoxis’ story (IV 95) cp. Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F 73. Among recent studies on Salmoxis see M. ELIADE, “Zalmoxis”, in *HR* 11 (1972), 257-302; F. HARTOG, “Salmoxis: le Pythagore des Gètes ou l’autre de Pythagore?”, in *ASNP* S. III 8 (1978), 15-42, and *Le miroir d’Hérodote* (Paris 1980), 102-25; P. ALEXANDRESCU, “La nature de Zalmoxis selon Hérodote”, in *DHA* 6 (1980), 113-22. Thracian ‘ignorance’, or rather illiteracy, was part of the stereotype (Androton, *FGrHist* 324 F 54 a), a false one, as we now know: the Greek alphabet was in use among the Thracians since the VIth century B.C. (see G. I. KAZAROW, *op. cit.* [n. 16], 92 ff.; D. DEČEV (Hrsg.), *Die thrakischen Sprachreste* [Wien 1957], 566 ff.; R. SCHMITT-BRANDT, “Die thrakischen Inschriften”, in *Glotta* 45 [1967], 40-60; Chr. M. DANOV, *op. cit.* [n. 3], 52 and 156 ff.).

topical idealization of a far-northern people). This, at least, is what seems to be the purpose of IV 93, a chapter which connects the main narrative with the following Getan digression. Herodotus, however, does not explain the nature of the relationship between heroism or self-immolation and the belief in immortality (as did later authors), and apparently ascribes a variety of the same belief to two other tribes not particularly renowned on account of their martial virtues. One of them, the Trausi (probably living on the river Trauos, near Abdera: VII 109, 1, cp. Liv. XXXVIII 41, 6), became famous in antiquity thanks to their birth-and-death customs: they weep when a child is born for the woes it will have to suffer in this world, but they laugh and rejoice at funerals, for the dead man is at last free from suffering and “finds himself now in all manner of happiness” ($\delta\pi\pi\sigma\eta\epsilon\delta\alpha\mu\eta\eta$ V 4, 2). This looks like a universal rule, not as a privilege of the happy few, as among the Getans. However, apart from the fact that not being born and death are better than life is a pessimistic commonplace of popular wisdom common to all peoples and times (e.g. Theognis 425-428; *Ecclesiastes*, etc.), the very juxtaposition of mourning at birth and rejoicing at funerals has been attributed to Hesiod (Fr. 377 M.-W.: *et Hesiodus natales hominum plangens gaudet in funere*). In any case, Herodotus is giving again a Greek, rationalistic, explanation of a Thracian custom, the true meaning of which might have been, as a matter of fact, totally different (e.g., a magical way of driving away the evil spirits).

The other tribe, living above the Krestonians (namely, the area of Mt. Dysoron), consider it a great disgrace for a woman not to be slain and buried together with her dead husband, this being the privilege of the most beloved of all his wives (V 5). Herodotus' purpose in both these cases is obviously to exhibit the reverse to Greek customs and beliefs. $\epsilon\delta\alpha\mu\eta\eta$ means elsewhere in Herodotus material ‘prosperity’ or ‘success’, both of individuals and cities: only here,

in a Thracian context, does the term appear in the sense of 'bliss' in afterlife. The archaic Greek view as exposed by Solon in his famous dialogue with Croesus (I 30-32) evidently considered a 'good death' as the ultimate fulfilment of a 'good life', the term ὄλβιος (and not merely εὐτυχής, "lucky" or "successful") being the one preferred for the 'happy' man who managed to accomplish both: "He who unites the greatest number [of good things, πάντα καλά], and retaining them to the day of his death, then dies agreeably (εὐχαρίστως), that man alone... is, in my judgment, entitled to bear that name" (I 32, 9).²³ These Thracians, on the contrary, considered death as the beginning of afterlife, seen as an inherently happy realm, totally unrelated to this world and to what man did or suffered in it (the Trausi laugh and rejoice equally at the funerals of the righteous and the wicked). It is an example of Herodotus' view of certain significant aspects of *la pensée sauvage* of his own time as Greek mind turned topsy-turvy.

II. History

We leave aside other aspects of religion (though an item of utmost importance on Herodotus' anthropological agenda) and proceed to an examination of one last main field of Herodotean inquiry, namely the Thracian *histoire événementielle*. First, a few general remarks. As we have already pointed out, Herodotus apparently never planned to write a comprehensive 'history of the Thracians': his main Thracian *logoi* remain essentially ethnographical, and whatever he included of Thracian 'history' is embedded in the *logoi* of other peoples

²³ Cp. Hesych. s.v. Τραῦσος, and Zenob. V 25, in *Corpus Paroem. Graec.* I p. 128. For other sources: E. OBERHUMMER, "Trausi", in *RE* VI A 2 (1937), 2245-6. Archaeological evidence: R. F. HODDINOTT, *The Thracians* (London 1981), 113-5. Euripides' famous verses in the *Cresphontes* (Fr. 449 N²) are commonly taken as a borrowing from Herodotus (with chronological speculations about the date of 'publication' of the *Histories*): see A. HARDER's commentary (Leiden 1985), 92 ff. For Herodotus' terminology of happiness see C. de HEER, MAKAP-ΕΥΔΑΙΜΩΝ-ΟΛΒΙΟΣ-ΕΥΤΥΧΗΣ. *A Study of the Semantic Field denoting Happiness in Ancient Greek to the End of the 5th Century B.C.* (Amsterdam 1968).

