More than Meets the Eye: Autopsy and Physicality in Herodotus and Ctesias

by

Rachel M. Hart

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The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Jeffrey Beneker, Professor, Classics
Laura McClure, Professor, Classics
William Brockliss, Assistant Professor, Classics
Matthew Waters, Professor, History (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire)

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Abstract

In this dissertation I argue that the historians Herodotus and Ctesias use the depiction of autopsy as unreliable in their texts to demonstrate that historiography is not objective. Because their texts claim to use autopsy as a means for accessing information about foreigners, I investigate the ways that these authors use visual motifs of othering physical bodies to highlight the unreliability of autopsy. I also argue that the characters within the narratives frequently manipulate the autopsy of observers in order to convey particular messages or truths, often simultaneously. The use of clothing to conceal or reveal the body is used to temporarily alter the way a body is perceived in terms of its identity, while the body's permanent alteration through violent means is similarly a communication to an observer, but there is an additional element of superiority implied through threats to bodily integrity. After showing that autopsy is unreliable and able to be manipulated, I consider the implications when autopsy is not the basis of a historical report, such as the representation of the most distant regions of the earth in the histories of Herodotus and Ctesias. Though these regions are depicted using different motifs than the nearer regions of *barbaroi*, we see that the fluidity of identity remains even when autopsy is absent. I argue that this plurality of truth and representation, which is present throughout the works of Herodotus and Ctesias, demonstrates a similar plurality of history. As a result, each author makes interpretive claims while producing a narrative that allows the readers to rely on their own ideas of what is believable within the text.

Introduction

In a post-9/11 world, the practice of physical othering has emerged into the light as a harmful, yet often unintentional, means of responding to the unknown. We form our concepts of truth based on what we see; when it comes to foreign populations, we often have little first-hand experience, and as a result we rely on what we can observe about their appearances easily and from a distance. Of the many aspects an observer might notice about another individual's body, one of the most marked is clothing. The visuality and distinction of clothing is a key tactic for distinguishing oneself from others – and Others – both on an ethnic and an individual level. As hinted above, this technique is by no means unique to antiquity; the pervasiveness of sartorial othering of foreign peoples is seen in the spread of violent Islamophobia in the West, and particularly in the United States, since the attacks of September 11, 2001. In 2012 a white American entered the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, WI, and murdered six people, including five men wearing turbans. Investigators determined that the gunman's actions were due to his white supremacist beliefs, leading him to perpetrate this act of violence against people he perceived to be inferior to himself based on their appearance.[1] It is also no accident that he targeted a Sikh community; in addition to the majority of the temple's members being non-white Indian or Indian-American, followers of Sikhism do not cut any of the hair on their bodies, and male Sikhs wear turbans. The Oak Creek gunman formed his conception of Sikhs from their outward appearance, and in particular from the full beards and turbans of Sikh men, identifying them with the Muslim extremists who attacked New York City and Washington D.C. Following the attack, Oak Creek temple member Ravi Chawla noted, "Most people are so ignorant they

[1] Romell 2012.

don't know the difference between religions. Just because they see the turban they think you're Taliban."[2] The reality that Sikhism and Islam are separate religions and that the actions of a small extremist group do not speak for the broader community was irrelevant to the shooter.

In addition to clothing, Islamophobia – and particularly the Oak Creek massacre – is an unfortunately apt analogue for the other methods of physical othering that I examine in this project. Aslan describes the rise of Islamophobic rhetoric as presenting conflict "between the modern, enlightened, democratic societies of the West and the archaic, barbarous, autocratic societies of the Middle East."[3] Greek authors use similar categories to describe the distinction between Greeks and foreigners; for example, Thucydides describes the gruesome slaughter of schoolchildren at the hands of Thracian mercenaries (7.29) as a particularly savage and non-Greek act.[4] The same judgment is present in the modern West, where the false idea of Islam as an inherently violent ideology is spread through selectively chosen or misrepresented quotations from the Quran.[5] In a related sense, Islamophobia itself is defined as "close-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims" in general, as opposed to anti-Muslim acts that target individuals.[6] The Oak Creek shooter was not targeting a particular person, but trying to make a claim about an entire religion. We see a similar lack of individualization when the most distant

[2] Yaccino, Schwirtz, & Santora 2012.

[3] Aslan 2005: xxi.

[4] Cf. also Cartledge's discussion of the passage (1993: 52-54). The motif of violent acts as a foreign practice will be examined in depth in the second chapter of this dissertation.

[5] CAIR 2011: 11.

[6] Ibid.: 26.

areas of the world are depicted in Greek texts. This discussion of Islamophobia is included as an illustration of my interest in the rhetoric surrounding the depiction of foreigners, an exploration of which is the theme of the current project.

As mentioned above, there has been a pervasive trend suggesting that Greek authors use ideological polarities to talk about people they perceive as unlike themselves.[7] Because most authors with extant works are freeborn Greek men, the "Other" for them includes categories of slave, foreigner, and female. Each of these "Other" categories is essentially a negation of the author's own identification, where by "female" we really mean anyone who is not perceived as male – for example, eunuchs.[8] Because the author rarely has first-hand experience living as one of these Others, he necessarily ends up relying on – or sometimes even creating – broad stereotypes that are meant to represent the Other. Thus we see many stories of, for example, foreign queens who enact violence against men, encapsulating many types of otherness in a single stock figure.[9] In this dissertation I focus on the category of foreign peoples, or anyone who is not Greek, noting in particular the ways that such polarities do not function successfully within the texts of Herodotus and Ctesias. For example, the term commonly used for non-Greek foreigners is *barbaroi*, but this is an incomplete category – i.e. it does not simply mean "not Greek" – and does not include the inhabitants of the *eschatiai* at the fringes of the known world.[10] For this reason, I avoid using the term *barbaroi* and its English cognate "barbarians"

[7] Lloyd 1966: *passim*.

[8] Cartledge 1993: 11.

[9] Monarchy is also an othered category in the view of the democratic Greeks (e.g. Gray 1995).

[10] Chapter Three elaborates on this terminology and its application.

unless I am specifically referring to the non-Greek peoples that dwell between Greece and the *eschatiai*.

The foundational monograph on the rhetoric used by Greeks to describe non-Greeks is Hall's *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*. As the title suggests, Hall focuses her analysis on tragedy, and in particular the plays of Aeschylus, in order to assess the "rhetorical polarization of Greek and barbarian" in fifth century drama.[11] Hall's main argument, that the negative stereotype of the "barbarian" arose as a result both of the Persian Wars and of the tragedians' characterization of non-Greek characters on the stage, has persisted as the dominant explanation for the shift in the connotations of what it was to be *barbaros* – i.e. un-Greek.[12] By tracing the stereotypes of the "barbarian" as "the mythical archetype of the supernatural agent of disorder,"[13] she argues that the negative portrayal of foreigners was an intentional creation of the fifth century, beginning from Aeschylus' *Persae* and what Hall suggests is its description of the entire non-Greek world as *barbaros*, with the Greeks attempting to define themselves in the process.[14] While many of the motifs she summarizes, such as feminization of the East and ideological dualities, are certainly present from the fifth century onward, Herodotus does not represent the world in such clear-cut categories as Hall's "absolute polarization" of Greek and foreigner. Hartog's *Mirror of Herodotus*, though published a year

[11] Hall 1989: 1.

[12] Ibid.: 1-2, 16-17.

[13] Ibid.: 50.

[14] E.g., κακῶν δὴ πέλαγος ἔρρωγεν μέγα | Πέρσαις τε καὶ πρόπαντι βαρβάρων γένει ("Indeed a great sea of evils has crashed upon the Persians and the entire race of barbarians," Aesch. *Pers*. 433-434, with πρόπαντι βαρβάρων γένει glossed as "whole non-Greek world" at Hall 1989: 57).

before Hall's monograph, accepts a similar understanding of Greek-barbarian rhetoric as a polarity used for Greek self-definition. Hartog's title refers to Herodotus' depictions of foreigners – focusing mainly on the Scythian *logos* – as a self-reflective meditation on Greek identity. Following these two books and their similar approach is *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Other*, by Cartledge; his monograph is consciously modeled on binary polarizations, with the chapters representing polarities such as "Engendering History: Men v. Women" and "Of Inhuman Bondage: Free v. Slave." While Cartledge does acknowledge at some points that these categories of identity can be fluid,[15] he maintains that there is always a pattern of two categories, one defined (e.g. Greeks) and the other a negated version of the first (e.g. non-Greeks).[16]

In this dissertation I will occasionally refer to similar categorical labels such as those which Hall examines, but this is for convenience of discussion; any literary or artistic attempt to represent reality will necessarily be impossible to cleanly define. To this end, I follow Gruen's argument that ancient peoples "had far more mixed, nuanced, and complex opinions about other peoples"[17] than what Hall, Cartledge, and others represent, and that Herodotus' *Histories* represents "a portrait of entanglement rather than an agenda of enmity" regarding the relationships of Greeks and Persians (as well as other foreign peoples).[18] For Gruen, the rigid categories proposed by previous scholars create the illusion that Greek authors uniformly

[15] E.g. he considers the distinction between history and fiction to be open and difficult, if not impossible, to clearly delineate (Cartledge 1993: 20).

[16] "In fact, the Greek-barbarian antithesis is a strictly polar dichotomy, being not just contradictory but jointly exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Greeks + barbarians = all humankind" (ibid.: 11).

[17] Gruen 2011: 3.

[18] Ibid.: 354.

presented a negative and hierarchical portrait of non-Greeks; while there are certainly episodes that contain such rhetoric, he argues that this is not a broad pattern, even for Herodotus and his externally-focused text, and that the highlighting of differences is not always partnered with a rhetorical superiority. The pluralistic notion of categories – i.e. that the categories need not be polar – will be supported throughout this dissertation. I borrow the terminology of pluralism from a recent volume edited by Ruffell and Hau, *Truth and History in the Ancient World: Pluralising the Past*. The essays in this volume consider "the hypothesis of a pluralistic concept of truth, one where different versions of the same historical event can all be true, or where there are different kinds of truths, or modes of belief that are culturally contingent." I support and follow this hypothesis, as will become clear. Indeed, when we consider the fluidity and ephemerality of identifying labels, such a pluralistic approach is necessary in order to holistically understand the texts within themselves as well as with each other.

Both Herodotus and Ctesias have been maligned since antiquity for being "liars," or at the very least being unintentionally inaccurate.[19] One of the most famous criticisms is that of Lucian in his *True History*: καὶ μεγίστας ἁπασῶν, τιμωρίας ὑπέμενον οἱ ψευσάμενοί τι παρὰ τὸν βίον καὶ οἱ μὴ τὰ ἀληθῆ συγγεγραφότες, ἐν οἷς καὶ Κτησίας ὁ Κνίδιος ἦν καὶ Ἡρόδοτος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοί ("They endured the worst retributions of all, those who told some falsehood during their life or wrote down untrue things; among them was Ctesias of Cnidus and Herodotus, and

[19] In addition to the passage by Lucian quoted here, Plutarch wrote an entire treatise titled *On the Malice of Herodotus* (Περὶ τῆς Ἡροδότου κακοηθείας); elsewhere, he comments that Ctesias' text "often… turns away from truth and toward the fabulous and dramatic" (πάσχει πολλάκις ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μυθῶδες καὶ δραματικὸν ἐκτρεπόμενος τῆς ἀληθείας, Plut. *Art.* 6.9 = Ct. T11e). All testimonia and fragments of Ctesias are from Lenfant 2004.

many others," *VH* 2.31).[20] While much could be said about Lucian's presentation of historians, the relevant aspect for the current project is that he is criticizing Herodotus and Ctesias, among other unnamed authors (ἄλλοι πολλοί), as "liars," mocking in particular their approach to representing truth. Just as categories of identity are resistant to definition, however, truth and objective reality are likewise subject to variation in written form.

