

## EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST—OR ARE THEY? NATIONAL STEREOTYPES IN HERODOTUS

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[This paper started life on 23 February, 1995, given as one of an informal Oxford series on ‘boundaries’. The purpose of the seminar was to stimulate discussion, and to give researchers an outline of developments in fields with which they might be unfamiliar. Those purposes suit *Histos* too, and so the paper is given here in its raw, unfootnoted, oral state, with only a few local pleasantries suppressed.]

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Boundaries in Herodotus: a generation ago the book to talk about would have been H. R. Immerwahr’s *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1966). Immerwahr emphasised the importance of natural boundaries in Herodotus’ narrative, and pointed out how often disastrous campaigns begin with a river-crossing, as tyrants transgress or try to change this barrier imposed by nature. Cyrus at the Gyndes—threatening to bring it low, cutting it into 360 channels and losing a *year*, 1.189—is the most interesting early example, though not the most straightforward. All leads up to the greatest transgressions of nature of them all, Xerxes’ abuse of the Hellespont and its narrative twin at Athos: Xerxes turns sea into land (the Hellespont) and land into sea (Athos), and we know he will not prosper. It can indeed be shown how ‘land and sea’ work against him in several different ways, so that there is almost a magical dimension to his fall (cf. Pelling in *Georgica: Greek studies in honour of George Cawkwell*, ed. M. A. Flower and M. Toher, *BICS Supp.* 58 (1991), 136–40). And there will indeed be something of that in this paper, for I will have a lot to say about the end of the *Histories*, a closure which many have found so puzzling. It cannot be coincidence that the narrative ends at the Hellespont, and with the dedication of the great cables, now severed, which transiently linked the two continents. Now the boundary is restored, and the order of nature is reasserted.

But my main focus is going to be different, more concerned with conceptual than with physical divisions between nations; and here the book to talk about is François Hartog’s *Le Miroir d’Hérodote*, first published in enigmatic French in 1980 and translated by Janet Lloyd into enigmatic English as *The Mirror of Herodotus* (1988); a second French edition then appeared in 1991. Hartog’s interest was in Herodotus’ portrayal of a barbarian *Autre*, an ‘Other’ which only made sense when read in polarity with the Greek ‘Self’. This evidently has something in common with Edith Hall’s treatment of barbarian construction and Greek self-definition in tragedy (*Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989)), and people are

coming to talk of Hartog-Hall as naturally as of Evans-Pritchard and Lévi-Strauss; though there are significant differences between Hartog and Hall, as will emerge. Hartog's analogy (319–20: all page-references are to the English translation) is with Dürer, constructing a criss-crossing framework of threads which he can hold before his eyes and view the world, then mapping it all on to a corresponding grid on the canvas. Herodotus' framework is that of Greek conceptualisation, and provides a series of assumptions of Greek practice which can be contrasted with the barbarian modes of behaviour he describes, a series of Greek-based questions to put to the material. We therefore have 'systematic differentiation' of Greek and Other. The alterity need not involve simple contrast or inversion: it is rather, say, that when Herodotus describes Scythian sacrifices (4.60–4) he has a series of Greek keys: the expectation that blood will be shed, that meat will be boiled over wood, that animals rather than humans will be killed, that wine will be used, that there will be an act of pouring; the question what happens to the meat afterwards, or what role the priest plays vis-à-vis the community. In Scythia these keys are pressed in a different combination: animals are killed by strangulation rather than by the knife, the carcasses may be roasted over burning bones rather than wood, the victims will sometimes be human, the wine is poured over the human victim's head, the liquid that strikes the ground is the victim's blood, the carcass is left, there is no communal eating and no concept of a participation between priest and community (Hartog, 173–92).

That is a simple example, and Hartog's presentation is often much more elaborate. One particularly important point is his notion of a 'double mirror' (though this phrase has been used slightly differently by some of Hartog's successors). Normally the painter's framework is a Greek one, but there are times when the polarity shifts a little. When Persians attack Greeks, the Persians constitute the Other, both in a certain nambypambiness and in their non-hoplite style of fighting: horses and archery are their specialities. When they invade Scythia, they have to play the part of the 'normal' people who are thrown by the bizarre reversals of practice they find in the nomadic Scythians, who fight the campaign paradoxically by avoiding battle. In that contrast the Persians have to be the dumb partner (Hartog, 49–57): Hartog, perhaps overstating, says that they become like Greek *hoplites* here; it is at least true that their usual hallmarks of archery and cavalry are lost from sight. So only one polarity can be used at a time. The Persian mirror reflects the Scythian Other, just as in its turn it will become the Other itself when contrasted with Greek normality.