or in the main narrative of the Persian Wars. Chronologically speaking, the events of Thracian history are spread over a period of nearly 900 years, which can be divided conveniently into four sections: 1) the decades preceding the Trojan War, *ca.* 1310-1280 B.C. in Herodotus' chronological system; 2) the archaic era from the second half of the seventh century to the middle of the sixth; 3) the second half of the sixth century down to the end of the Persian Wars (ca. 548-479 B.C.); and 4) the *pentekontaetia* down to 430 B.C. The great gap of the 'Dark Ages' between the Fall of Troy and the seventh century recurs in most other fragmentary 'national histories' in Herodotus' work (with the remarkable exception of Egypt). The sources for the sixth and fifth centuries are mainly Athenian and partly Ionian, with some help from local information plausibly collected in the Greek cities of the Thracian coasts.

1) The first event in Thracian history recorded by Herodotus is Sesostris' mythical conquest of Scythia and Thrace. Sesostris' time within Herodotus' *Sagenchronologie* can be established by that of his direct predecessor, Moeris, who lived like Heracles (II 145, 4) some 900 years before Herodotus' visit to Egypt (II 13, 1), namely around 1350 B.C. Sesostris' conquests were therefore deemed to have taken place in what we would roughly call the late fourteenth century B.C. After conquering the whole of Asia, Sesostris invaded Europe and subdued "the Scythians and the Thracians" (in this order). In Herodotus' opinion, these were the farthest nations to whom his army extended its march, "for in their country the pillars he erected are visible, while beyond them they are no longer found" (II 103, 1). What Herodotus has in mind are the so-called "Sesostris' pillars" that he himself saw in Palestine (II 106, 1) and possibly in Thrace as well. Most significantly, it is easy to realize that when he writes about Sesostris he is really thinking of Darius, who also crossed into Europe after conquering (or rather reconquering) the "whole of Asia". He

reveals the secret when he tells the story of Hephaestus' priest at Memphis, who once refused to place a statue of the Persian king next to those of Sesostris and his wife, claiming that while Darius had subdued all the other nations, Sesostris had subdued also the Scythians, whom the Persian king had been unable to conquer (II 110, 2). It sounds as if, under the guise of a striking historical analogy, a piece of nationalistic propaganda of the late sixth century was still circulating in Memphis about sixty years after Darius' retreat from Scythia. Herodotus the analogist did not miss the message. The anecdote is generally considered anachronistic, on the ground that Darius was in Egypt before the Scythian campaign; but it is undoubtedly 'well invented' for propaganda purposes. In later sources, the whole comparison between Sesostris and Darius changes. In the account of Hecataeus of Abdera (*FGrHist* 264 F 25, *ap.* Diod. I 55, 6-7) Sesostris, after conquering the whole of Thrace, gives up—like Darius—the idea of conquering Scythia. In other accounts, probably going back to Megasthenes (*FGrHist* 715 F 11 a-b), the great Pharaoh is even utterly defeated by the Scythians, who invade Asia up to the Egyptian border (Iust. II 3, 8-14; Oros. *Hist.* I 14). A causal connection is thus created between Sesostris' European campaign and the famous Scythian invasion of Upper Asia. A historical encounter of Egyptians and Scythians in southern Philistia might have prompted the development of Sesostris' legend even before Darius' disastrous retreat from Scythia gave rise to historical analogies. In Herodotus, however, the two events are totally unrelated and a gap of some seven-hundred years separates them.²⁴

²⁴ See I 103-106, dated in Cyaxares' reign (see below). On Sesostris' legend in Achaemenid and Hellenistic Egypt, see O. MURRAY, in *JEA* 56 (1970), 162-64; O. K. ARMAYOR, "Sesostris and Herodotus' Autopsy of Thrace, Colchis, inland Asia Minor and the Levant", in *HSCPb* 84 (1980), 51-74; A. B. LLOYD, in *Historia* 31 (1982), 37-40 (bibliogr. at p. 37 n. 11), A. ZAMBRINI, in *ASNP* S. III 15 (1985), 791 ff. and, most recently, C. OBSOMER, *Les campagnes de Sesostris dans Hérodote* (Bruxelles 1989). Sesostris' pillars and Darius' stelae: G. POSENER, in *BIAO* 34 (1934), 80 f.

2) Roughly to the same decades preceding the Trojan War (by Herodotus' term, *ante ca.* 1280 B.C.: II 145, 4) belongs a second mythical conquest of Thrace (presumably following the Egyptian evacuation): the Teucro-Mysian invasion from the Troad, coupled with the expulsion, or mass-deportation, of the so-called 'Strymonians' into Asia, where they came to be called "Asiatic Thracians" or "Bithynians" (VII 75, 2), with the settling in their stead of Teucran colonists (ἀποίκοι) whose descendants used to be known later as "Paeonians" (VII 20, 2; V 13, 2), and possibly also with the migration from Macedon of the Brigians (Βρίγες, distinct in Herodotus from the Βρύγοι, who remained in Thrace: VI 45; VII 185, 2), who, upon their arrival in Asia changed their name to "Phrygians" (VII 73).²⁵ The Bithynian enclave in northern Asia Minor and the Paeonian one between Thrace proper and Macedon, came to be regarded by Herodotus as ethnic residue—and hence as evidence—of the Teucro-Mysian invasion (we recall his reasoning upon the linguistic 'islands' of the Pelasgians in Thrace and the Propontis, I 57-58). Needless to say, the whole theory of a Teucro-Mysian conquest of Thrace is no more than a rationalizing interpretation of a few Homeric passages, in which the Thracians and the Paeonians appear as loyal allies of Priam, who once went personally to Thrace and got there many "gifts" (*Il.* XXIV 234 f.). All the Thracians 'held within the Hellespont' came to Priam's help at Troy, first with their leader Akamas and later on with Peiros of Ainos and with Rhesus, 'King' of the Thracians (*Il.* II 844-845; X 435). The Homeric Paeonians came to Troy from "Amydon and river Axios" with their leader Pyraichmes and