The written form itself can be just as elusive; in the above-mentioned volume on pluralizing history, Meeus summarizes the previous century of scholarship that has been unable to agree to what genre Ctesias' writing should be attributed, due in large part to his reputation for fallacy.[21] While I agree with Meeus' conclusion that Ctesias wrote as part of the larger historiographic movement, the impression of falsehoods in the text has led others to read Ctesias' work as part of a poetic tradition,[22] following the Ciceronian concept of poetry as entertainment,[23] or as a precursor to the Greek novel, since it shares many narrative elements

[20] Text of *True History* is from the Loeb edition. Unless otherwise specified, quotations from Greek and Latin are from the respective Oxford Classical Text edition. All translations are my own.

[21] Meeus 2017: *passim*

[22] The foremost proponent of this theory is Jan Stronk, who has written several articles on the topic of Ctesias' genre (2007, proposing the *Persica* as a historical fiction novel), as well as proposing a poetic reading in the introduction to his edition of Ctesias' fragments (2010; see also 2011). See also Wiesehöfer 2013.

[23] *Q: Intellego te, frater, alias in historia leges obseruandas putare, alias in poemate. M: Quippe cum in illa ad ueritatem, Quinte,* quaeque *referantur, in hoc ad delectationem pleraque; quamquam et apud Herodotum patrem historiae et apud Theopompum sunt innumerabiles fabulae* ("Quintus: I understand, brother, that you believe that some rules should be followed in history, and others in poetry. Marcus: By all means, since everything which is related in the former aspires for truth, and most things in the latter aspire for enjoyment; although there are countless tales in the work of Herodotus, the father of history, and in Theopompus," Cic. *Leg*. 1.5).

with that genre.[24] Yet Meeus is right to point out that many of the qualities that cause scholars to doubt Ctesias as a historian are also present in Herodotus and, to a lesser extent, Thucydides, yet there is no question that the latter two authors wrote historiography.[25] In addition, Photius' ninth-century epitome refers to Ctesias' writing as *historia* (Ct. T8) while also noting that Ctesias sought to position himself as part of a Herodotean tradition. As this dissertation focuses primarily on the texts themselves and how each author presents himself in writing, I thus understand Ctesias as a historian who positions himself within the Ionian historiographic movement.[26]

A related problem with labeling Ctesias as a historian, however, is that the modern reader is conditioned to see history as an intent to record objective facts. This impulse is exacerbated by comments from antiquity where historians are disparaged for their inaccuracies, as in the passage from Lucian discussed above. Because Ctesias allegedly lived among the Persians for seventeen years (cf. Ct. T3),[27] modern readers of the *Persica*, and to a lesser extent the *Indica*, have been concerned with assessing the historical value of Ctesias' writing based on his autopsy.[28] Unfortunately we cannot know the degree to which he engaged with Persians; even if we accept his claim that he served as Parysatis' personal physician (e.g. F28 §3 = Plut. *Art.* 18.3), and that

[24] Esp. Auberger 1995, Stronk 2007.

[25] Meeus 2017: 175-177.

[26] For a more detailed treatment, see Chapter Three, below.

[27] Waters 2017: 10-11.

[28] Bigwood, for example, is rather critical of Ctesias in terms of historicity, focusing on the (in)accuracy of his *Persica* in comparison to Herodotus (1978); however, she does have a positive assessment of his portrayal of the *bittakos* in the *Indica* (1993).

he accessed recorded annals in order to learn about Persian history before his time,[29] the details of his circumstances elude us. Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that the original context for many of Ctesias' stories is absent; our judgment of Ctesias' presentation is necessarily filtered through the authors who transmitted his content. For example, we have Photius' summaries of the *Persica* and *Indica,* yet his version reflects his own interests rather than an exact representation of what Ctesias wrote. Much of what survives, then, is fabulous and difficult to believe, but – as I will show in the third chapter of this dissertation – this does not necessarily suggest that Ctesias was only interested in marvels. Due to the selective nature of the extant fragments and summaries, many are hesitant to "refer to Ctesias as a historian, as we understand the term;"[30] but Waters' qualifying remark "as we understand the term" indicates the problem of modern scholars attempting to classify Ctesias' genre. "History" as a genre, like other categories that I have referenced in this introduction, is a fluid and inconsistent label, particularly in the fifth and fourth centuries when such writings originated. Indeed, Thomas states that Herodotus' *Histories* "cannot be categorized in any modern terms,"[31] an assessment to which I would add Ctesias' writings as well.

Because Herodotus and Ctesias share many qualities – a reputation for inaccuracy, overt claims of privileging autopsy as a method of obtaining knowledge, narrative focus on non-Greek

[29] οὗτος οὖν φησιν ἐκ τῶν βασιλικῶν διφθερῶν, ἐν αἷς οἱ Πέρσαι τὰς παλαιὰς πράξεις κατά τινα νόμον εἶχον συντεταγμένας πολυπραγμονῆσαι τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον ("This man [i.e. Ctesias] says that he inquired about the details of everything from the royal records, in which the Persians keep their ancient deeds compiled according to some law," D.S. 2.32.4 = Ct. T3).

[30] Waters 2017: 14.

[31] Thomas 2000: 27.

peoples – I consider them together in this dissertation. It is more common for scholars to focus on a single author, as evidenced by the above summations, but such an approach is limiting; any conclusion is only proven true for the particular author. In addition, there is a tendency to read Herodotus and Ctesias in contrast to each other, focusing on questions of accuracy and proving one to be "more reliable" than the other. Rather than examining the historicity of any single event, my study focuses on the literariness and narratives of the two authors. Because Herodotus' entire *Histories* is extant while Ctesias' *Persica* and *Indica* survive mainly in summary form or through his influence on later authors, my study is of necessity more focused on Herodotus; however, with what we know about Ctesias' writing, I read him as a potential support for the claims I make regarding Herodotus' text and the overall tradition to which both authors belong. Taking their own claims that autopsy is the primary and most reliable means of accessing truth, I combine an examination of autopsy and visuality with the authors' direct interests in non-Greek peoples. From this integration of visuality and foreigners, I trace the literary representation of the visual appearance of non-Greeks as a continuous thread throughout this dissertation. As referenced at the start of this introduction, the narrative motifs that Herodotus and Ctesias use to depict the bodies of foreigners can be understood in three general categories, which I have chosen for the purposes of organizing my chapters.[32] Each chapter thus focuses on one visual motif while also corresponding to uses and manipulations of autopsy, with the overarching conclusion that the unreliability of autopsy is a manifestation of the pluralistic nature of historiography, rather than the failings of a single author.

[32] As my approach to antiquity is generally pluralistic, there is significant overlap between my chapters in terms of content; for example, some episodes of visual deception (Chapter One) result in extreme physical violence (Chapter Two). Such resistance to categorization will be addressed as necessary when discussing the relevant passages.

The organization of this dissertation corresponds to Darbo-Peschanski's outline of the historiographic process of inquiry, which relies on the degree of physical remove from the event."[33] The inquirer is the eyewitness himself, but as he becomes more separated – whether temporally or spatially – from the event about which he is inquiring, he requires more intermediaries between himself and "the point of initial *opsis*."[34] While her scheme refers within her discussion to temporal distance from past events, it holds true for spatial distance as well. As I consider autopsy in the writings of Herodotus and Ctesias, I am concerned primarily with how the authors present the act of eyewitnessing and its reliability. My argument is twofold: I show that autopsy within the texts is insufficient for acquiring objective knowledge, particularly as we consider the eyewitness' distance from an original *opsis*, and I additionally suggest that Herodotus and Ctesias use the motif of unstable autopsy to add a pluralistic dimension to their presentation of events. To this end I adapt Darbo-Peschanski's framework to structure my own examination of autopsy and foreign bodies into three broad categories: temporary bodily modification through dress as an attempt to manipulate how identity is perceived, violent acts done to the body in order to influence a third witnessing party, and bodily integrity in the most distant inhabited areas of the world (*eschatiai*) where no Greek has potential for eyewitnessing the inhabitants or even the land itself. I will simultaneously trace ways that the role of the witness changes in distance through each of these themes, increasing their degree of removal from the *opsis* and thus their understanding of truth.

[33] Darbo-Peschanski 2017: 90-91.

[34] Ibid.: 91.

The first chapter is concerned with dress, which I define – following Lee – as a "coherent system of nonverbal communication" which incorporates all modifications to the body, including hair, cosmetics, and accessories, as well as clothing.[35] Dress is often used by Greek authors to characterize foreign peoples, and this is no different for Herodotus and Ctesias. The highly visual nature of clothing combines with its malleability in order to communicate a continually performed set of messages concerning identity.[36] I consider ways that individuals within the texts of Herodotus and Ctesias use dress to intentionally alter the way that they are perceived, highlighting the fluidity and instability of eyewitness accounts.[37] Nearly all of the episodes discussed in this chapter contain an element of deception; for the sake of structure, however, I organize them into subgroups that depend on the type of deception, i.e. changing one's assumed social status or how one's gender is perceived. The fluidity allowed by the impermanent nature of dress results in a parallel fluidity of identity and its construction.

My second chapter turns to more permanent means of modifying the body, namely through violent means. The manifestation of extremely violent acts as a characteristic of foreigners is a rhetorical motif; Greek people are not exempt from engaging in similar violent acts, yet the literature is permeated with the notion that violence is an un-Greek practice. Indeed, most episodes of violence are perpetrated by eastern monarchs, reflecting a Greek – or at least, an Athenian – preference for democracy through vilifying monarchy. This chapter is organized with subsections based on different methods of enacting violence upon the body, with the

[35] Lee 2015: 1.

[36] See Butler (1990) for the notion of social identity – in her approach, gender – as performance.

[37] The chapter begins with a discussion of group identity through clothing before moving to that of individuals.

understanding that each method communicates its own type of message to a witnessing party through violent alteration of the body. We see that this third-party witness is necessary for the discursive meaning of a violent act and that the violence is meant to impose meaning for the witness, not for the person whose body has been acted upon. The witness' distance from the act allows them to be an eyewitness, yet simultaneously it removes them from the action itself. In this way, the perpetrator of violent acts is able to manipulate how a witness understands the truth of a situation.

The third and final chapter turns its focus to an even more distant realm, the most distant areas of the inhabited earth. With increased distance from the narrator's point of *opsis*, the literary accounts become more impossible to believe. The narrator rarely, if ever, engages with the peoples described at the *eschatiai*, instead relying on a "chain of transmission"[38] wherein information is relayed from the outermost regions by intermediaries located between the *eschatiai* and the narrator. In addition, all assumed categories fall apart when the *eschatiai* are incorporated into the framework; for example, there is no longer a binary of Greeks and *barbaroi*, because the *barbaroi* are those foreigners with whom the Greeks are in contact, wholly distinct from the inhabitants of the *eschatiai*. I argue that intermediaries are necessary for authors to report on the *eschatiai* before turning to consider the role of autopsy regarding these regions. Because the *eschatiai* are so distant, there is no possibility that either Herodotus or Ctesias ever visited the locations in question, yet they present themselves throughout their works as dependent on eyewitnessing – or talking to eyewitnesses – for their information. The lack of autopsy for the authors leads them to be reliant on the chain of intermediaries, even presenting

[38] Darbo-Peschanski 2017: 91.

stories that they themselves claim not to believe. The resulting effect of this reliance is that the readers are left to make their own choices about what is true.