Consider too the story of the Scythians and the Amazons at 4.111–7, discussed by Hartog at 216–24 (cf. also 258–9, 367–8). The Amazons had found their way into Scythia, and it was only on inspecting some battle-victims that the Scythians discovered their adversaries were women. The Scythians then

decided not to fight them, for these would be the ideal mothers for their children: Greeks might normally operate with a polarity of man/battle and woman/childbearing, but with people such as these the polarity needs to develop in an odd way. So the Scythians sent a detachment of young men to camp nearby, and gradually both Scythians and Amazons began to wander from the camp. First one woman and one man met together, and matters took their course; they agreed through sign-language to meet the next day, with each bringing a friend. Eventually the entire armies had paired off. The women picked up some Scythian language. The Scythians urged their new women to come home with them, but the Amazons demurred: we are not like your women, we use weapons and ride horses, while yours stay at home in the wagons (a deliciously Scythian twist of conventional domesticity) and do womanish work. We would never get on. So bring a part of your possessions, leave home, and live with us... Once settled, the women still feared the Scythians' natal families; so they all moved to where their present descendants live, among the Sauromatae, and still speak a form of Scythian—an inaccurate form, because the Amazons had not originally picked up the language perfectly. (That inspired How and Wells to one of their more remarkable comments: 'The greater aptness of the Amazons [at learning the others' language] is a delightful touch; but they were inaccurate (cf. *σοδοικίζοντες* c. 117), as lady linguists often are.')

Here the Scythians themselves, or at least their women, come to seem almost normal when contrasted with that Other of Others, the Amazons: once again, we have only one polarity at a time. True, it is not simply a schematising convenience, we *notice* the relatively conventional nature of the Scythian Hausfrauen, and it is expressive that the Scythians, strange as they are, are out-stranged by the Amazons—just as it is expressive that Ares, most marginal of Greek gods, is at the 'normal' end of the sacrificial spectrum for the Scythians (4.59, 62). And even here the Scythians are not as Greek as all that. The Scythian men come to some understanding with the Amazons, and evidently find these strange peoples much easier to process than the Greeks had; they can cope with a marriage when it is the men who leave home and bring a dowry; they speak the same language, even if it's a pidgin version. But one can see the pervasiveness of this Otherness in making sense of strange customs, in locating them.

I should like to make three initial points about the Hartog approach.

First, a point about the way Hartog is to be taken. He is often summarised along the lines 'when he seems to be talking about the barbarians, he is *really* talking about the Greeks' (J. Percival, *G&R* 37 (1990), 98). It is true that Hartog sometimes writes like that. He tells the story (256) of Marco Polo who recounts traveller's tale after traveller's tale to Kublai Khan, who eventually protests:

‘There remains one of which you never speak’.

Marco Polo inclined his head.

‘Venice,’ said the Khan.

Marco smiled. ‘And what else did you think I was telling you about?’

But most of Hartog’s emphasis falls differently, and he does not present Herodotus’ description of the Other as a matter of Greek self-definition: this is a principal difference of emphasis between Hartog and Hall, whose subtitle is ‘Greek self-definition through tragedy’. (Hartog indeed claims that the construction of Greek identity is waiting to be the business of Books 7–9.) One can understand Hartog’s emphasis: for if this were all Greek self-definition, much would not be very *interesting* Greek self-definition. With the sacrifices, what emerges about Scythian habits (isn’t it interesting that the dead animal ‘cooks itself’ on its own bones, with its own flesh stuffed into its own stomach?) is much more arresting than any reflection on the underlying Greek habits which they might provoke (look at us, we use a cauldron and boil. Well, what do you know). *Thoma*, the wonder at the different, does remain a basic element of the Herodotean style and persona, and the audience is surely expected to be ‘really’ interested in the barbarian Other. Rather than formulating it in such ways, we should revert to that painter’s threaded screen. What is in point is the Greek conceptualisation through which the Other is grasped, the systematic differentiation from the Greek; but that Greek conceptualisation is often *assumed*, rather than being the ‘real’ or primary focus of interest. Such questions of formulation are important: we might compare, for instance, the ease with which critics of another Other, women in tragedy, slip from thesis (1), tragic women are an ‘Other’ in the sense that they are conceptualised in terms of their relation to their men, to the far more questionable thesis (2), women in tragedy are *only* of interest in terms of what they reveal about men and male concerns, that the ‘Other’ is *only* used to reveal things about the Self. The better conclusion in both cases would be that Self and Other form an indissoluble unity, and one is ‘really’ interested in both: just as one cannot separate out the *oikos* into exclusively male or female concerns, so one cannot develop ideas about barbarians without also having ideas about Greeks.

So Herodotus is not ‘really’ talking about his Greek screen, he is *using* it. But my second point pulls rather the other way: for it is very difficult to use the screen without prompting *some* reflection about screen as well as Other. Hartog in fact has very little to say about this and posits rather stable categories, as Carolyn Dewald brought out in a penetrating review (*CPh* 85 (1990), 217–24). For him monarchy typifies the East, for instance, and *isonomia* the West; he is not very interested in the complications introduced by

the presence of all those Greek tyrants (and the great majority of the tyrants in Herodotus are Greek, over fifty of them, and on the mainland as well as in Ionia). But his followers have had more to say about this, especially Paul Cartledge (*EMC/CV* 9 (1990), 27–40 and *The Greeks* (Oxford, 1993), esp. ch. 3). The very alertness to varying practices suggests one mode of reflection on one's own, an awareness of one's own cultural relativeness: 3.38, Darius' seminar on culturally diverse funeral practices, is the obvious example. True, 3.38 is also very atypical in its explicit 'sophistic' generalisation; but Herodotus' pervasive praise of other people's customs, even though it is sometimes largely a method of transition—'their best custom is A, their second best is B' (e.g. 1.196ff) is almost as multi-purpose as 'and now for something completely different'—also encourages a critical capacity to see that Greek is not *always* best. I am sorry to labour the point, but it is worth bearing in mind for some later parts of the argument, when we shall be discussing whether (for instance) to find a more triumphalist, less self-critical celebration of Greek freedom-fighting and toughness in contrast to Persian servility and wimpishness.