²⁵ Herodotus' Midas' gardens are in Macedon (VIII 138, 2), not in Phrygia (as in Xen. *Anab.* I 2, 13), and he was certainly aware that the Homeric Phrygians were Asiatic; but he might have dated another 'Brigian' migration to Asia *after* the Trojan War, as did Xanthos the Lydian, *FGrHist* 765 F 14 (with Strabo's discussion, XIV 5, 29, p. 681). See also Arrian, *FGrHist* 156 F 60, with F. Jacoby's *Kommentar*. Later sources attributed a Thracian origin to many Asiatic peoples: see P. CARRINGTON, "The Heroic Age of Phrygia in Ancient Literature and Art", in *Anatolian Studies* 27 (1977), 117-26.

thereafter Asteropaios, a grandson of the River-God Axios himself.²⁶ Some Mysians are mentioned in the *Iliad* together with Thracians and two other northern peoples, the Hippemolgoi and the Abioi (XIII 4-6).²⁷ All this served perfectly the purpose of pseudo-historical reconstruction as devised either by our Ομηρικώτατος—historian himself or by a former scholar; but Herodotus, by employing analogy (consciously or not), might have modelled the Teucro-Mysian conquest of Europe after the Persian one, and the expulsion of the ‘Strymonians’ to Bithynia after the mass-deportation of the Paeonians to Phrygia by Darius (see below), and eventually even come to judge this first Asiatic conquest of Europe as the historical, non-legendary, *aiti* of the Trojan War (he might well have put the whole story in the mouth of some of his fictitious Persian λόγιοι, trying to justify Asiatic claims on Europe!).

3) The choice of these events of pre-Trojan pseudo-history of Thrace discloses the Herodotean preconceived notion of the Thracians as a disunited people and hence an easy prey to every foreign conqueror. The same notion also lurks behind the first event of the next period. Herodotus was told that the Sigynnai were said to be Median colonists (ἀποικοί) by origin. Their dress was indeed regarded (by Pontic Greeks or bilingual Thracians, presumably: V 10) as Median, but etymologically the word *sigynnai* would make sense only among the Ligurians (meaning “traders”) or on Cyprus (“spears”), not in Median culture. But Herodotus is puzzled over the problem (a typical ‘problem of origin’) mainly from the historical point of view: “How they can be colonists of the Medes I for my part cannot guess; still everything is possible in a long lapse of time” (ἐν τῷ μακρῷ

²⁶ See esp. *Il*: II 848-849; XVI 287-289; XVII 351-352; XXI 154 ff. Cp. D. DEČEV, *op. cit.* (n. 22), 351 ff.; N. G. L. HAMMOND, *A History of Macedonia* I 296 f.

²⁷ Cp. Posidonius, *FGrHist* 87 F 104 (2); Strab. VII 3, 2, pp. 295-296; XII 8, 3, p. 572, etc.

χρόνῳ, V 9, 3). A full discussion of this exceptionally interesting mode of reasoning may take us far away from Thrace and even lead us astray into the labyrinth of Herodotus' *spatium historicum*. For our purpose, it could be relevant to stress one point: the μακρὸς χρόνος of the proverb quoted in our passage amounts in any case to less than a century, if we reckon the Herodotean reigns of Phraortes (22 years: I 102, 2), Kyaxares (40 years: I 106, 3) and Astyages (35 years: I 130, 1) as the Median age of expansion, during which, in Herodotus' view, 'colonists' might reasonably have been sent out even beyond the Istros.²⁸ In our system, the implied period would be, roughly, 647 – 550 B.C. It may also be relevant to realize that in the case of the Sigynnai Herodotus seems honestly to admit that he is at a loss for want of clues and insufficient information about Median history, and not using here some *Trug der Lügenliteratur* as he may well have done in other cases.²⁹

4) The next historical event deserving some attention is the alleged war between Perinthus and the Paeonians. It opens the main Thracian *logos* and may by roughly datable within the sixth century (but prior to Darius' and Megabazus' Thracian campaigns). The amusing anecdote narrated in this chapter (V 1) is entirely built around a pun (Παίονες-παιωνίζω), understandable of course only by Greeks, and hence a pure Greek fiction. What Herodotus leaves unexplained in the story, is why and how did the Paeonians from the Strymon,

²⁸ The reign of Deiokes (I 96-101) was not seen as an age of Median expansion. At I 32, 2, ἐν γὰρ τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ means "a long life" (cp. Soph. *Ai.* 646 and *Ph.* 306).