The culmination of these chapters, which use motifs concerning foreign bodies to examine the presentation of autopsy, is that we must understand "history," or at least *historia* in the ancient sense, to be a more fluid and pluralistic system than is usually understood. Even in the contemporary world, history cannot be free from biases in selection and presentation; as White states, "the historian must draw upon a fund of culturally provided 'mythoi' in order to constitute the facts as figuring a story of a particular kind, just as he must appeal to that same fund of 'mythoi' in the minds of his readers to endow his account of the past with the odor of meaning or significance."[39] The author must make an interpretive choice in his topic and is selective not only concerning which aspects he will focus on, but also as to how he will relate that information. Within the text are individuals and intermediaries that manipulate the power of autopsy or provide alternate interpretations of truths by means of altering the appearance of bodies. I will show that Herodotus and Ctesias use their texts to enact the same persuasive power over the readers by representing truth as malleable and pluralistic, allowing the readers to form independent ideas of what is (not) true based on what they see in the texts.

[39] White 1973: 294.

Chapter One. The Clothed and Unclothed Body

1.0 Introduction: Clothing as Identifier

In her recent monograph on bodies and clothing in ancient Greece, Lee argues that "dress was the primary means by which individuals negotiated identity."[1] In addition, she borrows from the relatively new development of modern dress theory, which "views dress as an embodied social practice by means of which individuals and groups construct identity," and applies that approach to Greek society to analyze ways that the ancients communicated identity through their clothing.[2] In this chapter I use Lee's assessment as a foundation for examining the effects of clothing on an observing audience, as well as how its effects can be manipulated by those being observed. Through analysis of motifs related to clothing, and in particular to the clothing of non-Greek individuals, I will show that autopsy in the writings of Herodotus and Ctesias is an *unreliable* means of acquiring knowledge for the authors and their characters, despite the claims of the authors and their characters that eye-witnessing is the *most reliable* method of accessing truth and reality.[3] Beginning from a discussion of the connections between culture and clothing, I spend the greater part of the chapter focusing on ways that individuals communicate a false "truth" about their identity through the use of clothing, again relying on Lee's approach to dress as a visual communication. I conclude the chapter with an analysis of the reverse of this process,

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[1] Lee 2015: 1.

[2] Ibid.

[3] E.g. Themistocles suggests that Aristeides would more persuasively report to their allies that the Persians had surrounded Salamis because he had seen the army for himself (Hdt. 8.79-80); his eyewitness account was not believed until a group of deserters from Tenos confirms what Aristeides reported, implying both that autopsy should be trusted (because Aristeides was correct in his report) but also that, as much as autopsy is assumed to be reliable, it is human nature to want additional confirmation beyond a single eyewitness.

turning to a study of viewer manipulation through the removal of clothing, both from the entire body and from the genitals alone.

Due to the inquiry-based nature of their texts, Herodotus and Ctesias are concerned with describing observable truths about the world and its inhabitants; as a result, these texts tend to problematize social categories and boundaries. As a personal quality that is selected and changeable, dress allows an individual to control how they are perceived by observers; for example, Herodotus tells of a Coan woman who defects to the Greeks from the Persian army following Plataea, dressing herself first in fine clothing and jewelry before approaching Pausanias for aid (Hdt. 9.76.1). Clothing and other external modifications provide an opportunity to portray nuances of identity that may, at first, seem to reinforce social boundaries, but the temporary nature of apparel allows for fluidity between categories. Throughout his text, Herodotus remarks on the typical clothing of various peoples, which indicates that this characteristic can make each people unique.[4] In fact one particular group, the Melanchlanoi ("Black Cloaks"), is identified by a name based on their native clothing. The only details we know about these neighbors of the Scythians is that they wear black garments and follow Scythian customs, though they are not Scythian themselves;[5] we get no other information about what customs in particular they follow, nor why they follow Scythian customs despite not being

[4] E.g. 1.195 (Babylonians), 4.74 (Thracians).

[5] εἵματα μὲν μέλανα φορέουσι πάντες, ἐπ᾽ ὧν καὶ τὰς ἐπωνυμίας ἔχουσι, νόμοισι δὲ Σκυθικοῖσι χρέωνται ("They all wear black garments, from which they also have their name, and they practice Scythian customs," 4.107); ἄλλο ἔθνος καὶ οὐ Σκυθικόν ("[they are] another nation and not Scythian," 4.20.2).

ethnically Scythian.[6] They are distinguished mainly due to their unique clothing, showing the importance of apparel for describing foreign peoples.

Ctesias too identifies groups of foreigners based on their attire, giving the same weight to the sartorial customs of the various Indian peoples as he does to their social customs and physical form. The Pygmies differ greatly in appearance from the Greek audience; they have black skin and extremely long beards, and they average one and a half cubits tall (F45 §21). This physiological distinction has a direct effect on the attire the Pygmies wear:

> Ἐπειδὰν οὖν τὸν πώγωνα μέγα φύσωσιν, οὐκέτι ἀμφιέννυνται οὐδὲν ἱμάτιον, ἀλλὰ τὰς τρίχας, τὰς μὲν ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὄπισθεν καθίενται πολὺ κάτω τῶν γονάτων, τὰς δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πώγωνος ἔμπροσθεν μέχρι ποδῶν ἑλκομένας, ἔπειτα περιπυκασάμενοι τὰς τρίχας περὶ ἅπαν τὸ σῶμα, ζώννυνται χρώμενοι αὐταῖς ἀντὶ ἱματίου.
>
> Once they have grown a large beard, they no longer put around themselves any cloak but the hair, of which some they let fall from the back of the head far down to the knees, and some from the beard in front is drawn down as far as the feet, then having thickly encompassed the hair around the entire body, they gird themselves using this hair instead of a cloak. (F45 §21)

The Pygmies' unique physical appearance directly dictates and even becomes part of their attire. As a result, their "clothing" is a distinctive physical quality that belongs only to them. Ctesias considers attire to be an identifying characteristic in the way that Herodotus does.

1.1 Clothing and Cultural Representation

In addition to geographic distinction, the practice of describing foreigners' attire can be used as a generalizing tactic to describe their character. I begin from a general examination of

[6] This is likely due to proximity, as we see in similar passages listing neighboring peoples; for example, the Adyrmachidai, the Libyan people living closest to Egypt, wear Libyan clothing but follow Egyptian customs (4.168.1).

instances where clothing is used to identify a large group in terms of their military ability. To assess this moralizing motif, I explore a procedural adoption of clothing by subsequent peoples, a motif that appears in both Herodotus and Ctesias to explain the origins of Persian attire.[7] When Ctesias records the innovative gender-hiding garment developed by the Assyrian queen Semiramis, he notes that it was so useful and attractive a garment that the Medes would adopt it as their traditional garment upon conquering the Assyrians, as would the Persians after them (Ct. F1b §6.6). Similarly, in Herodotus, the garment that comes to be known as "Persian" originates with a smaller subgroup within the empire – in this case, Lydia (1.71) – before being broadly adopted by the conquering Persians (1.135). While Ctesias' remark on Semiramis' garment is heavily condensed in its transmission, Herodotus recalls the Persian adoption of Lydian clothing, particularly through mention of trousers, at key points throughout his *Histories* to make a broad military judgment on those wearing it, even when the Persians are no longer wearing the garment that elicited the earliest remark.

Of course, clothing exchanges do not only happen on a mass scale. While cultural adoption of attire is not uncommon, there are also several examples of a single person changing their clothing. Just as Herodotus uses trousers as an identification of Persian soldiers, specific items of clothing can be emblematic of certain offices or positions as well as culture. The motivations of these individuals differ, and those whose primary motivation is deception will be discussed later, in section 1.2. For this section, I continue to focus on characters whose motivations are rooted in culture, whether this is the national culture of the Greeks – as opposed

[7] This is only one example of this motif, as the adoption of clothing from foreign cultures is by no means a uniquely non-Greek practice (e.g. Hdt. 4.189.1-2, where the narrator notes that the design of Athena's aegis originated among Libyan women). The example of Persian garments is chosen for its presence in both authors.

to the Scythians – or cultural roles, such as that of the Persian king. The common thread throughout section 1.1 – and indeed the entire chapter – is that of an assumed hierarchy. As Greek men, Herodotus and Ctesias necessarily represent women and foreigners as distinctly Other, and we will see that this treatment persists when considering dress.

1.1.1 Adopting a National Garment

Ctesias ascribes the origin of Persian dress to the Assyrians, or at least to an individual Assyrian ruler. Relying on stereotypes of Eastern luxuriance and effeminacy, he describes a series of leaders who do not present themselves as one might expect, beginning with the queen Semiramis.[8] On her journey to visit her husband with the army, she develops a garment to hide her identity among the men. Ctesias is explicit in describing the intended perception of the garment: Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν πολλῶν ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν μέλλουσα διαπορεύεσθαι στολὴν ἐπραγματεύσατο δι' ἧς οὐκ ἦν διαγνῶναι τὸν περιβεβλημένον πότερον ἀνήρ ἐστιν ἢ γυνή ("When she was first about to travel on a journey of many days she worked to make a garment through which it was not possible to distinguish whether the person wearing it was a man or a woman," Ct. F1b §6.6). The truth beneath the apparel, her identity as a woman, is entirely hidden. She alters her own appearance in such a way as to eliminate the category of gender entirely;[9] rather than creating the impression that Semiramis is moving across a gender boundary, the garment dissolves the boundary by making her gender (or that of anyone wearing such a garment) completely indistinguishable, "partially male and partially female" while beneath the

[8] Cf. Hall 1993: *passim*; Bigwood 1980: 202, who suggests that Diodorus overemphasizes Ctesias' original stereotypical depictions and adds more explicit details.

[9] Cf. discussion on the false elephants (Ct. F1b §16.8 ff.), below.

garment.[10] This reflects a greater interest of Semiramis in crossing both physical and ideological boundaries in the way she is visually perceived.[11] As Roach and Eicher have shown, aesthetics constitute an important element of dress, particularly when constructing gender, which further emphasizes the significance of Semiramis' garment.[12]

What is perhaps even more remarkable is that this very garment becomes a type of national dress. Because the Greek readers would have understood textile production as an originally female task, it is not surprising for an ancient audience to see a woman developing new types of dress;[13] even now, clothing is often considered a feminine interest.[14] Despite Semiramis' more masculine endeavors in conquest and infrastructure, one of her most enduring creations is an article of clothing, one which renders gender distinctions invisible. The importance of the garment is clear even from the summary of Ctesias' original text: ὕστερον Μήδους ἡγησαμένους τῆς Ἀσίας φορεῖν τὴν Σεμιράμιδος στολὴν, καὶ μετὰ ταῦθ' ὁμοίως Πέρσας ("later the Medes, once they were in control of Asia, wore the robe of Semiramis, and afterward the Persians did likewise," Ct. F1b §6.6). The text as we have it gives no detail about what the

[10] Gera 2007: 77.

[11] "Semiramis viene dunque presentata come il guerriero smodato, il cui desiderio di dominio non si ferma di fronte a nulla, che non esita quindi a tentare di passare in regioni i cui confini erano considerati praticamente invalicabili" (Capomacchia 1986: 54); "What can we learn about boundaries and limits in Ctesias? [...] The queen herself will, in her subsequent behaviour, erase more than one boundary between masculine and feminine spheres of activity" (Gera 2007: 77-78).