That sort of reflection on the 'screen' is not so far destabilising the categories themselves (East/West, Greek/barbarian), only the evaluative judgement we exercise on them; but there is another sort of 'reflection', also brought out by Cartledge, which is more thoroughly revisionist. That concerns the distinctions which readers are invited to make among different Greek peoples: Greece is not a single undifferentiated glob. The position of Sparta is particularly interesting here, often serving as a sort of *internal* Greek 'Other'. Thus the burial customs of Spartan kings are explicitly linked to barbarian practices (6.58–9), and the court-stories of Sparta, especially those concerning the births and inheritances of Leotychidas and Demaratus, have something of the Orient about them; Cleomenes too is the most 'eastern' of Greek tyrants, and sometimes seems a sort of mirror-image of the Persian Cambyses. No surprise, then, to see the Spartans behaving enigmatically, for instance at the beginning of Book 9 or in the shuffling about of troops before Plataea, and being found as perplexing by the other Greeks as they often find barbarians. We are already firmly on the path to Thucydides, where the important national polarity is Athenian/Spartan rather than Greek/Persian—though Herodotus' Spartan stereotype, it is worth noting, is substantially different from Thucydides' (and as usual more interesting ...).

A neat way in which this internal Otherness is caught is at 4.77, the story of the wise Scythian Anacharsis as he returns from his travels around the World—an Other equivalent of the Greek Solon or of Herodotus himself. Anacharsis reported that the only Greeks with *leisure* for *wisdom* (σχολή, σοφίη—notice the Greek buzz-words) were *the Spartans*: they were the only ones you could talk to, 'give and receive *logos*' (the Greek buzz-word of buzz-

words). True, this is a story told ‘by the Peloponnesians’, and Fehling understandably leaps on this (*Herodotus and his ‘Sources’*, tr. J.G. Howie (1989), 107); but that makes it all the more telling in Herodotus’ narrative, for it suggests that *the Peloponnesians themselves* have this sort of construction, challenging Greek ethnic stereotypes and doing so by linking Spartan and Scythian. Even to the Peloponnesians, the Other is not looking so Other as all that.

I should myself like to find even more slippage (or more fashionably ‘contestation’) in the Greek categories, and the area where I should like to find it will be clearer if I make my third initial point. This concerns the relation of Hartog’s ‘Otherness’ to the *Histories* as a whole, which will be a version of the old question of the relation of the early ethnography to the history of the Persian Wars. Perhaps we should not be too worried about this, and can just accept that Herodotus’ book can include marvels, *θήματα*, of all kinds and ‘doings’, *ἔργα* in all sorts of senses—achievements, exploits, monuments, what peoples get up to: in a post-Heath world, we cannot be simplistic about ‘unity’. But there is one obvious set of moves to make, and again Hartog’s successors have been happy to make them. That is to relate the political Otherness of the Persians to their recurrent expansionism. We see one Persian tyrant after another carried away by success to launch disastrous campaigns, despite the recurrent Warners who tell them how little there is to gain and how much to lose: Cyrus, the Lydian Croesus, Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes. They cross their rivers (Gyndes, Halys, Ister, the Hellespont) or their deserts (Arabia); and they lose. Why do they do this? Is it something about the Persian court—the pressures of rule on a despot who had to prove himself, or the way that Warners cannot deflect the megalomaniac urges? These last points suggest a sort of pathology of Oriental monarchy, one conceived in Hartog-like Other terms; and the Otherness thus becomes a category of explanation, not just exposition. On the other side, the Greek self-definition (for Hartog, we should remember that this comes in Books 7–9) can deal in terms like the love of freedom, the readiness to fight because one is fighting for oneself rather than a master.

One can see how easily such explanatory points can be put in celebratory and triumphalist terms, and one can find passages to support that emphasis: if we dwell on Demaratus at 7.101–4 (‘Sire, they have a master called *Nomos*, whom they fear far more than your people fear you’) or Tritantaichmes at 8.26 (‘Mardonius, what manner of people are these, who contend not for riches but about *arete*?’—on this passage cf. D. Konstan, *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 61–2), we can easily emphasise the superiority of Greek *nomos* in very straightforward terms. Yet the triumphalist passages often have something a little problematic about them. Demaratus is talking about Sparta, and there is a question how far this internal Other really serves as a microcosm of all Greece; and, despite Tritantaichmes, Greeks are hardly impervious to

wealth elsewhere in the Histories, from the σοφισταί who come flocking to Croesus' halls when they are ἀκμαζούσας πλούτῳ ('at the height of their wealth') at 1.29.1 to Themistocles' continual self-seeking, πλεονεξία, in Book 8 (Konstan, *art. cit.* 70).