²⁹ On the Sigynnai cp. Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 55 (in Egypt!); Strab. XI 11, 8, p. 520 (in the Caspian area); *Orph. Argon.* 756 Vian (in the Pontic area). For modern identifications of the Sigynnai (Tziganis or gipsies, Sequani etc.) see D. S. BARRETT, "Herodotus' Sigynnai (5.9) and Gipsies", in *G & R* S.S. 26 (1979), 58-60 (with full bibliogr.). A bronze plaque of Iranian, but non-Scythian, art (6th cent. B.C.) has been tentatively attributed to the Sigynnai (I. LENGYEL, in *AArchHung* 22 [1970], 51-68). A. J. TOYNBEE's reading [Σιγύνναι] in the lacuna at VII 76 (and Υγεννέων as ABCP at III 90, 1; Υτεν- edd.) ignores the fact that the dress and weapons described in this heading are *not* Median (see *CR* 24 [1910], 236-38).

more than 300 km to the west of Perinthus and separated from it by a chain of formidable Thracian tribes (see the list in VII 110-112), come into collision with the Greek city on the Propontis. Perinthus' 'natural' enemies would be its nearest neighbours, the Apsinthians, not the Paeonians (a mysterious *polis* called Παιών in the Thracian Chersonese is, however, mentioned by Ps.-Scylax, *Peripl.* 67, *GGM* I p. 55), but of course the joke was too good to be wasted: ever since its invention it probably circulated throughout Greek Thrace until it was heard by Herodotus or by one of his oral informants at Perinthus, of all places.

5) The story of the two Miltiades in the Thracian Chersonese occupies a full *logos* (VI 33-41) which, as has already been noticed, is narrated as part of Athenian history between mid-sixth-century and the eve of Datis' expedition (*ca.* 548-493 B.C.). The Thracian background of these episodes is twofold: first, the warfare between the Hellenized Dolonci of the Chersonese and the bellicose Apsinthians, two tribes separated by the narrow *isthmos* between Pactya and Cardia, which the first Miltiades caused to be walled (VI 36, 2); and next, the somewhat controversial incursion of Scythian 'nomads' as far as the Chersonese, possibly datable by Herodotus' confused chronology about 495 B.C.³⁰ One major personal achievement of the younger Miltiades was his marriage (between 515 and 513 B.C.) with Hegesipyle, the daughter of Olorus, a "Thracian king" (VI 39, 2),³¹ whose name entered the family of the Cimonids as that of Thucydides' father. In the course of this period most of Thrace became a province of the Persian empire (*ca.* 513-479 B.C.). Apparently, Herodotus was convinced that as a result of Darius' Scythian campaign, all the peoples of Europe "as far as Thessaly" (or "on hither

³⁰ See on the whole problem F. PRONTERA, "Per l'interpretazione di Erodoto VI 40", in *PP* 27 (1972), 111-23 (with full bibliogr.).

³¹ On the tribe of Olorus see L. PICCIRILLI (ed.), *Storie dello storico Tucidide* (Genova 1985), 83.

side of the Macedonians") were enslaved and made tributary (δασμοφόρος) to the Great King by two systematic conquests, first by Megabazus and later on by Mardonius. He understood, of course, that the new status involved, besides tribute, conscription to the multinational imperial army, Persian governors, garrisons and fortresses throughout the country.³² What he does not make clear enough is whether Thrace was organized as a regular 'satrapy' under one central governorship, or every region and tribal conglomeration became a separate military and fiscal unit. He actually uses the plural ὑπαρχοί for the governors of "Thrace and the Hellespont" (VII 106, 1), νομός in relation to the Hellespont only, and ὑπαρχος for the governor of this same νομός (IX 116, 1) or for its main military base, Sestos (VII 33). Knowing that Miltiades' autonomous realm in the Chersonese was left undisturbed by the Persians until 493 B.C., he probably inferred from this fact that the Hellespontine νομός was set up separately only after Mardonius' operations in Thrace in 492 B.C. Terminological ambiguity, as well as the emphasis upon the fact that the Persians actually had to subdue Thrace systematically twice, keeps open the question of the correct meaning of 'Skudra' in some Persian inscriptions and of the degree of stability of Persian rule in Thrace until the final evacuation of all the ὑπαρχοί in 479-476 B.C.³³

6) One memorable enterprise is directly related to Megabazus' measures taken to enforce Persian rule in western

³² VII 59, 1; 105; 106, 1-2 (Doriscus); 107, 1; 113, 1 (Eion); 108, 2 ("Samothracian fortresses"); 112 (Pieria).

³³ See esp. H. CASTRITIUS, "Die Okkupation Thrakiens durch die Perser und der Sturz des athenischen Tyrannen Hippias", in *Chiron* 2 (1972), 1-5; N. G. L. HAMMOND, "The Extent of Persian Occupation in Thrace", in *Chiron* 10 (1980), 53-61, and *CAHIV* (2) 1988, 243-53; W. PAIĄKOWSKI, "De Persarum provincia Scudra quid sentiendum", in *Meander* 36 (1981), 75-90, and "Einige Bemerkungen zur Lokalisierung der persischen Provinz (Satrapie) Skudra", in *Eos* 71 (1983), 243-55; J. M. BALCER, "Persian Occupied Thrace (Skudra)", in *Historia* 37 (1988), 1-21. See also the relevant sections in B. ISAAC, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*, Studies of the Dutch Archaeol. and Histor. Society, 10 (Leiden 1986).