[12] Roach & Eicher 1979: 7-8

[13] van Wees 2005: 44-45.

[14] Lee 2015: 28.

garment may have looked like, since στολή is a broad term for any attire, even armor.[15] Also significant is the implication in this note that each conquering group adopts qualities from the vanquished; thus when the Medes conquer the Assyrians, they adopt the Assyrian garment originally created by Semiramis, and when the Persians later conquer the Medes, they too take on Semiramis' design.

Though Herodotus names Lydia (rather than Assyria) as the origin of what becomes known as Persian clothing, the trajectory of the clothing originates in a culture that is defeated by the Persian empire, just as in Ctesias' account. Throughout Herodotus' text, Persians are noted for wearing trousers in battle, both by the narrator (7.61.1) and by characters within the text via direct speech (1.71.2, 5.49).[16] From Herodotus' first narrated conflict involving the Persians, we hear of the importance of their clothing for the outcome of a battle. This first mention of Persian trousers happens entirely among non-Greeks, when the Lydian Sandanis discusses with Croesus an upcoming battle against the Persians: Ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἐπ᾽ ἄνδρας τοιούτους στρατεύεσθαι παρασκευάζεαι, οἳ σκυτίνας μὲν ἀναξυρίδας, σκυτίνην δὲ τὴν ἄλλην ἐσθῆτα φορέουσι […] τοῦτο μὲν δή, εἰ νικήσεις, τί σφεας ἀπαιρήσεαι, τοῖσί γε μὴ ἔστι μηδέν; ("O king, you are preparing to march against men of this sort, who wear leather trousers and other leather clothing […] and in fact, if you are victorious, what will you take away from men who have nothing?" Hdt. 1.71.2-3). When Sandanis' speech ends, the narrator continues by similarly noting that the

[15] E.g. Hdt. 1.80.2: ἄνδρας ἐπ᾽ αὐτὰς ἀνέβησε ἱππάδα **στολὴν** ἐνεσταλμένους ("upon [the camels] he put men equipped with cavalry **armor**").

[16] The accompanying Medes and Sakai Scythians wear trousers as well (7.62.1, 7.64.2); see below.

Persians at this time were not a luxurious people.[17] Though the narrator confirms Sandanis' assessment of the Persians' humility in appearance, Sandanis is incorrect in his assertion of Lydian superiority, as the Persians are victorious in the subsequent battle. The Lydians' clothing proves to be inferior to that of the Persians. The narrator's remark credits the Persians' eventual opulence to this very battle in which they conquer the Lydians and incorporate them into their empire, including an adoption of Lydian (and later, Median) attire.[18] The Lydian origin of Persian clothing ties in with Herodotus' overall approach to the Persian wars, which likewise begins with the Lydians and their luxury. The noted shift in sartorial practice leads the Persians into luxuriance and ultimately, when they face the Greeks, defeat. When the Persians adopt Lydian dress, they also adopt the role of the defeated party, which will be ruinous against the Greeks and their more successful attire.

In the central book of the *Histories*, the Persians are again a threatening force moving in from the east, this time against the Ionian Greeks. The motif of trousers as indicative of fighting ability is repeated by Aristagoras, the tyrant of Miletus who is asking the Lacedaimonians for aid: οὔτε γὰρ οἱ βάρβαροι ἄλκιμοί εἰσι, ὑμεῖς τε τὰ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον ἐς τὰ μέγιστα ἀνήκετε ἀρετῆς πέρι. ἥ τε μάχη αὐτῶν ἐστὶ τοιήδε, τόξα καὶ αἰχμὴ βραχέα· ἀναξυρίδας δὲ ἔχοντες ἔρχονται ἐς τὰς μάχας καὶ κυρβασίας ἐπὶ τῇσι κεφαλῇσι. οὕτω εὐπετέες χειρωθῆναί εἰσι ("for the barbarians

[17] Πέρσῃσι γάρ, πρὶν Λυδοὺς καταστρέψασθαι, ἦν οὔτε ἁβρὸν οὔτε ἀγαθὸν οὐδέν ("For the Persians, until they subdued the Lydians, had nothing either luxurious or good," 1.71.4).

[18] Herodotus remarks overtly on the common appropriation of foreign customs by Persia: ξεινικὰ δὲ νόμαια Πέρσαι προσίενται ἀνδρῶν μάλιστα. καὶ γὰρ δὴ τὴν Μηδικὴν ἐσθῆτα νομίσαντες τῆς ἑωυτῶν εἶναι καλλίω φορέουσι καὶ ἐς τοὺς πολέμους τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους θώρηκας ("the Persians admit foreign customs most of all men. For indeed they wear Median clothing because they believe it to be finer than their own, and [they wear] Egyptian chestpieces into battle," 1.135).

are not accustomed to war, and you have reached the greatest accomplishments in war in terms of virtue. Their combat is in the following manner, i.e arrows and short spears; they go into battles wearing trousers and hats upon their heads. For this reason they are easily subdued," Hdt. 5.49.3-4). Pelling has persuasively shown that Aristagoras' speech has several narrative ties to both the first and ninth books, cementing its programmatic position at the center of the *Histories* and, narratively, the beginning of direct conflict between Greeks and Persians.[19] Like Sandanis before him, Aristagoras claims that his side will be victorious due to the opponent's sartorial practices.[20] Clothing is again a medium through which upcoming battles are examined; the Greek army anticipates a victory due to their observations of Persian attire and its perceived inferiority.

The particularities of the Persians' dress at this point in the narrative present some logistical confusion. In the first book of the *Histories*, Sandanis mocks the Persians for wearing trousers, implying that the Lydians do not; after the Lydians are defeated, the Persians adopt their style of dress. Following this logic, one would conclude that the Persians no longer wear trousers into battle. Indeed, Herodotus mentions that the Persians happily adopt from other cultures, and in fact prefer Egyptian-style armor as well as Median dress (1.135.1). From this comment, it is possible to presume that the Persians have adopted a style of Lydian dress that is not worn into battle while retaining the battle attire they took over from the Medes. Herodotus does in fact say that the Persians wear trousers into battle when he catalogues the various components of their army (7.61.1), as do the Medes (7.62.1); this corresponds well with the above passage from the first book that claims the Persians adopted Median attire, as well as a

[19] Pelling 2007: *passim*.

[20] Branscome 2010 does not address the speech by Sandanis, focusing only on the collective Persian contingent that faces the Greeks.

convenient parallel to the adoption of Persian national dress from the Medes as described by Ctesias.

Equally as distinctive as the trousers are the *kurbasiai* worn on their heads. Branscome states that the mention of *kurbasiai*, a term often used by comic authors to denote foreignness, adds a derisive note to Aristagoras' description.[21] Based on the generalized nature of this detail, as well as Aristagoras' reticence in specifically naming the Persians in his speech, Branscome suggests that the *barbaroi* in the speech are meant to exclude the Persians, who would be neither easy to defeat nor necessarily dressed inferiorly, citing Herodotus' claim that the Persian contingent wore the greatest armor and was the best of the collected army.[22] While I agree that the trousers and *kurbasiai* are rhetorical motifs meant to evoke otherness and inferiority, Branscome's reading ignores the context of Herodotus' own remark that praises the Persians (7.83.1); Herodotus does not claim to be describing the entire Persian contingent, but rather the Immortals, a specialized group of ten thousand soldiers who served under a different general than the Persian infantry. Thus, when Aristagoras refers to *barbaroi*, he refers to the entire collected army and identifies their clothing as a sign of weakness. In fact, the sartorial motif continues when Herodotus lists the various national contingents of the Persian army, describing their arms and clothes and noting that the Persians (7.61.1) and Medes (7.62.1), as well as the Sakai (7.64.2), are wearing trousers into battle.[23]

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[21] Branscome 2010: 11.

[22] Ibid.: 11-12, citing Hdt. 7.83.2: κόσμον δὲ πλεῖστον παρείχοντο διὰ πάντων Πέρσαι καὶ αὐτοὶ ἄριστοι ἦσαν ("the Persians furnished the greatest arrangement throughout all [the contingents], and they themselves were the best").

[23] Interestingly, the Sakai, rather than the Persians, are also noted in this passage for wearing *kurbasiai* (11).

As the motif and narrative progress, Persian attire becomes symbolic of the Persians themselves.[24] When the Greek and Persian armies first meet in battle – after Aristagoras' anticipatory speech, and well before Plataia – the conflict opens with the narrator noting the following:

> Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ ἐπείτε ἀθρόοι προσέμειξαν τοῖσι βαρβάροισι, ἐμάχοντο ἀξίως λόγου. πρῶτοι μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλήνων πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν δρόμῳ ἐς πολεμίους ἐχρήσαντο, πρῶτοι δὲ ἀνέσχοντο ἐσθῆτά τε Μηδικὴν ὁρῶντες καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας ταύτην ἐσθημένους· τέως δὲ ἦν τοῖσι Ἕλλησι καὶ τὸ οὔνομα τὸ Μήδων φόβος ἀκοῦσαι.
>
> When the Athenians all together met with the barbarians, they battled in a manner worthy of telling, for of all the Greeks we know of, they first went into battles at a run, and they first endured seeing both the Median clothing and the men wearing it; until this time, to hear even the name of the Medes was a fear for the Greeks. (Hdt. 6.112.3)

The Athenians' place of primacy among Greeks is due to two factors: being first to practice a military technique of running at the enemy, and being first to face the Persians' clothing[25] and men wearing Persian clothing despite a previous fear at their very name. While we may expect to hear a distinction made on account of military innovation, the twice-mentioned aspect of clothing here is placed on equal footing with the innovation. By this point in the text, Persian clothing has become representative of the Persian forces themselves.

By the final book, we discover that, unlike Sandanis, Aristagoras is accurate in his claims, as the Persians eventually fall to the Greeks at Plataia. Lest the audience forget the reason

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[24] While in certain ideological contexts, the terms οἱ Πέρσαι and οἱ Μῆδοι become conflated, here I follow Tuplin (1994: 247-248) in viewing the two appellations in Hdt. 6.112 as intentionally distinct. Tuplin looks to 7.62, wherein the Medes and Persians are said to be wearing the same type of armor: Μηδικὴ γὰρ αὕτη ἡ σκευή ἐστι καὶ οὐ Περσική ("for this equipment is Median and not Persian," 7.62.1). This recalls the Persian tendency to adopt the clothing of peoples under their rule as discussed above.

[25] Herodotus describes the clothing as Median, despite referring to the entire Persian army; while this may seem contradictory, he is likely describing the battle armor that the Persians adopted from the Medes (see above), making it both Median and Persian.

for the Persians' defeat, the narrator makes his thoughts clear when reflecting upon the death of Mardonios and his men: πλεῖστον γάρ σφεας ἐδηλέετο ἡ ἐσθὴς ἔρημος ἐοῦσα ὅπλων· πρὸς γὰρ ὁπλίτας ἐόντες γυμνῆτες ἀγῶνα ἐποιεῦντο ("in fact their clothing, being without armor, harmed them the most; for they made battle against hoplites who were lightly-armed," 9.63.2). The Greek assumption of sartorial superiority has been fulfilled. To further emphasize the inferiority of the Persian armor, Herodotus describes the Greek hoplites – who by nature of the title ὁπλίται must be bearing armor (ὅπλα) – as γυμνῆτες, which must here mean "lightly-armed", though it is also a word used by authors both earlier and later than Herodotus to mean "unclothed."[26] The notion of being so lightly armed as to be nearly unclothed contrasts strongly with the specific attire that the Persians are described as wearing. By including the term γυμνῆτες for the hoplites, Herodotus suggests that the Persians did not lose due to the Greeks having much heavier armor, but that *even* the lightly-armed soldiers were able to defeat the Persians.