I should prefer a Herodotus who uses these categories in subtler ways, but ways which are no less explanatory. That will particularly be true of the final chapters, where I shall argue that he draws his audience in to ask challenging questions about the Greek/barbarian antinomy and about history itself. But we should also be clear that any destabilisation does not come wholly from the blue: the categories have not been that stable to begin with, and have been articulated in ways which are often decidedly off-key. We might take the very beginning, the story of Candaules and his wife: what more off-key way could there be to introduce an Oriental pattern of transgressive *eros* than to introduce that most disturbing sexual aberration of all, a man who falls in love with his own wife? Or we might reflect on Croesus, and observe that Lydia is by no means a straightforwardly 'Eastern' realm, but rather an in-between country, where we have a king who is fascinated by Greece, who welcomes Greek sages to his court, who is prepared to listen, who learns his lessons from Bias/Pittacus and eventually even from Solon; a king who prizes Greek insight, Greek gods, and Greek friendship. Herodotus' description of Asia begins with the kingdom which is nearest to Greece, one known to Greek poets five generations before Croesus (1.12.2), and one whose customs are noted as extremely similar to those of the Greeks (1.94.1). In terms of any East/West division, he begins on the cusp, the margins of both parts of the world; and begins by dealing with a figure who is hard to place and who resists description in the easy formulations of Greek/barbarian discourse. Herodotus begins by pressing on the boundaries and blurring them, not by establishing them clearly. That does not mean that the categories do not exist, or that they are not important; but they are problematic from the start. (It is interesting that Hartog barely mentions Croesus.)

But I shall take my main examples from the last two books, when the blurring of stereotypes has become particularly interesting. First, the speeches before Salamis. For some time we have become used to the contrast between the nervy atmosphere of the Persian court, where no-one speaks freely, and the clearer air of Greece, where people can express themselves with fearless frankness: consider, for instance, the Cambyses–Croesus–Prexaspes exchanges at 3.34–6 ('they think I'm mad, do they? I'll show them I'm not mad: look, I can shoot this arrow straight through your son's heart', then Croesus' consummately diplomatic 'you are not yet the man your father was, because you do not yet have a son as fine as the one he left'); or the Xerxes Council at 7.8–12 (Artabanus treads very carefully,

but even so ‘it’s lucky for you you’re my uncle, Artabanus’...); and contrast 5.92, when the Greek Soclees ‘spoke freely’ about tyranny. One can again see how this can be developed as an explanatory theme. Despots do not listen to their Warners’ wise advice; but that is not because they are stupid, it is because the atmosphere and character of a court make it so difficult for anyone to speak straight. In the East, discourse is travestied.

At 8.60–70 both sides discuss their strategies. The Persian debate recreates the familiar atmosphere. Xerxes does not even ask for opinions himself, but Mardonius does the questioning for him; then the Halicarnassian queen Artemisia is the only one to speak frankly, much to the unspoken delight of her enemies, who assume that this will be the end of her. Notice the self-interest of the Persian grandees there, something we often associate with the Greeks: but angling for personal advantage is not confined to one side.

More interesting is the counterpart on the Greek side, where Themistocles is able to speak no more freely than his Persian counterparts. His real fear is that put to him by his Wise Adviser Mnesiphilus, that the Greek alliance will fragment and every state will go its own way, and that is the fear which he has expressed to the Spartan commander-in-chief Eurybiades. But he cannot say this openly in the full council. Instead he comes out with his strategic argument for fighting in the narrows rather than the open sea. It is an irony that this argument, second-best for Themistocles, nonetheless turns out to capture the truth (the sort of irony which one can easily parallel from the speeches of Thucydides); but it is a further irony that it is totally ineffective in the council itself. The allies are utterly unpersuaded, and it is the threat of *Athenian* defection which decides the day: unless they get their own way they will sail away and found their own colony in Siris in Italy (8.63–64.1). The threat of fragmentation and parochial self-interest once again rules, and by a roundabout way we have come back to see the wisdom of Mnesiphilus’ and Themistocles’ initial fears. The Greek debate is in fact a travesty of a debate, just as surely as its Persian counterpart; and the final aspect of this travesty is that it should all be short-circuited anyway, by Themistocles’ famous furtive message to Xerxes via Sicinnus. So much for any idealisation of frank, free, and open debate. Logos can be travestied in more ways than one, and in more worlds than one.

Yet to qualify a national distinction is not to destroy it. The two debates are certainly different *sorts* of travesty, with intimidated silence the keynote of the Persian, ineffective but articulate wiliness the keynote of the Greek. That is indeed caught by the first sentences of both: before the Greek debate starts, we have Themistocles’ noisy and boisterous lobbying; before the Persian counterpart, the Persians sit ‘quietly and in order’ (8.59.1 67.2). Moreover, this refinement of our earlier, cruder contrast of Greek and Persian carries even stronger explanatory force. This is *creative* complication. We



may no longer have a glorifying picture of Greek freedom and free speech, but this Greek style explains a good deal more, not just their final victory but also some of their earlier failures: the collapse of the Ionian revolt, for instance, where similar articulate and self-interested fragmentation set in. As so often in Greek characterisation, virtues and vulnerabilities are intimately related: the Greek strengths and weaknesses both spring from their fierce sense of *polis* individualism and pride. Interestingly, too, that will also explain a good deal of what happened after the *Histories* end, a Herodotean preoccupation to which we shall return in a moment. For the present we have an *ὄθισιμος λόγων*, a ‘pushing and shoving of words’ among the Greek states (8.78.1), and there are several other cases where their verbal contentions are described in similarly agonistic language (e.g. *ἀκροβολισάμενοι*, ‘skirmishing’, at 64.1). All too soon, the Greek-against-Greek contention, the antagonism, the pushing and shoving is going to turn real, and turn bloody.