Thrace, namely the mass-deportation of three Paeonian tribes to Asia Minor and their settlement in Phrygia for about fourteen years (*ca.* 513-500 B.C.). In telling this story in the second part of his main Thracian *logos* (V 12-15) Herodotus is clearly following a certain pattern, or motif, of Persian mass-deportation, in five topical stages: 1) An order is formally given by the Great King to conquer and “enslave” a certain people and to bring them into his presence; 2) the appointed general or satrap conquers the area, eventually makes a “netting” (*σαγηνεύειν*) of the population and takes it into “captivity” (*ἐξανδραποδίσαι* is the usual term for this provisional treatment); 3) the captives are brought into the King’s presence—at Susa, at Sardis, or wherever he may have happened to be at that time; 4) the King formally declares the captives “a rooted-out people”: *ἀνασπάστους ποιεῖν*, a rather peculiar expression, perhaps ultimately the translation of the official Aramaic term *šrš* for “rooting-out”, one of the main capital punishments in Persian law (see *Ezra* VII 26); 5) finally, the “rooted-out” people are brought to a certain place of internment to be there permanently “settled down” (*ἐγκατοικῆσαι*), as if to balance, somehow, the “rooting-out” by “taking-root” in a new homeland. There can be little doubt that such a literary pattern of mass-deportation, laying stress on the deleterious effects of “rooting-out” on cultural identity, is Greek in form and spirit;³⁴ ultimately, however, it may have taken shape by the realities of a known practice of imperial rule, which the Persians had inherited from their predecessors, the Neo-Assyrians and the Neo-Babylonians.³⁵ To the Greeks of Herodotus’ generation the great king-deportator was, of course, Darius, who was to be remembered for ever as the one who ordered the punitive mass-deportation of the Barcei from Cyrenaica to Bactria, of the Milesians to Ampe on the

³⁴ See D. AMBAGLIO, “Il motivo della deportazione in Erodoto”, in *RIL* 109 (1975), 378-83.

³⁵ B. ODED, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden 1979).

Persian Gulf, and of the Eretrians to Arderikka in Cissia. His alleged plan to exchange preventively the abode of the Ionians and the Phoenicians (VI 3) did not appear incredible at all, either to Herodotus or to his Ionian informants, and nobody in Ionia during the revolt had any doubts about the seriousness of the dreadful threat of deportation “to Bactria” (VI 9, 4)—metonymical for the “end of the world”. In the case of the Paeonians, the order was given by Darius to Megabazus to remove them all from their homes (ἐξαναστῆσαι ἐξ ἡνέων)³⁶ and to bring them “into his presence, men, women and children” (V 14, 1). The order was carried out through the conquest of the inland towns and then by rounding up the dispersed population. Three Paeonian tribes, the Siropaeonians, the Paeoplians and those dwelling as far as Lake Prasias, were “torn from their seats” (ἐξ ἡνέων ἐξαναστάντες) and led away by Megabazus in person to Asia Minor. They set off from the mouth of the Strymon along the coast, crossed the Hellespont and went up to Sardis to be brought in Darius’ presence (V 23, 1). We next hear of the “rooted-out” Paeonians as living in a “tract of land and village of their own” in Phrygia (V 98, 1): about fourteen years had passed since the deportation, but neither the agricultural opportunities of the site, nor the proximity to their professed ancient motherland or to their kindred Phrygians, helped the “rooted-out” to take root in Asia. As soon as the Ionian revolt broke they fled back home (V 98; this is the only case of return from Persian internment in Herodotus). No punishment or retaliation for their escape is mentioned, and in 480-479 they reluctantly served as footmen in Xerxes’ and Mardonius’ armies as did most Thracians and northern Greeks (VII 185, 2; IX 32, 1). Herodotus’ motive for the deportation of the Paeonians may look, at first sight, as of the

³⁶ At V 12, 1, ἀνασπάστους ποιεῖν is not technical. Chronologically, the deportation of the Paeonians followed the “netting” of the Samians (III 149) and preceded the deportation of the Barcei (ca. 512/11 B.C.).

'developmental' or 'economic' type, the anecdotal explanation given being the famous story of Darius and the industrious Paeonian woman (V 12-13);³⁷ on the other hand, her two brothers aimed at "tyranny" over their own people (V 12, 1), an ominous threat in a country like Thrace by Herodotean standards (cp. V 3, 1). This 'motive' would fit better the 'preventive' type. In any case, there is no question here of a punitive motivation, as in all other cases of mass-deportation in Herodotus.

7) Two Greek colonial attempts, by Histieus in about 512 and by Aristagoras some fifteen years later, at "Myrcinus of the Edonians"—both of them unsuccessful, owing ultimately to the resistance of the local Thracians—as well as Mardonius' operations in 492 B.C. in the Pangaeum and Skapte-Syle region, are directly connected by Herodotus with the richness of the area in timber and gold-mines.³⁸ Next we hear of the Thracians during Xerxes' march and retreat in 480 B.C. Here Herodotus is anxious to stress the fact that the European Thracians were forced to join the Persian army against their will,³⁹ while the Asiatic Thracians served dutifully in their ethnic units (VII 75, 1-2) like all other peoples of the empire. Only the inaccessible Satrai and the king of the Bisaltians and Krestonians avoided conscription by taking refuge in the mountains (VII 110; VIII 116, 1-2). However, in feeding the Persian army most Thracians and northern Greeks complied with the orders they had been given, though suffering great

³⁷ For this famous tale cp. Aelian. *NA* VII 12, and also Nicol. Dam., *FGrHist* 90 F 71 (deportation of Mysians under Alyattes). Modern interpretations: G. H. MACURDY, "The Origin of a Herodotean Tale in Connection with the Cult of the Spinning Goddess", in *TAPhA* 43 (1912), 73-80; E. WILL, "Hérodote et la jeune Péonienne", in *REG* 80 (1967), 176-81. On the 'real' causes of the Paeonian deportation see N. G. L. HAMMOND, *A History of Macedonia* II 55 ff.