The motif of Persian dress is thus overtly connected with battle outcomes at what may be considered the Persian army's three most pivotal appearances in the text (1.71, 5.49, 9.63). Their very first battle occurs against the Lydians, and the ensuing Persian victory establishes their military dominance in the narrative. Herodotus' middle book brings the audience to another

[26] The term used in Hdt. 9.63.2 for the Persian garments is ἐσθής. Of the 48 time this word occurs in Herodotus (following the list in Powell 1960 s.v.), it almost always refers to clothing worn outside of a military context and would not normally be translated as "armor" (σκευή is more common, particularly in the catalog of those accompanying the Persian army, 7.61-99, and distinct from ἐσθής in 4.203.4). By my reckoning the exceptions to this usage are the above passage (9.63.2) and 1.71.2 in the same speech of Sandanis discussed earlier, as well as 6.112.3 (also discussed above), 7.80 in the catalog of Persian army contingents, and 9.80.2 in the aftermath of Plataia, when Greek soldiers loot the bodies of the soldiers mentioned in 9.63.2. These occurrences of ἐσθής are the only clearly military uses of ἐσθής, and they are each associated with the Persians (or their immediate followers) in battle.

anticipation of conflict, this time the collective Greeks against the now-larger Persian Empire. In preparing for their first potential military engagement against Persia, the Persian soldiers' attire is again a major identifying mark in battle, as it is also when the two armies first meet. The culmination of this anticipation occurs in book 9 after the final battle of the Greco-Persian conflict at Plataia, when the narrator states directly that the Persians' attire was their greatest weakness. The change from Persia's military supremacy to their downfall can be traced partly through the lineage of their sartorial practices; the clothing of the conquered Lydians remains conquered, even when worn by Persians and Medes. Though the depth of description varies, both Ctesias and Herodotus trace the trajectory of clothing as it passes to subsequent conquering peoples. The result is a general blurring of nations within the Persian Empire, with little distinction made among the components of the larger group unless, as with the catalog of army contingents in the seventh book, the narrative purpose is to explicitly highlight difference.

1.1.2 Individual Cultural Attire

The same identity distinction that we see with the adoption of culturally specific dress also happens on a smaller, more individual scale in the works of both authors.[27] Just as Herodotus uses trousers as an identification of Persian soldiers, specific items of clothing can be emblematic of certain offices or positions. A single distinctive piece of clothing is able to demarcate a notable individual, and such items are frequently gifted to another person, often with

[27] The motif is present in Ctesias, but each of the few examples falls under a separate distinctive category in this chapter, and each will be discussed at the appropriate point. Section 1.1.2 will thus necessarily be privileged toward representation in Herodotus.

violent results.[28] Even in these contexts, the clothing is what marks an individual's status or role to any onlookers. A simple adjustment of clothing reflects the changing nature of the person wearing the item; Herodotus reports that when Xerxes reaches Abdera on his retreat from Greece, "he first loosened his belt in his flight back from Athens, thinking that he was safe" (πρῶτον ἐλύσατο τὴν ζώνην φεύγων ἐξ Ἀθηνέων ὀπίσω, ὡς ἐν ἀδείῃ ἐών, 8.120). Although Herodotus claims he does not believe the men of Abdera who relate this tale, he nevertheless records this detail. There are several possible reasons for including an account that the author allegedly disbelieves, including narrative variation and general characterization, and each of these could be true in the present passage.[29] Following Wesselmann on 8.118 (just prior to the belt remark), I read 8.120 as a case where Herodotus, despite disbelieving the account, records an inaccurate story in order to express some greater "truth" than what is simply accurate.[30] Because Herodotus additionally notes that Xerxes' motivation to alter his clothing comes from his belief that he is out of danger, the episode signifies a change in the king's perceived safety level and mental comfort. While Xerxes may not have actually loosened his belt upon leaving

[28] Example of distinctive individual clothing: Pythermos dons a bright purple cloak in order to spread rumors of its greatness among the Lacedaimonians and draw people to admire it, then he appeals to the amassed crowd to support the Ionians (Hdt. 1.152). Examples of gifts that result in violence: Syloson giving a cloak to Darius in exchange for nonviolent control of Samos, which Darius later retracts when he attacks the island (Hdt. 3.139-147); Xerxes' gift of a robe to his mistress Artaÿnte, who is mutilated when the queen discovers the affair (Hdt. 9.109-113); Mithridates' bragging about the acts that earned him finery from Artaxerxes leads to his execution for ingratitude (Ct. F26 §15-16).

[29] Wesselmann 2017: 139.

[30] On 8.118: "...but in the next chapter he insists it never happened. Nevertheless, the story serves as a perfect characterisation of the Persian king – even if it is factually untrue: Herodotus has chosen the story for its basic message, its likelihood and typicality, what the Greeks called *eikos*, not for its degree of factual truth" (ibid.).

Europe, we – and Herodotus – can surmise that he certainly would have viewed his return to Asia as a sign of safety, which in Herodotus' narrative is signified by an alteration of dress.

In an exchange of clothing between two individuals, the act of giving – whether as a permanent gift or as a temporary outfit – is the emphasized quality that determines the outcome for the recipient.[31] If an article of clothing is openly given without any related subterfuge or renegotiation of the terms of the exchange, the recipient is unlikely to suffer ill effects. An often-studied passage of Herodotus will illustrate an impermanent exchange that does not poorly affect the recipient of the garment.[32] In an attempt to replicate a dream and prove its divine origin, Xerxes insists that Artabanos not only sit on the throne and sleep in his bed, but he says first of all to assume the king's dress.[33] The throne alone is not enough to suggest the role of king; the sanctioned regal accoutrements must also be worn in order for the dream to appear.[34] By wearing Xerxes' royal attire, Artabanos appears to move across social boundaries, seeming to be a

[31] "Gift-giving itself is a well-attested practice of Achaemenid kings" (Brosius 1996: 74), though she cites only Greek sources, which cannot be considered strong evidence for any Achaemenid practice. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that this motif was used for Achaemenid kings throughout Greek literature. Additionally, both Herodotus and Ctesias give general viewpoints of gift-giving as a practice among the peoples they describe (e.g. Hdt. 3.20-22 & Ct. F1b §3.2, both involving eastern kings).

[32] The interpretation of Xerxes' dream is the most studied element of this episode (see Evans 1961, van Lieshout 1970, Bichler 1985, Pelling 1991); because my analysis concerns the dream's appearance to Artabanus, its meaning is not relevant.

[33] εἰ λάβοις τὴν ἐμὴν σκευὴν πᾶσαν καὶ ἐνδὺς μετὰ τοῦτο ἵζοιο ἐς τὸν ἐμὸν θρόνον, καὶ ἔπειτα ἐν κοίτῃ τῇ ἐμῇ κατυπνώσειας ("If you take all my attire and put it on, and after this sit on my throne, then also lie down in my bed," 7.15.3).

[34] As used by Herodotus, σκευή is not simply a general term for clothing but rather denotes official and often military equipment worn on the body, appearing ten times (following Powell 1960 s.v.) in the catalog of Persian army contingents (7.61-99). Moreover it is distinct from the more generalized clothing words ἐσθής and εἶμα by the narrator himself, who describes a group of Persians who were killed by Libyans for the sake of their clothing *and* their equipment (4.203.4).

monarch rather than as a ruled subject. This is only a superficial visual trick, however; Artabanos does not actually become a ruler, nor is he ever perceived as such by anyone except the god sending the dream. Moreover, if we accept Lateiner's argument that deceit "[requires] a knowing agent, usually one who works for his own profit or advance," then Xerxes and Artabanos are not creating a deception,[35] rather than trying to attain some advantage. Artabanos is simply acting to understand Xerxes' dream. Nor is it necessarily a delusion in the sense that Lateiner presents such acts; while there is an element of belief in an unproven supernatural event, there is no indication in the text that the dream has more mundane origins.[36] For Lateiner, a delusion requires that an audience be persuaded of a fictive truth through the use of trickery that falsely purports to originate from a supernatural or divine being.[37] In the account of Artabanos and Xerxes, the divine aspect is separate from the trickery. The clothing is a gift from Xerxes so that Artabanos will be able to temporarily assume a monarch's role, if only on his bodily exterior and not in a meaningful or influential way.[38] The visual perception that Artabanos is the king presents a convincing image to the god; indeed, the dream does appear to Artabanos, signifying that there is a sense of truth to his appearance. For one evening, Artabanos appears to be a king and remains a subject simultaneously.

Herodotus also tells of the actions of Skyles, a Scythian ruler with a strong affinity for all things Hellenic. Skyles is notable for the fact that he is not gifted any Greek attire, but rather he

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[35] Lateiner 1990a: 231.

[36] Ibid.: 230. For Lateiner, a delusion appears to be supernatural or divine in origin, yet is a trick perpetrated by deceitful mortals; there is no such mortal influence in the story of Xerxes' dream.

[37] Ibid.: 235; he also notes that Herodotus often reports supernatural events as if true because his audience would consider them to be possible (235).

[38] Cf. the ancient Near East king substitution ritual (Waters 2014).

appropriates it – just as his predecessor Anacharsis does with the customary rituals of Kyzikos (Hdt. 4.76-77) – and wears the garments to live a secret, more Greek lifestyle. Whereas we have seen that the Persians are a people who highly value foreign customs, Herodotus notes that the Scythians "avoid using foreign customs, not even those of other of their own people, but least of all Greek customs, as both Anacharsis and later Skyles in turn made clear" (Ξεινικοῖσι δὲ νομαίοισι καὶ οὗτοι αἰνῶς χρᾶσθαι φεύγουσι, μήτε τεῶν ἄλλων, Ἑλληνικοῖσι δὲ καὶ ἥκιστα, ὡς διέδεξαν Ἀνάχαρσίς τε καὶ δεύτερα αὖτις Σκύλης, Hdt. 4.76.1). Anacharsis comes to port at Kyzikos and observes a local festival to honor the Mother of Gods, and he swears that "if he should return to his own land safe and healthy, he will sacrifice according to the same rites the Kyzikenoi perform, and establish a night festival" (ἢν σῶς καὶ ὑγιὴς ἀπονοστήσῃ ἐς ἑωυτοῦ, θύσειν τε κατὰ ταὐτὰ κατ' ἃ ὥρα τοὺς Κυζικηνοὺς ποιεῦντας καὶ παννυχίδα στήσειν, 4.76.3), which he fulfills upon his return home. Not only does he supplant the rites of the Scythians by attempting to import foreign practices, he also takes those rites from the Greeks,[39] and the Scythian king, Saulios, kills Anacharsis for his transgression (4.76.5). Herodotus is explicit about the cause of Anacharsis' execution, saying it occured "for this reason, that he traveled abroad to Hellas and took part in foreign customs" (διὰ τοῦτο ὅτι ἐξεδήμησέ τε ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ ξεινικοῖσι ἔθεσι διεχρήσατο, 4.76.5), while also dismissing a second version of the narrative that was fabricated by the Greeks themselves (4.76.6). Among the same Scythians in their cultural isolation, Skyles later becomes king and is very much drawn to the Hellenic culture about which his mother educated him as a child, to such an extent that he disregards his own Scythian customs (4.78.3). Throughout the course of his philhellenism, Skyles makes a habit of leaving

[39] The ritual's Greek origin provides an aetiology for the Scythian distrust of Greeks (4.76.1).

his guards outside the city of the Borystheneitai, going within the city walls, and divesting himself of his Scythian attire and donning Greek clothing instead, allowing him to walk freely through the city in a performance of a Greek lifestyle. Though Skyles may physically appear Greek to a Greek or Scythian observer, particularly because he was learned in the appropriate language and habits, beneath that costume was a Scythian, who became no less a Scythian for his foreign dress. Skyles' subsequent death at the hands of the Scythians as punishment for practicing Greek habits shows us that, despite his appearance, his fellow Scythians continued to perceive him as a Scythian.