I earlier drew attention to the two ways in which national stereotyping might be contested, by challenging the evaluative preference for Greek characteristics over barbarian and by challenging the Greek/barbarian distinctions themselves. Here we have both, for Greek characteristics are seen to be weaknesses as well as strengths, and also seen to have suggestive overlaps with Persian characteristics. On each side self-interest and travesty of *logos* combine in different ways.

These two forms of contestation can also be seen in our last example, the close of the *Histories*. In formal terms, the closure is very strong indeed, even if not quite so obvious as the strong interim closures after Salamis and after Plataea. It is not just the way the last chapter goes back to the beginning with Cyrus, rather as the *Iliad* goes back to Helen, the figure who started it all. The closing of the ring is much more extensive (J. Herington, *ICS* 16 (1991), 149–60). The initial Candaules story is recalled by the story of Xerxes and Masistes’ wife (9.108–13), unnamed just as Candaules’ wife was unnamed; this affair is no less suggestive than its early counterpart of an awful future, for the outraged son Darius, cuckolded by his father, is to play a part in Xerxes’ overthrow some fifteen years later. Just before the end, we then have the story of Artayctes’ execution. This is the man who outraged the shrine of Protesilaus, the first Greek to set aggressive foot on the Asian mainland. All sorts of rings are here concluded: with the Trojan War, where we started in Book 1; with Candaules, where we had our second start in 1; with Cyrus, who began the Achaemenid empire; with the Hellespont, the natural boundary which is now firmly reasserted.

In his *Herodotus* (London, 1989) John Gould concentrated on reciprocity as the distinctive Herodotean explanatory category. The approach is richly productive—and yet this terminal point does not sit altogether comfortably with that emphasis. Reciprocity is a game for two. If reciprocity between

Greek and barbarian were the important category, we might more naturally have gone on to the Peace of Callias (or ‘Peaces’, or ‘cessation of hostilities’, or what you will), with the see-saw of reciprocal hostilities finally reaching some equilibrium and rest. This finishing point sits better with a different sort of explanatory model, one which, arguably, is superimposed on the reciprocity ideas introduced early in Book 1, though it never entirely displaces them: a more self-contained picture of expansion and self-destruction, a point about Persian growth and contraction rather than any give-and-take with particular enemies, a game for one rather than two. (I should wish to argue that this fits a much wider preference in Greek conceptualisation for organic, growth-and-decay models—but that is, and I hope will one day be, a theme for a book rather than a seminar paper.) Now Persia, despite the continuation of fighting with those enemies and the continuation of the Greeks’ desire to get their reciprocal own back, has nonetheless shrunk back to its natural frontier, and the cycle of expansion-contraction has come to a natural point of rest. It is a neat example of the point beloved of closural theorists, the way a choice of ending is closely connected with one’s explanatory framework. One can only know when a story ends once one knows what sort of story it is to tell.

That continuation, however, is also strongly stressed. There is a tension between the firm formal closure and the alertness to so many questions, historical and moral, which are still open. That is partly a matter of the phrasing of 9.121, the last sentence of narrative: ‘and in this year nothing further happened’. There is no suggestion that anything other than winter marks the ending: it is the sort of transition-*cum*-closure which we have had before, and will often have in Thucydides. We would be amazed if nothing followed from it in the *next* year, especially as we have just had the Athenians taking over the leadership of the campaign from the Spartans (9.114.2)—another ring, this time with the beginning of Book 8, where this takeover was marked as an important *stage*, not a *conclusion*, of hostilities against Persians on their own ground (8.3.2). It was, and is still, a favourite closural technique to suggest that as one story ends another is beginning or might be beginning: one thinks of the end of the *Odyssey*, or Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, or in ancient historiographic prose Sallust’s *Bellum Iugurthinum*.

In this case we are in no doubt what story it is going to be. That is clear from Herodotus’ several flash-forwards to later events (‘external prolepses’, in narratological jargon). These are never casual, nor casually placed: it is no coincidence, for instance, that the most important flash-forward to the Peloponnesian War (7.137) comes just before Herodotus’ praise of Athens for *not* fragmenting Greece during the Persian Wars (7.139). More relevant to Greek–barbarian stereotyping is the early flash-forward to Pausanias’ lust (ἔρως) to become tyrant and marriage to the daughter of a Persian grandee.