³⁸ V 11, 2; 23-24; 124, 2; 126, 1-2; VI 45, 2; 46, 2-3. The site in question is identified with Amphipolis (Ennea Hodoi) by Thuc. I 100, 3 and Diod. XII 68, 2.

³⁹ See esp. VII 108, 1; 110; 115, 2; 122; 185, 2.

pressure (VII 121, 1). The majority of the hostile clashes between Thracians and Persians recorded by Herodotus are not associated at all with Xerxes' invasion but with the disastrous retreat of the Persian armies in 480 and later⁴⁰—an excellent opportunity for plundering and getting rid of the intruder. So the picture is not clear cut. Herodotus' interest in surviving evidence of the march in local customs is remarkable. A tract of the road which Xerxes' army took west of the Strymonic Gulf the Thracians neither plough nor sow, "but greatly worship it until my own time" (VII 115, 3); and the Acanthians, following an oracular instruction, offer sacrifice to Artachaios, an Achaemenian, "the tallest Persian ... and the one who had a louder voice than any other man" (VII 117, 1-2). This is a passage pregnant with signals and an over-optimistic message. It recalls another man with a loudest voice, the Egyptian who called Histiaeus over the Istros on the eve of Darius' retreat from Scythia (IV 141), as well as another slain warrior, Philippus of Croton, an Olympic victor and the handsomest Greek of his day, whose beauty gained him a hero-worship at the hands of his victorious enemies, the Egesteans (V 47, 1-2). *Ergo*, exceptional physical gifts and beauty prevail in some civilized societies—sometimes with the help of an oracle—over frontiers and hatred.

8) The four last events in Thracian history belong to the period after the Persian Wars: the siege of Eion in 476/5 B.C. by the Athenians under Cimon, at the end of which Boges, the Persian governor, though given permission to retire to Asia under terms, preferred to slay all his family, concubines, slaves and property, and then to die in the total conflagration of the palace (VII 107, 1-2);⁴¹ the end of Sophanes of Decelea, the Athenian hero of Plataea, killed in battle at Datum

⁴⁰ VIII 115, 4; IX 89, 4; 119, 1.

⁴¹ Cp. Thuc. I 98, 1; Diod. XI 60, 2 (470/69 B.C.); Plut. *Cim.* 7, 2; Paus. VIII 8, 9; Polyaen. VII 24.

against the Edonians in 466/5 B.C.;⁴² the encounter at the Istros of Scythian and Thracian forces around the middle of the century, following the flight to Thrace of the Hellenized Scythian king Scylas;⁴³ and the latest historical event recorded in Herodotus' work: the arrest in summer 430 B.C. by king Sitalkes and Nymphodorus of Abdera of two Spartan envoys to Asia and their handing-over to the Athenians, who put them to death (VII 137, 2-3; cp. Thuc. II 67).

*

* * *

A full collection of all historical passages on Thrace in Herodotus is doomed to produce an irreparably fragmentary picture. It is like reading the fragments of, for example, Hellanicus on the history of Attica from the time of Ogygos to the end of the Peloponnesian War. His Thracian anthropology, though most of it is gathered together in two special *logoi*, is no less fragmentary, in the sense that it is highly selective. We do not get from it a full picture of Thracian society. Herodotus, as usual, chose out of his rich erudition and life experience what he deemed interesting to himself and to his audience; in other words, things more or less extraordinary—‘θωύματα’ in his own words: after all, “Herodotus is the prototype of the historian who always marvels”, as Momigliano once put it. As a Graeco-centred historian, Herodotus was interested in Thrace mainly as an area of conflict between Asia and Europe; what he had in mind in

⁴² Cp. Isocr. *Or.* VIII (Περὶ εἰρήνης) 86. This event is usually identified with the Athenian disaster at Drabescus (probably modern Drama, to the northwest of Philippi), on which see Thuc. I 100, 3; Diod. XI 70, 5; XII 68, 2; Paus. I 29, 4.

⁴³ IV 78-80. Herodotus' sources on this famous contemporary event may be both Athenian (the Thracian king involved in the affair, Sitalkes, was an ally of Athens since 431 B.C.) and Pontic (on Tymnes, the steward of Scylas' father Ariapeithes, see IV 76, 6). See now J. R. GARDINER-GARDEN, in *Klio* 69 (1987), 347-49.

his ethnographical sections was primarily to sketch some unusual scenes of human life and beliefs among some of the northern tribes living between Greece and the Scythians, namely, between the domestic and the outright exotic. The result is a lively picture of a world of temperate strangeness, in a quintessentially Herodotean mixture of realistic crudity and imagination.

DISCUSSION

M. Nenci: Vorrei chiedere qualche chiarimento e sottolineare alcuni elementi importanti della relazione Asheri.

Mi pare importante il suo accenno alla possibilità che Erodoto abbia attinto notizie da Traci in Atene. Questo può valere per ogni regione dell'ecumene erodotea, ma specie per popolazioni sicuramente molto rappresentate ad Atene. E questo può valere anche per altri centri, greci o non greci, frequentati da Erodoto: non è solo Erodoto che viaggia per notizie, sono anche le notizie a viaggiare per Erodoto.