While the attire is certainly a noteworthy element of the narrative, the greater crime is admittedly that, like Anacharsis before him, Skyles also performs foreign religious practices, in particular wishing to be initiated into the rites of Bacchus Dionysus. For the Scythians, this is a threefold scandal: it is generally a foreign custom, it is specifically a Greek custom, and even more specifically, the deity in question is Dionysus. Herodotus remarks at this point that "the Scythians reproach the Hellenes regarding the Bacchic celebrations" (Σκύθαι δὲ τοῦ βακχεύειν πέρι Ἕλλησι ὀνειδίζουσι, 4.79.3), highlighting the particular disdain they have for Dionysus and his followers. The added details of Bacchic worship and regular appropriation of Greek dress, in addition to Skyles' role as king of the Scythians, create a greater potential for disaster than Anacharsis faced. Prior to the initiation, Skyles is able to keep his alternative adventures somewhat hidden, but the amused Borystheneitai invite Scythians to watch the ritual and betray him to the Scythians, which results in his execution at his brother's hand.[40] As Herodotus

[40] They are amused because the Scythians regularly mock their rites, so in return they alert the Scythians that their own king is partaking in the very rituals that they mock (4.79.4), something the Scythians consider "an exceedingly great misfortune" (κάρτα συμφορὴν μεγάλην, 4.79.5).

concludes, and as he shows with the stories of Anacharsis and Skyles, "thus the Scythians protect their own customs, and they give such great penalties to those who additionally take up foreign customs" (οὕτω μὲν περιστέλλουσι τὰ σφέτερα νόμαια Σκύθαι, τοῖσι δὲ παρακτωμένοισι ξεινικοὺς νόμους τοιαῦτα ἐπιτίμια διδοῦσι, 4.80.5). Thus we see that cultural boundaries – whether based in monarchy or nationality – can be visually transgressed through modification of dress, even when there is no larger motive of deception or personal gain.

1.2 Deception and Disguise

The crossing of conceptual boundaries via clothing often occurs as a result of deception, whether as a disguise to protect an individual or as part of a more malicious plot. Lateiner notes that deceptions are intentional, "quick-thinking acts that promote self-preservation."[41] An easy method of deception, and one which appears in both Herodotus and Ctesias, is to temporarily modify an individual's body in order to deceive an onlooker or onlookers. As we have already seen in the previous section, sartorial modification does not always happen as part of a visual deception.[42] This visual alteration is most often achieved via clothing, as we saw above with the examples of Anacharsis and Skyles, though cosmetics and equipment are also used. Though many visual deceptions appear for personal motivation, as we will see below, there are also several episodes that occur within the context of battle. For example, Tellias instructs a band of Phokians to attack at night while being fully smeared with chalk, both on their bodies and on

[41] Lateiner 1990a: 231. For Lateiner, these deceptions, or "frauds", are distinct from a second group of unplanned "delusions" that do not seem to benefit anyone (230).

[42] See the above discussion on Artabanos and Xerxes for the reason it is excluded from the current section on deception.

their equipment; as a result, the enemy will flee in terror at this sight, and the Phokians will also be able to quickly determine who is an enemy in the midst of a dark conflict (Hdt. 8.27). The creation of a distinctive and unexpected appearance creates an element of surprise, wherein the observers may be unable to understand what they are seeing.

In a similar attempt to intimidate an enemy in battle, Semiramis creates another astounding visual deception by disguising her camels as elephants in order to match those of her Indian opponents and startle them into error, "hoping she would terrify the Indians because of their belief that there are no elephants at all beyond India" (ἐλπίζουσα καταπλήξεσθαι τοὺς Ἰνδοὺς διὰ τὸ νομίζειν αὐτοὺς μηδ' εἶναι τὸ σύνολον ἐλέφαντας ἐκτὸς τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἰνδικήν, Ct. F1b §16.8). She instructs craftsmen to secretly create likenesses of elephants from oxhide stuffed with straw, and within each likeness she positions an armed soldier and a camel to create the illusion of bestial movement while allowing for strategic control.[43] She even goes so far as to train her army's horses to not fear the camels, lest they betray the secret; this in fact is how her ruse is revealed to the enemy:

> Τὰ γὰρ εἴδωλα πόρρωθεν μὲν ὁμοίαν εἶχε τὴν πρόσοψιν τοῖς ἀληθινοῖς θηρίοις, οἷς συνήθεις ὄντες οἱ τῶν Ἰνδῶν ἵπποι τεθαρρηκότως προσίππευον, τοῖς δ' ἐγγίσασιν ἥ τε ὀσμὴ προσέβαλλεν ἀσυνήθης, καὶ τἄλλα διαφορὰν ἔχοντα πάντα παμμεγέθη τοὺς ἵππους ὁλοσχερῶς συνετάραττεν·
>
> For from afar the likenesses had the same appearance as the real beasts, to which the Indians' horses were accustomed, and they boldly charged, but an unfamiliar smell hit upon the nearest horses, and all the other things threw the horses entirely into an immense confusion. (Ct. F1b §19.3)

Though one may expect that the revelation of the false elephants would be ruinous, it is precisely the resulting chaos that allows many of Semiramis' soldiers to escape to safety whereas the

[43] Cf. Cyrus setting up wooden likenesses of Persian soldiers in order to frighten the city of Sardis into submission (Ct. F9 §4).

Indians are less able to cope, having been unprepared for their horses to react in such a way.[44] For Semiramis, the deception is successful at both levels. The external vision presented to the opposition is that Semiramis has an unexpected plethora of battle elephants at her disposal; the objective actuality, that the "elephants" are simply armed men and camels, is the key to her survival. The pluralistic animal creation aids Semiramis, who herself is a character that eludes categorical labels, in her masculine role as military leader and in her ability to merge gender categories as we saw above. The animals are "truthfully" camels, but at the same time, the perception that they are elephants has such a strong effect on the enemy that we can consider their identification as elephants to also bear truth. Gera remarks that by "using hides, straw, humans, and camels in order to create an artificial, hybrid animal, Semiramis ignores the boundaries between inanimate and animate matter, as well as between humans and animals," in addition to more general remarks about Semiramis' repeated crossing and dissolution of boundaries.[45] This transgression of conceptual categories provides the basis for this section's organization; I first demonstrate the unreliable nature of autopsy as displayed by individuals attempting to elevate their status, inasmuch as the identity they are perceived as having, then I consider Cyrus the Great's childhood story as a case study of lowering one's perceived status, an account which is recorded by three authors – Herodotus and Ctesias, who are my subjects, and Xenophon as well.

[44] Semiramis and many of her men survive, though they are not ultimately victorious in this battle.

[45] Gera 2007: 78 n. 9.

1.2.1 Elevating One's Status

Because deception involves trickery, there are numerous examples of indiviudals attempting to change the way their status is perceived, usually with an end to being considered as a higher-status individual. Indeed, Ctesias shares a story of temporary modification that aligns well with Lateiner's remark on personal gain as motivation. The eunuch Artoxares wishes to someday become king, but as a eunuch, his gender and its associated social role prevent him from class mobility. Artoxares' eventual goal is to move from a subject's role to that of monarch, but a greater boundary lies in his way: Ἀρτοξάρης ὁ εὐνοῦχος, ὃς μέγα ἠδύνατο παρὰ βασιλεῖ, ἐπιβουλεύει βασιλέα θέλων αὐτὸς βασιλεῦσαι. Πώγωνα γὰρ καὶ ὑπόρρινα προσέταξεν αὐτῷ γυναικὶ κατασκευάσαι, ἵνα ὡς ἀνὴρ φαίνοιτο ("The eunuch Artoxares, who was greatly influential to the king, plotted against the king because he himself desired to rule. For he ordered a woman to fabricate a beard and moustache for him in order that he appear to be a man," F15 §54). As this passage shows, eunuchs do not fit easily into a Western gender binary; Artoxares is neither a man nor a woman and thus is in a third category.[46] Eunuchs are associated with a completely separate set of motifs from those of men and women; they may or may not be of lower status than woman, but they are certainly othered in terms of gender by being not-men.[47] One of the stereotypically distinct qualities of a eunuch is the lack of facial hair due to the prepubescent removal of the testicles, preventing the necessary hormones from setting in.[48] Artoxares must change his appearance so that observers will believe him to be male. By being

[46] Ibid.: 81. Eunuchs and the general practice of eunuchism are discussed further in the following chapter.

[47] See, e.g., Cartledge 1993 on dual categories as privative negations. We will see similar discussions of perceived gender roles in section 1.3 of this chapter.

[48] Ringrose summarizes the physical effects of eunuchism (1994: 91-92).

perceived as male he would be a step closer to crossing the next boundary into kingship, though his plot is unsuccessful.[49] While Artoxares' plan is ultimately to breach the boundary between subject and monarch, he first attempts to use false facial hair to cross a gender boundary from eunuch to male. Further intensifying that such category navigation is fluid, the use of clothing and accessories to change the perception of one's identity is a temporary process and can always be reversed, as happens when Artoxares is exposed. The visual is again key: he was not attempting to *become* a man, but rather only to be perceived as a man until he achieved his ultimate goal of becoming monarch.

Herodotus tells of a different man attempting to attain leadership – the Athenian Peisistratus.[50] Peisistratus has already been tyrant of Athens once before being exiled, but the resulting struggle between political factions has left the Athenians desperate (Hdt. 1.60.1-2). Peisistratus' erstwhile rival Megacles offers his daughter as wife to Peisistratus if he returns to rule Athens. Both parties agree but need a way to validate Peisistratus' return from exile; he will need divine support. The gods do not follow mortal commands, however, so the two men create a grand deception in order to give the illusion of divine support:

> ἐν τῷ δήμῳ τῷ Παιανιέι ἦν γυνὴ τῇ οὔνομα ἦν Φύη, μέγαθος ἀπὸ τεσσέρων πηχέων ἀπολείπουσα τρεῖς δακτύλους καὶ ἄλλως εὐειδής· ταύτην τὴν γυναῖκα σκευάσαντες πανοπλίῃ, ἐς ἅρμα ἐσβιβάσαντες καὶ προδέξαντες σχῆμα οἷόν τι ἔμελλε εὐπρεπέστατον φανέεσθαι ἔχουσα, ἤλαυνον ἐς τὸ ἄστυ, προδρόμους κήρυκας προπέμψαντες· οἳ τὰ

[49] δι' ἧς καὶ καταμηνύεται· καὶ συλλαμβάνεται καὶ παραδίδοται Παρυσάτιδι, καὶ ἀναιρεῖται ("He was later revealed by her [i.e. the woman he asked to help him], and he was captured and delivered to Parysatis, and was killed," F15 §54).

[50] Though this passage does not deal directly with non-Greek peoples, it discusses an Athenian who does not fit the pattern of democratic citizen. The Peisistratid line predates formalized democracy in Athens, as can be gleaned from the passage's focus on Peisistratus' attempt to attain the tyranny (a form of sole rule). In addition, the Peisistratids are located in the past, i.e. with a greater temporal distance from the author.