This comes precisely at 5.32, just after we have had Aristagoras' ambition to become tyrant of Naxos: Aristagoras who is married to Histiaeus' daughter, Aristagoras who himself knows how to brown-nose his Persian grandees. The lush Ionian and the archetypally unspartan Spartan are juxtaposed just as the gaze returns to the West, destabilising any univocal picture of Ionian/eastern luxury and Spartan hardiness; and this also comes just before Cleomenes' big scenes, which start a different train of thought about Spartan ~ Asian analogies.

The flash-forwards to the Athenian post-Persian-War expansion concentrate in Book 7 and in Book 9, but they have a different texture in each. In 7 they have more of a Persian focus, for instance 7.106–7 on the downfall of Persian-imposed tyrants at Doriscus and Eion, or even 7.151 on (presumably) the Peace of Callias: that has the effect of emphasising, as the war begins, how it will all end. In 9 they are different. Now the emphasis falls more on Greeks fighting Greeks, focusing on both the Spartan and Athenian side: the typical style is 'much later this Arimnestus died ... when leading a detachment of 300 picked men against the Messenians' (9.64.2: note the '300', for there is a lot of Thermopylae in the air around that stage of the narrative), or 'this Hermolycus died later in the war between the Athenians and Carystus' (9.105): other examples are 9.35.2, 37.4, 73.3. The significance is clear (cf. Stadter, *ASNSP* 22 (1992), 801–2, commenting on Hermolycus). Greek against Greek is clearly to be the theme of the next few years, of '*Histories* 10'.

Most important, though, is what the Athenians do to Artayctes. (On this scene see esp. D. Boedeker, *Class. Ant.* 7 (1988), 30–48.) Artayctes is not a cuddly character, and his death is not inappropriate. Its manner remains suggestive. The Athenians nail him to a panel, hang him to the side of a hill or headland, and stone his son to death before his eyes (9.120.4). The cuddliness stakes are evenly matched, and this sort of atrocity is almost exactly (perhaps we could have done with a little more mutilation) what we have come to expect of the Persian side. The Athenian story is beginning as the Persian story ends; the Thucydidean notion of the enslaving tyrant-city, with its insinuation that Athens is Persia's successor, is already here. (This is brought out particularly clearly by Stadter, *art. cit.*) That is another reason why a 449 finish, with any intimation of rest between the great powers, would not have done. Athens' story is going to thrust on well past then.

People normally hound this passage for what Herodotus is saying about the Athenian empire, and debate how it fits with his other remarks about Athens. Does he approve or disapprove? Is this a *warning* to Athens of what awaits them, as John Moles has now argued (*PLLS* 9 (1996), 259–84)? Certainly, the self-destructive patterning leaves little doubt of where such an aggressive brutal, expansionist empire is heading, and perhaps it is indeed a

warning. My own emphasis, like Gould's, falls rather differently, on Herodotus as a memorialist of the past rather than—or as well as—a Warner for the present. In particular, we should note the effect that awareness of the Athenian empire would have on the categories deployed within the *Histories* themselves. There is always a two-way process involved in the interaction of text-reading and reader's extratextual experience, and it always simplifies to think of the 'practical utility' of a text: a reader's practical experience will affect the reading of a text, just as the text may affect that reader's practical behaviour, and just as Hippocratic writers can appeal to a doctor-reader's practical experience of cases to verify or modify the theoretical theses which they are putting forward. Here the style of the Athenian expansion is bound to destabilise any univocal picture of what is Greek and what is barbarian. The Greekest of states—the Greece of Greece', as an epigram put it (*Anth. Pal.* 7.45)—is now falling into the barbarian pattern, and the Other is coming very close to home.

Then we have the final chapter itself, which so many critics have found strange—though it should also be said that it would be even stranger if this were *not* the ending, if some subsequent narrative had been lost. Such elaborate and suggestive flashbacks are not unknown elsewhere, but we find them in speeches, not presented in the narrator's own voice. This is special, something (surely) held back for a very special position.

This Artaxctes who was hung up had an ancestor Artembares, who was the one who made a proposal to the Persians which they passed on to Cyrus. It ran as follows. 'Since Zeus gives empire to the Persian people and to you as an individual, Cyrus, now that you have destroyed Astyages, let us act as follows. We have only a small, rough territory; let us move from there, and take another, better land. There are many close at hand, and many farther away; let us take one, and we will command marvel [*θωμαστότεροι*, another ring with the proem] from more people. It is reasonable for men who rule to act like this, and when will we have a better opportunity than when we rule over many people and over all Asia?' Cyrus listened, and found the proposal less than marvellous [*οὐ θωμάσας τὸν λόγον*]. He told them to do this if they chose, but, they did, to make preparations to be ruled by others rather than to continue to rule themselves. 'Soft lands tend to generate soft peoples: the same land cannot produce marvellous [*θωμαστόν*] crops and good fighters.' The Persians acknowledged what he had said, accepted the wisdom of his advice, and departed; and they chose to live in a poor land and rule rather than to sow the plain and be other peoples' slaves.

—*δουλεύειν ἄλλοισι*, a concluding phrase which touches a thematic nerve. The last sentence also has that epigrammatic, ‘summarising’ quality often found in conclusions; and the technique of ending with an anecdote, a thematically important vignette, is easy to parallel in ancient and modern authors. (Cf. esp. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure* (Chicago, 1968) and e.g. R. Peden on Catullus, *Homo Viator* (ed. Whitby, Hardie, Whitby, 1987), 95–103; P.H. Schrijvers on Horace, *Mnem.* 26 (1973), 154.)