Vorrei chiarire il rapporto *Periodos ges* e *Periegesis*. Come si ricava dello stesso Erodoto che in V 49 indica come *periodos ges* la carta di bronzo di Aristagora, così la tradizione distingue bene, diversamente da come afferma Jacoby, fra *periodos* (carta) e *periegesis* (descrizione). Non credo qui che la periegesi sia "an ancillary index to a map", ma un'opera indipendente dalla carta.

Il determinismo geografico erodoteo è alla base del fatto che "the land is first of all": in questo senso l'*excursus* sui Traci conferma la regola.

Vorrei chiedere ad Asheri se non pensa che in V 6, 2, l'accenno all'ἀργία sia introdotto per il confronto che poneva col soloniano *nomos argias*.

L'accenno agli usi funerari può essere di interesse etnologico per i Greci, ma forse va inserito nel crescente uso anche della necropoli come fonte storica.

Infine, il passaggio da etnografia a storia non è solo un passaggio da una descrizione degli altri in dipendenza dalla narrazione di fatti storici, ma presuppone la coscienza erodotea del presente che contiene in sé il passato e del presente caratterizzato da mentalità che trovano loro radici nei *nomoi*, e quindi anch'essi nella tradizione, dei diversi popoli.

Infine, l'idea che i Persiani potessero trasferire gli Ioni in Fenicia e i Fenici in Ionia, mi pare una evidente sottolineatura dell'inganno che si stava perpetrando verso gli Ioni. I Persiani erano capaci certo di deportare

e operare stanziamenti coatti, ma è assurda l'idea di una doppia deportazione, fra l'altro punitiva verso i fedeli Fenici.

M. Asheri: Your remark on Hecataeus' Περίοδος γῆς and Περιήγησις is relevant and certainly should be taken into account. As to the possible reference in V 6, 2 to the Solonian law mentioned in II 177, 2 (usually identified with the νόμος περὶ τῆς ἀργίας known to Demosthenes), it seems to me that in this case it would be rather difficult, even for the most careful reader, to become aware of such a reference; for two reasons: a) Herodotus does not use the same terms in both places, and b) we are not certain whether the law in question was already known, in Herodotus' time, as νόμος ἀργίας. Moreover, one may justifiably wonder what might have been the 'message' of a comparison of a Thracian aristocratic *ethos* with an Athenian legal measure against destitutes.

M. Dible: Das Exposé hat sehr schön gezeigt, wie Herodot Thrakien einerseits zu den Ländern rechnen kann, die den Griechen durch viele Möglichkeiten der Information recht wohl bekannt sind, andererseits aber auch Abschnitte in die thrakische Landeskunde einschiebt, in denen Thrakien als eines der Länder am Rande der Welt erscheint, wo es so Wunderbares zu sehen gibt wie die Lebensweise der Päonier am Prasios-See. Könnten Sie diesen Widerspruch noch etwas näher beschreiben oder erläutern, weil er mir auf grundsätzliche Fragen der herodoteischen Kulturgeographie zu führen scheint?

Ein anderer Punkt von Interesse ist die Erwähnung des Goldes, dessen Gebrauch Herodot aus moralischen Gründen durchweg missbilligt und als Zeichen effeminerter Lebensweise betrachtet. Es ist auffällig, dass Goldschmuck und Goldgeräte bei den Griechen in archaischer Zeit und dann wieder im 4. Jhdt. v.C., aber schon vor dem Alexanderzug, archäologisch reichlich nachzuweisen sind, im frühen und hohen 5. Jhdt. v.C. aber selten begegnen. Entspricht also Herodots Urteil einer, mindestens unter den Intellektuellen, weit verbreiteten Auffassung in der Früh- und Hochklassik?

M. Asheri: In Herodotus' view Thrace occupied an intermediary position between the known (Greece) and the unknown (northern and

western Europe). The coastal strips of Aegean and Pontic Thrace were mostly Greek or thoroughly hellenized. The hinterland was less known, especially the Getan area north of the Haemus range; still Herodotus could collect about it some indirect information. For him the true *terra incognita* was the limitless area extending beyond the Istros to the north and west: this was a true ἔρημος χώρη καὶ ἄπειρος (V 9, 1)—namely, not necessarily a desert, but rather a land unexplored and virtually inaccessible, about which nothing certain (τὸ ἀτρεκές) could ever be said (see H. Edelmann, in *Klio* 52 [1970], 79-86).

As for the gold, we should not forget that throughout the fifth century (and after) Persian gold continued to flow into Greece, corrupting statesmen and cities. Moreover, Herodotus understood perfectly the importance of Thracian gold (the Pangaeum, etc.). It is, therefore, quite possible that the political use of gold led some fifth-century intellectuals of traditional views, like Herodotus, to the moral disapproval of a metal symbolizing corruption and effeminacy. This issue deserves, however, a much more systematic study.

As for the question whether Herodotus' reflections on Thrace might have been influenced by Athenian politics, my answer is definitely positive, but only in the sense that most of his sources on Thrace, as I have already stressed, were Athenian in origin and spirit: there is no reason to assume that Herodotus favoured Athenian policy in Thrace or elsewhere.