> ἐντεταλμένα ἠγόρευον ἀπικόμενοι ἐς τὸ ἄστυ, λέγοντες τοιάδε· «ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, δέκεσθε ἀγαθῷ νόῳ Πεισίστρατον, τὸν αὐτὴ ἡ Ἀηθναίη τιμήσασα ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα κατάγει ἐς τὴν ἑωυτῆς ἀκρόπολιν.»
>
> In the Paianian deme was a woman whose name was Phye, three fingers short of four cubits in stature and otherwise beautiful; having equipped this woman with a full set of armor, they led her up onto a chariot and they explained a plan by which she would be able to appear most plausible, and they led her into the city, sending heralds running ahead; when the heralds arrived in the city they proclaimed what was commanded, saying the following: "Athenians, receive with a good mind Peisistratus, whom Athena herself leads to her own acropolis, having honored him especially of all men." (Hdt. 1.60.4-5)

To imitate the presence of a deity, Peisistratus and Megacles utilize Phye, whose remarkable physique – she is very tall (μέγαθος ἀπὸ τεσσέρων πηχέων ἀπολείπουσα τρεῖς δακτύλους) and attractive (εὐειδής) – makes her well-suited for the men's plan.[51] Though these qualities of her appearance are enough to draw the attention of Peisistratus and Megacles, her body must be further modified before the deception can be fully manifested. Phye is clothed with garments that suggest the presence of Athena (σκευάσαντες πανοπλίῃ). The visuality of the trick is further designated by the mention that Phye is put on a chariot and prepared to appear most plausible (εὐπρεπέστατον φανέεσθαι) as the goddess. The attire is the final step in making a mortal woman appear to be a divinity. Her height and beauty coupled with the proclamations that Athena accompanies Peisistratus cannot make the illusion effective without the addition of particular clothing. Once the visual element is added, the proclamation orchestrated by Peisistratus and Megacles emphasizes and affirms through the phrases **αὐτὴ** ἡ Ἀηθναίη and τὴν **ἑωυτῆς** ἀκρόπολιν that the woman on display is indeed Athena, adding an aural element to the deception.

[51] For the qualities of height and beauty as desirable and remarkable in Herodotus' inquiry, cf. Pigres and Mantyes using their tall and beautiful sister (ἀδελφεὴν μεγάλην τε καὶ εὐειδέα) to draw the attention of Darius (Hdt. 5.12-13), and Nitetis (κάρτα μεγάλη τε καὶ εὐειδὴς, Hdt. 3.1), who is likewise adorned in finery and presented to a king.

When Herodotus tells us that the ruse was successful, he highlights the now-loosened boundary between divine and mortal: οἱ ἐν τῷ ἄστεϊ πειθόμενοι τὴν γυναῖκα εἶναι αὐτὴν τὴν θεὸν προσεύχοντό τε τὴν ἄνθρωπον καὶ ἐδέκοντο Πεισίστρατον ("the men in the city, having been persuaded that the woman was the goddess herself, both worshipped the mortal woman and received Peisistratus," 1.60.5). The narrator uses the same intensifying language of the proclamation when he tells us that the citizens believed Phye was "the goddess herself" (αὐτὴν τὴν θεὸν). Moreover he notes that Phye was "worshipped" as the goddess, signifying again that the people perceived her to be immortal, yet in the same phrase she is called τὴν ἄνθρωπον. Herodotus directly characterizes the divinely-dressed Phye in terms of her mortality. This shows that, although the intended observers were allegedly deceived and saw her as a goddess, Phye's movement from mortal to immortal was only one of appearance and perception; throughout the entire ruse, she remained a fully mortal woman, as far as the reader is concerned. For the witnessing Athenians, however, the woman they see *is* Athena.

In addition, Herodotus introduces the Phye episode by referring to the deception as "silliest by far, as I find it" (εὐηθέστατον, ὡς ἐγὼ εὑρίσκω, μακρῷ, 1.60.3) at a time in the narrative when the Greeks – and particularly the Athenians – were already distinguished above the *barbaroi* in cleverness and being free from foolishness (καὶ δεξιώτερον καὶ εὐηθείης ἠλιθίου ἀπηλλαγμένον, 1.60.3). Scholars read this opening as an anti-Athenian remark, suggesting that "according to Herodotus, the Athenians' gullibility is extreme"[52] and that the author's remark is "a confession of being puzzled by it himself."[53] I follow Blok in understanding the procession as

[52] Anhalt 2008: 273.

[53] Blok 2000: 17. In this chapter Blok also discusses the similar treatment of the procession in the *Athenaion Politeia,* which relies heavily on Herodotus' version.

intended to assert Peisistratus' military success, rather than an attempt to actually convince the observers that a deity is present.[54] By repeatedly mentioning the Athenians' noted intelligence in addition to the foolishness of the display, we need not accept the superficial assumption that the Athenians were fully deceived; indeed, Peisistratus does not require belief on their part, only that the observers "would understand the event as a *staged* procession of Athena with a hero, fashioned after familiar imagery."[55] The Athenians would necessarily accept the trick as a performative assertion of political identity, and they would respond accordingly. A deceptive display can nevertheless portray one truth – in this case, that Peisistratus' rule is legitimate – by hiding another truth, that the goddess is simply a mortal woman from a neighboring deme. While Herodotus indicates that the Athenians believed the ruse, the reality of the situation concerning the Athenians' credulity is doubted by many scholars.

1.2.2 Cyrus the Great

While the examples discussed so far have involved the use of clothing to elevate one's social category, a person may also appear to be in a lower hierarchical category due to physical modifications through the use of clothing. Sometimes, the new perceived status is meant to

[54] Blok is persuasive in noting the connections between Peisistratus' display and epic scenes of heroic triumph with divine accompaniment (ibid.: 45-48); also cf. Hdt. 4.180 for a potential religious connection as well, wherein the Auseans dress up their fairest girl and process her as Athena in a yearly festival.

[55] Blok 2000: 44 (emphasis original). Though Blok argues that the Athenians would not have believed Phye was Athena, Herodotus certainly presents them as credulous, and I am here concerned primarily with Herodotus' presentation.

simply startle the observer,[56] but more often the change is still a means of deception wherein a superficial presentation disguises the objective truth beneath while communicating a more general truth. One of the greatest deceptions utilizing attire is that involving the young Cyrus. Cyrus' lineage and early family history are represented very differently by Herodotus and Ctesias, yet both authors include details of clothing as a meaningful component of the story. An additional reason for choosing Cyrus' youth as a point of exploring temporary modification is that, as a prominent figure in non-Persian literature,[57] we can compare Herodotus' and Ctesias' versions of the story to that of Xenophon in order to establish which elements are unique to one author and which are likely part of the greater tradition associated with Cyrus.

Though he acknowledges that there are several potential traditions of Cyrus' biography, Herodotus presents the version he heard from Persians "who do not wish to exalt the details of Cyrus but to speak the actual story" (οἱ μὴ βουλόμενοι σεμνοῦν τὰ περὶ Κῦρον ἀλλὰ τὸν ἐόντα λέγειν λόγον, 1.95.1) and tells the story of Cyrus' origins through the mouth of Mitradates, a herdsman who pastures his flock in the nearby hills.[58] When Mitradates is given a newborn to

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[56] In order to torment the deposed Egyptian king Psammenitos (διεπειρᾶτο αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχής, "tested his spirit," 3.14), Cambyses dresses Psammenitos' daughter – once a royal princess – in the clothes of a slave (ἐσθῆτι δουληίῃ) and parades her in view of Psammenitos; when he fails to respond, Cambyses then leads Psammenitos' son – along with many other young men – bound in ropes to be executed (τούς τε αὐχένας κάλῳ δεδεμένους καὶ τὰ στόματα εγκεχαλινωμένους). Psammenitos still does not respond, lamenting only when he encounters a former wealthy companion who has now been reduced to begging in the streets (Hdt. 3.14). The companion has himself visibly crossed a social boundary, from wealthy elite to poor beggar; this is the transformation that actually moves Psammenitos.

[57] In addition to Greek literature, Cyrus also appears in the Babylonian Nabonidus Chronicle (a nearly-contemporaneous document which describes his conquering of Babylon) and the Hebrew Bible (esp. Ezra 1).

[58] ἐπιστάμενος περὶ Κύρου καὶ τριφασίας ἄλλας λόγων ὁδοὺς φῆναι ("I could even say three other paths of stories regarding Cyrus," 1.95.1).

expose in the wilderness, he assumes the infant is the child of a servant, not realizing that he is the son of the Median king's daughter Mandane and her Persian husband Cambyses (Hdt. 1.111.3-4); one discordant detail, however, is the child's clothing. This observable exterior betrays the reality that Cyrus is part of the royal family. The garments are nearly the first thing he notices: ὡς δὲ τάχιστα ἐσῆλθον, ὁρέω παιδίον προκείμενον ἀσπαῖρόν τε καὶ κραυγανόμενον, κεκοσμημένον χρυσῷ τε καὶ ἐσθῆτι ποικίλῃ ("As soon as I entered, I saw a child laid out gasping and crying, adorned with gold and embroidered clothing," 1.111.3). Mitradates notes the special attire, but he does not understand its importance at first. By the time he is relating the tale to his wife, he must realize what the clothing signifies, because he finds it worth a second mention: ἐθάμβεον δὲ ὁρέων χρυσῷ τε καὶ εἵμασι κεκοσμημένον, πρὸς δὲ καὶ κλαυθμὸν κατεστεῶτα ἐμφανέα ἐν Ἁρπάγου ("I was astonished when I saw that he was adorned with gold and clothing, and that he brought visible weeping into the home of Harpagus," 1.111.4). With full knowledge of Cyrus' identity, Mitradates is able to acknowledge that the fine clothing should have made him aware of the child's royal lineage. Moreover, Cyrus has not been laid out in such attire by accident; despite being feared by Astyages, the infant is allotted his rightful garments in preparation for death (1.110.1). Astyages' emotions and actions are not enough to erase Cyrus' royal identity.

Later in the narrative of Cyrus' backstory, clothing becomes a means for securing his survival. As an infant Cyrus is identifiable only by the previously-mentioned attire; Harpagus will be looking for that clothing as a sign that the infant is dead. It would seem that nobody knows what the child actually looks like, deferring instead to the easily-recognized garments. In order to ensure that Mitradates will not be punished, and that Cyrus will survive, Mitradates'

recently stillborn child is dressed in the royal attire and placed in Cyrus' cradle: τὸν μὲν ἔφερε θανατώσων παῖδα, τοῦτον μὲν παραδιδοῖ τῇ ἑωυτοῦ γυναικί, τὸν δὲ ἑωυτοῦ ἐόντα νεκρὸν λαβὼν ἔθηκε ἐς τὸ ἄγγος ἐν τῷ ἔφερε τὸν ἕτερον· κοσμήσας δὲ τῷ κόσμῳ παντὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου παιδός, φέρων ἐς τὸ ἐρημότατον τῶν ὀρέων τίθει ("The child which he bore to put to death, this one he gave over to his wife, and his own child being dead, he took it up and placed it into the cradle in which he carried the other; having adorned it with all the adornment of the other child, he carried it to the most desolate part of the hills and placed it there," Hdt. 1.113.1-2). The change of clothing is the detail that makes possible Cyrus' eventual acquisition of power. The visual exterior conveys a possible truth – that the dead infant is Cyrus – while beneath the garments the actuality could be correctly ascertained. Harpagus notices only the clothing, however, and the deception is successful; the stillborn infant in the fine garments is given a royal burial as Cyrus while ensuring that the actual Cyrus, dressed as he must be in meager garments after this point, will survive to become king.