The theme is indeed important. Softness (*ἀβρότης*) and toughness have figured frequently, in several different ways: sometimes the notion that a people are not worth conquering because they have no luxuries (Sandanis at 1.71), but more frequently the idea that luxury and the easy life bring softness and weakness. The clearest case might be Aristagoras at 5.49.3, commenting on the wimpish Persian habit of wearing trousers into battle. There some of the final chapter’s paradox is hinted but not developed, for within two sentences Aristagoras is pointing to the luxuries of the Persians as both (a) making them easy to conquer and (b) making them a very tempting target for expansion.

The theme has also been particularly associated with Cyrus. There was 1.155–6, when Cyrus accepted Croesus’ advice not to enslave the Lydians, but to make them put on fancy clothes, and teach them to play the lyre and harp and indulge in retail trade. Earlier still there was the ploy at 1.125–6, where he stirred up the Persians to revolt against the Medes by working them into the ground one day, giving them a great banquet the next, and asking them whether they preferred the life of luxury or of hard work. Some have found unease in reconciling 1.125–6 with 9.122, but it is better to see Cyrus, shrewd as he always is, as a sort of resident expert on luxury and its beguilements, knowing how to exploit the attractions rhetorically (with the Persians against the Medes) or practically (with the Lydians)—but also knowing the dangers when the Persians themselves are conquered.

9.122 clearly picks up those themes: but how? If we had not read the preceding text, we should assume that the point was that the Persians *rejected* such luxury, and therefore presumably remained strong, acknowledging Cyrus’ insight into its dangers. But we know that the Persians did not: already in Book 1 we see them becoming ‘soft’, there in association with the conquest of Lydia (1.71.4). More recently, Pausanias had inspected the Persian camp after Plataea, and the softness, *ἀβρότης*, was overwhelming. Two meals were prepared, the simple Spartan one and the cordon bleu version of the Persians (9.80–83). Pausanias’ own moral, admittedly, is more on the ‘what was the point of attacking people as poor as us?’ line, the Sandanis rather than Aristagoras version. That too has its point: Pausanias, of all people, would not think it worth attacking a people for the dubious pleasure of eating Spartan meals. But it does make it clear that the Persians had not

stuck to their Cyrus lines, and the point of the anecdote lies after its time-span concludes—in what the Persians did next, the way they slipped away into luxury after all. Wisdom and insight, as so often in Herodotus and in Thucydides too, carry you only so far. Even though the Persians could see the dangers, they could not resist a fancy pair of trousers and a nice glass of wine.

So is the moral that the Persians *weren't* tough, that Cyrus' warning came true? That is problematic too. The Persians, as opposed to their allies, have in fact been pretty tough, and Herodotus has emphasised it (9.40, 68.1, 71.1, then 102.3 at Plataea). Plataea is particularly interesting:

...As for spirit and strength, the Persians were not inferior; but they were unarmed [i.e. not armed as hoplites, cf. 5.97], also untrained, and no match for the enemy in skill. They would dart out, perhaps singly, perhaps in groups of tens [do we here think of the debate of Xerxes and Demaratus whether one Spartan could take on ten foreigners, 7.103–4?], perhaps more, perhaps less, and they fell among the Spartiates and were killed. It was particularly at the point where Mardonius himself was stationed, fighting from a white horse and supported by Persian elite troops to the number of a thousand, that they forced the enemy back. For as long as Mardonius survived, they held their ground and fought back and killed many of the Spartans; but when Mardonius had died and his detachment had fallen, finest of the army as they were, then the others gave ground and fell back before the Spartans. What harmed them most was their clothing, because they had no armour; they were lightly-clad men fighting hoplites... (9.62–3)

This is hardly a case of enervation brought on by luxury: these are substantial fighters, who can give the Spartans a hard time even when they are 'lightly-clad men fighting hoplites'. (The passage was enough to excite Plutarch's indignation, *de Malignitate Herodoti* 873f.) True, they had already been 'wearers of necklaces and bracelets' when selected for Mardonius' army, but they were there explicitly tougher than the Medes (8.113.3), once the typifiers of the hard life (1.125–6).

'Necklaces and bracelets': this question of jewellery, and more widely of clothing, is interesting. For some time Persian dress has been a principal signifier of their nambypambiness (Aristagoras and the trousers); here at Plataea, as at Marathon (6.112.2), the clothing is again picked out to make an important point. But up till now it has looked as if its significance was mainly emblematic, as it was for Aristagoras when he dwelt on their trousers. Now, at Plataea, its effect turns out to be wholly literal: it is the lack of stronger armament which does them down. We should be used to symbols

working on two levels, literal and emblematic. Most relevant here would be the armour of Achilles in the *Iliad*, where both emblematically and literally it turns out not to ‘fit’ Patroclus or Hector, and at the last the non-fit leaves a chink on Hector’s throat which admits the death-wound (*Il.* 22.322–30). But in Herodotus it seems to be *only* on the literal level, and the emblematic level seems to have disappeared. These Persians are anything but nambypamby in spirit, and their cordon bleu diet does not seem to have made them feeble either. Once again, a major explanatory motif has been destabilised, and we may once again be uncertain what to make of Cyrus’ final advice.