M. Burkert: Ich habe zwei ganz verschiedene Fragen:

1) Es scheint mir sehr wichtig, dass Herodot bei den Thrakern, bzw. bei einigen Thrakern, von einem "Glauben" berichtet, nicht nur von *vόμοι* — auch wenn der "Glaube" in seinen rituellen Manifestationen vorgestellt wird, bei den Τραυσοί (V 4) wie bei den Γέται ἀνανατίζοντες —; und mich fasziniert die philologische Feststellung, dass εύδαιμονίη (V 4, 2) hier in anderem Sinn als sonst bei Herodot erscheint. Dieser Sinn wäre vom Griechischen her eleusinisch-orphisch zu nennen (vgl. etwa *b. Hom. Cer.* 480-482 und Pindar, Fr. 137); und da frage ich mich: hat dies etwas damit zu tun, dass man in der 2. Hälfte des 5. Jhdts. sowohl Eumolpos als auch Orpheus zu Thrakern gemacht hat (vgl. F. Graf, *Eleusis*

und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit [Berlin/New York, 1974], 17 f.)? Das ‘Weinen bei der Geburt’ befindet sich doch wohl auch bei Empedokles, B 118.

2) Was ‘Arbeit’ betrifft, scheint man gewöhnlich die Arbeit des Bauern anders zu werten als die des Handwerkers. Bauernarbeit ist mit Grundbesitz eng verbunden, während die Handwerker mobil sind, ihr Bürgerrecht daher in Frage steht. Herodot spricht in II 167 ausdrücklich von den *χειρωναξίαι*; heisst das nicht, dass die Thraker nach Herodot darüber noch hinausgehen, wenn sie Bauernarbeit (*γῆς ἐργάτην*) für *ἀτιμότατον* (sogar im Superlativ) halten?

M. Asheri: I am inclined to think that Herodotus’ notions about Thracian beliefs in afterlife must be directly linked to the (mainly Athenian) tradition connecting Eumolpus, Orpheus—and, of course, Dionysus—with Thrace.

Τέχνην ... οὐδεμίαν, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐς πόλεμον ... μοῦνα (II 166, 2) may exclude agriculture as well. In any case, in V 6, 2, Herodotus is probably thinking of serfs tilling the estates of the aristocrats, rather than of free-holders.

The problem ‘Who is a Thracian’ arises naturally. The different tribes living between the Strymon and the Euxine had plenty of things in common to deserve a collective ethnical denomination. Herodotus certainly did not judge by linguistic standards alone, for the simple reason that he did not understand the language(s) in question and therefore was unable to distinguish linguistic differences (compare what he honestly acknowledges about the Caunian variety of Carian at I 172, 1). He in fact was judging by a cluster of criteria, including physical appearance, dress, customs, and traditions on origin, and apparently he did not object to accepting the ‘definition’ of the Thracians prevailing at Athens in his own times (a definition which, incidentally, while including the Getans, excluded the Paeonians and the Agathyrsi). We have many more difficulties than Herodotus had to accept any suggested definition, owing both to our linguistic notions and theories and to our modern obsessions with problems of identity in general.

M. Lloyd: I should like to make two comments on Professor Asheri's paper. In the first place, I wish to consider his comment on II 167. It needs to be emphasized that here Herodotus is not abandoning his diffusionist stance on cultural evolution, though this has not infrequently been claimed. It should be noted that the verb *μεμαθήκασι* at the beginning of the chapter is picked up by *μεμαθήκασι* at the end. At the beginning of the chapter he is questioning whether the practice at issue was obtained *παρ'* *Αιγυπτίων* because it also occurred elsewhere. He is, however, convinced that it was not a Greek invention and was learned from somewhere. The standard hyper-diffusionist position where so much in Greek civilization is derived from Egypt is here in abeyance, but he is still thinking in diffusionist terms. His problem is that there were several possible sources, and he cannot decide which one to accept.

The second issue on which I should like to speak in the question of the propagandist dimension in the Sesostris tradition—and here I am simply expanding on the observations of Professor Asheri. I am quite sure that the Sesostris figure of Herodotus has his origins in Egyptian tradition as the model, or at least a model of divine kingship. He does all the things expected of an Egyptian king. As such, he had decided potential as an instrument of nationalist propaganda. When confronted with the triumph and humiliation of the Persian occupation, the Egyptians both for themselves and for others used Sesostris as a symbol of their national greatness and achievement, and, if it became necessary to modify the details of the Sesostris *logos* for propaganda purposes, this was done. In Darius' time, and probably earlier, national self-esteem required that the Egyptians should be able to boast of a ruler who surpassed, or at least equalled, the conquests of the Great King. Sesostris is, therefore, presented in II 110 as even conquering the Scythians, something which Darius had signally failed to do. In later Greek tradition we find a development of this process when it became necessary for the Egyptians to cope with the culture-shock of Alexander's conquests. Then we find that Sesostris' conquests are expanded to equal or surpass those of this new threat to national self-esteem.

M. Asheri: I fully agree that μεμαθήκασι should be translated in the same way in both sentences of II 167 (the Greeks “acquired” or “learned”), and not as quoted in my paper (above p. 144). But I am less certain that this passage implies the idea that the ‘first inventor’ of the social prejudice in question must be one of the non-Greek peoples on the list. Perhaps Herodotus was not sure, after all, whether this prejudice was ‘invented’ by one particular people and thereupon ‘acquired’ by the rest of mankind, or was rather independently ‘invented’, or ‘learned’, by most Greeks and barbarians for unexplained reasons. Herodotus was of course instinctively a professed ‘diffusionist’.