Yet, once again, the explanatory *register* remains, despite the destabilisation: the explanatory categories are not developed in a monologic, definitive, ‘this is how you need to look at it’ sort of way, but they are there for the reader to ponder and explore. We need to have ideas about how the Persians became great, as well as why they eventually went too far; and their continuing formidable qualities, as well as their wealth and excesses, need to remain in our mind and encourage multiple trains of thought. And remembering Athens helps the reader to understand the Persian greatness as well as the dangers they run.

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Stephen Greenblatt’s *Marvelous Possessions* (Oxford, 1991) is multiply suggestive for Herodotus. Dealing with European perceptions of the just-discovered New World, he brings out the importance of ‘wonder’, ‘marvel’—*thoma*. It is something which initially numbs other responses; but soon wonder creates the preconditions for a range of further steps. Some choose to respect and leave unmarred a distant culture, but some (actually, more, many more) prefer to go and attack and take over; some concentrate on this new Otherness, others seize on the similarities and talk for instance about Mexican ‘priests’ and ‘communion’. (Edward Said makes some similar points about the Western construction of Islam in *Orientalism* (London, 1978): the way Mohammed was ‘constructed’ as a counterpart of Christ and therefore an ‘impostor’, or the way Islam came to be viewed as just another Christian heresy.) Greenblatt knows Hartog’s book (the English translation was published in a series which he edited), and gives a very interesting ‘summary’ of its argument (pp. 122–8)—especially interesting, because the summary in fact substantially reinterprets what Hartog said. In Greenblatt’s version of Hartog, ‘The discovery of the self in the other and the other in the self confers upon Herodotus’ voice a special authority... He has succeeded in comprehending the alien by injecting its wildness into the victory celebration of the polis’ (127–8). Self in Other and Other in Self: that phrase is particularly apposite for the end of the *Histories*. The favoured Greek/barbarian

antitheses are now being challenged; the Athenians, of all people, are looking barbarian; barbarian nambypambiness is looking more questionable than we thought.

Yet a challenge to a polarity is not a rejection, a renouncing of categories is not a cancelling. Geoffrey Lloyd has brought out that Greek scientific conceptualisation found it natural to operate with strong polarities while accepting the existence of marginal cases or cases which belonged on both sides of the divide (ἐπαμφοτερίζοντα, see esp. his *Science, Folklore, and Ideology* (Cambridge, 1983), 44–53, and more generally *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge, 1966)). A similar principle operates here, and the categories are destabilised without being destroyed completely. Persian dress did make a difference, after all, even if not the one we expected; there was some nambypambiness on the barbarian side, if not among the Persians themselves; and whatever we finally decide about Cyrus, we do not conclude that he was talking nonsense. It is rather that our categories and their content are being juggled, and the reader ends with a feeling of disoriented modification of prejudice rather than complacent reassurance. It is rather like the national characteristics in Thucydides, though once again Thucydides' narrative technique tends to be less multifaceted. By the end of the work Athens is still new-fangled and enterprising, Sparta is still an ideal enemy to fight with because she is still so stick-in-the-mud (Thuc. 8.96.5); but the categories have been heavily qualified too, with all those unspartan Spartans, and Sparta even becoming a sea-power. There as here the categories are simultaneously challenged and asserted, by a process of continual redefinition and renouncing.

We should not be too surprised by this. It is not too different from the world of tragedy, where (say) an audience can be discomfited to find that phenomena associated with Thebes—crises as to where one's personal duty lies in *Antigone*, for instance—can sometimes seem very close to home. The *Persae*, too, offers an analogy, where after so much Oriental Otherness the laments at the end of the play are likely to strike a more universal note, and some at least of the audience may come, doubtless disconcertingly, to feel contact with this strange and alien culture.

Nor, crucially, is it very different from the end of the *Iliad*: indeed, the similarities are so close that we should think of intertextuality, not simply draw the comparison. There, as here, the future beyond the end of the narrative becomes crucial to its suggestions: what will happen to Achilles and to Troy, what will happen to Athens after 478, and what will happen to the earlier generation of Persians after they have acknowledged the wisdom of Cyrus' advice. And in each case the future serves to bond the two sides together. Achilles and Priam are linked by the universality of death; the Athenians will not be so very different from the Persians, as imperialism turns out



to have its own universally aggressive and brutal characteristics. Just as the Persians found it impossible to stick to Cyrus' advice, so the Athenians will not find it easy to hold back, however much past experience should have alerted them to the dangers. The *Iliad*, like Herodotus, began with people who seemed very different from one another, the Achaean war-machine and the domesticity of Troy, the grim silence of the marching Achaeans and the excited Trojan chatter. By the end, there as here, it is the similarities rather than the differences which come to be felt as most challenging and interesting.

Herodotus' audience would not, then, have found it a total surprise to find Self in Other and Other in Self. That is one way, though only one, in which the Mirror works.

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