Ctesias' version of Cyrus' origin is vastly different. Though his Cyrus is also reared away from the palace, he does so because that is the home he is born into (Ct. F8d §3); his extremely poor parents are Atradates, a thief (ἐλῄστευεν ὑπὸ πενίας, "he practiced robbery due to need"), and Argoste, a goatherdess (αἰπολοῦσα). Despite his alternate parentage, the narrative still requires a sartorial component to ensure Cyrus will be able to eventually become king. The ability of an impoverished youth to gain access to royalty is explained outright: Νόμος ἐγένετο ἐν Μέδοις, ὅστις πένης τρογῆς ἕνεκα προσίῃ ἀνδρὶ εὐπόρῳ ἑαυτὸν διδοὺς, ὅπως τρέφοιτό τε καὶ ἀμπέχοιτο, ἴσα καὶ δοῦλον νομίζεσθαι ἐκείνου· ἢν δὲ μὴ παρέχῃ ταῦτα ὁ λαβών, ἐξεῖναι παρ' ἄλλον ἀποχωρεῖν ("There was a practice among the Medes that whoever was poor by birth

would submit and give himself over to a wealthy man, in order that he be fostered and clothed, and is believed to be equal to that man's slave; but if the one who received him does not provide these things, it is permissible for him to depart for another master," Ct. F8d §2). A social contract exists wherein a poor man – in this case, Cyrus – may offer himself to a richer man as his slave; in return, the richer man must foster and clothe the poor man. These are not frivolous instructions, as the narrator also suggests that the rich man is under obligation to provide these services by mentioning the provision that the poor man may leave to offer his services to another if his needs are not met. By participating in this system, Cyrus becomes a cleaner in the royal palace, then moves through the ranks of servants – from outdoor to indoor cleaner, to torchbearer – before finally becoming cupbearer to king Astyages under the supervision of Artembares. It is this course, in which clothing and fosterage are provided, that allows for the social mobility through which Cyrus has access to the king and, later, to the kingship itself. Though this seems like a small and perhaps uninteresting detail, the fact that clothing is mentioned again as Cyrus gets promoted shows the strong connection between social position and attire. The first time that he is moved to a higher position, the narrator notes that the initial step is that he is given "a better garment" (βελτίω [...] στολὴν, F8d §4). While clothing is not used deceptively in Ctesias' narrative, it is nevertheless tied very closely to the social ranks that Cyrus traverses on his path to kingship.

Though I am focusing on Herodotus and Ctesias because of a similarly-declared intent to describe foreign peoples as a whole, I would like to consider Xenophon's version of Cyrus' origins in the *Cyropaedia* alongside the other accounts. Just as Herodotus and Ctesias differ in their treatment of Cyrus' biography, Xenophon similarly follows his own version, which results

in three varied narratives involving the same figure.[59] Cizek ties each author's approach to an external trend in literature, suggesting that Herodotus follows the conventions of tragedy, Ctesias of more atypical tragedy (e.g. the later plays of Euripides) and early hints of romance, and Xenophon converts the story into a Socratic and political framework.[60] Moreover, each author may have used different or varied source material for Cyrus' life story; as mentioned above, Herodotus knew at least three alternate variations. We must keep these multifold approaches distinct when considering the Cyrus narratives, though even among such diverse treatments we find elements of commonality.

Xenophon follows Herodotus in naming Mandane and Cambyses as Cyrus' parents, though there is no suggestion of the child being unwanted by anyone in the family, nor does any person have a prophetic dream about Cyrus' future as ruler of Asia.[61] The opposite seems to be true; upon first meeting his maternal grandfather Astyages, twelve-year-old Cyrus is happily welcomed into the palace at the king's invitation. Though the circumstances of Xenophon's account of Cyrus' biography differ greatly from those of Herodotus and Ctesias, interestingly clothing once again plays a key role in facilitating Cyrus' movement toward kingship. When he first arrives at the court and embraces Astyages,

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[59] I.e. Xenophon does not claim autopsy or that he is presenting a history of a people, two qualities that unite Herodotus and Ctesias, though cf. Harman 2008: *passim* (esp. 71) for reading the *Cyropaedia* as ethnography while also acknowledging the problematic nature of ascribing the work to any single genre.

[60] Cizek 1975: 538.

[61] The dream is a common feature of both Herodotus' and Ctesias' accounts: Herodotus tells of Astyages having dreams that Mandane's child will rule Asia (1.107-108), but in Ctesias' version it is Argoste herself who has a dream (F8d §9).

> ὁρῶν δὴ αὐτὸν κεκοσμημένον καὶ ὀφθαλμῶν ὑπογραφῇ καὶ χρώματος ἐντρίψει καὶ κόμαις προσθέτοις, ἃ δὴ νόμιμα ἦν ἐν Μήδοις· ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα Μηδικά ἐστι, καὶ οἱ πορφυροῖ χιτῶνες καὶ οἱ κάνδυες καὶ οἱ στρεπτοὶ οἱ περὶ τῇ δέρῃ καὶ τὰ ψέλια τὰ περὶ ταῖς χερσίν, ἐν Πέρσαις δὲ τοῖς οἴκοι καὶ νῦν ἔτι πολὺ καὶ ἐσθῆτες φαυλότεραι καὶ δίαιται εὐτελέστεραι· ὁρῶν δὴ τὸν κόσμον τοῦ πάππου, ἐμβλέπων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν· ὦ μῆτερ, ὡς καλός μοι ὁ πάππος.
>
> In fact, when he [Cyrus] saw that he [Astyages] was adorned with eyeliner and cosmetic pigment and a wig, things which are customary among the Medes (for all these things are Median – purple tunics and shirts, collars around the neck and bracelets around the hands – but among the Persians at home even still today their clothes are much simpler and their livelihoods more frugal); when he saw his grandfather's adornment, he looked at him and said, "Mother, how lovely my grandfather is." (X. *Cyr*. 1.3.2)

Immediately after greeting Astyages, Cyrus is struck by the man's attire, which we are told is characteristically Median and would thus have been noteworthy to Cyrus after being raised in Persia. Not only does Cyrus observing Astyages' finery represent the contrast of Media and Persia, it also provides an opportunity for Cyrus to make a strong connection with the current king. By vocally admiring the Median adornment – which includes cosmetics and jewelry as well as expensive clothing – Cyrus flatters Astyages to become closer to him, and clothing is the signifier that he has been successful in this endeavor: ἀντασπαζόμενος δὲ ὁ πάππος αὐτὸν καὶ στολὴν καλὴν ἐνέδυσε καὶ στρεπτοῖς καὶ ψελίοις ἐτίμα καὶ ἐκόσμει, καὶ εἴ ποι ἐξελαύνοι, ἐφ' ἵππου χρυσοχαλίνου περιῆγεν, ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτὸς εἰώθει πορεύεσθαι. ὁ δὲ Κῦρος ἅτε παῖς ὢν καὶ φιλόκαλος καὶ φιλότιμος ἥδετο τῇ στολῇ ("And after greeting him in return his grandfather put him in a beautiful cloak and honored and adorned him with necklaces and bracelets, and if he went out anywhere, he went about on a golden-bridled horse, just as Astyages himself was accustomed to do. And Cyrus, inasmuch as he was a boy who loved beauty and honor, delighted in the cloak," X. *Cyr*. 1.3.3). The reward for praising the king's attire is jewelry and clothing, which Cyrus is clearly pleased to receive.[62] Moreover, the cloak is described as καλὴν,

[62] Cf. note 48 above.

emphasizing its attractiveness and visual appeal; its beauty is particularly important for the φιλόκαλος Cyrus.

Whether clothing is used as a deception or as a gift, its importance is based in the innate visuality of dress. This visuality of this exchange is further emphasized by the *Cyropaedia*'s narrator in the repetition of vocabulary of seeing and beauty: **ὁρῶν** δὴ αὐτὸν **κεκοσμημένον** […] **ὁρῶν** δὴ τὸν **κόσμον** τοῦ πάππου, **ἐμβλέπων** αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν· ὦ μῆτερ, ὡς **καλός** μοι ὁ πάππος.[63] Astyages rewards Cyrus not only for the flattery but also for properly recognizing and understanding the connotations of his specific attire and adornment. After all, Astyages is more than a common Mede; he is the king of the Medes, and thus his clothing would be even more ornate than that of other Medes. Additionally, Harman has shown that throughout Xenophon's works generally and in the *Cyropaedia* specifically, vision is a highlighted theme that expresses relationships of power and imperial spectacle.[64] Extending her discussion, this scene of familial interaction reads as a monarch assessing his heir to determine how he may perceive others and in turn be perceived as king; Astyages is certainly pleased with Cyrus' interpretation of his finery, thus his reward is attire befitting a monarch.

As in Xenophon's account, the highlighting of adornment and sight through vocabulary appears also in Herodotus' depiction of Cyrus:[65] **ὁρέω** παιδίον […] **κεκοσμημένον** χρυσῷ τε καὶ ἐσθῆτι **ποικίλῃ** (1.111.3); ἐθάμβεον δὲ **ὁρέων** χρυσῷ τε καὶ εἵμασι **κεκοσμημένον**, πρὸς δὲ καὶ

[63] See above for translations. All bolded emphasis is mine, unless otherwise noted.

[64] Harman 2008, though she admits (74) to focusing only on the scenes of imperial conquering for her chapter, which thus necessarily omits the encounter between Astyages and Cyrus. Cf. also Harman 2012 on the *Agesilaus*.

[65] Unfortunately, without Ctesias' original text, we cannot know with certainty whether he used similar language of visuality.

κλαυθμὸν κατεστεῶτα **ἐμφανέα** ἐν Ἁρπάγου (1.111.4); **κοσμήσας** δὲ τῷ **κόσμῳ** παντὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου παιδός (1.113.2).[66] The appearance of Cyrus' clothing here is a clear sign of his identity, marking him generally as a member of the royal family and specifically as the child who is to be put to death. The display and viewing of the garments becomes a "proof" of Cyrus' death: ἐλθὼν δὲ ἐς τοῦ Ἁρπάγου **ἀποδεικνύναι** ἔφη ἕτοιμος εἶναι τοῦ παιδίου τὸν νέκυν. πέμψας δὲ ὅ Ἅρπαγος τῶν ἑωυτοῦ δορυφόρων τοὺς πιστοτάτους **εἶδέ** τε διὰ τούτων καὶ ἔθαψε τοῦ βουκόλου τὸ παιδίον ("Having gone to the home of Harpagus he [Mitradates] said that he was ready to display the corpse of the child. And after Harpagus sent the most trustworthy of his spearmen, through them he saw and buried the herdsman's child," Hdt. 1.113.2-3). Mitradates presents a truth to Harpagus, that the child wearing Cyrus' clothing is dead, but he hides the additional truth that Cyrus is not the dead child. As with Peisistratus' deception using Phye,[67] the narrator here reminds us that the specific appearance is only a ruse by naming the individual's true identity.

1.3 Dressing as Women

Perhaps the greatest visual modification that allows for transgression of social boundaries involves gendered clothing. Just as certain pieces of clothing identify the wearer in terms of their national affiliation, apparel can indicate the wearer's gender. From Greece we have evidence for brassiere-like undergarments, and in a more general consideration appropriate clothing for particular contexts was regulated, with distinctions made along gender lines;[68] Foxhall also notes that the very nature of attire allows one to "[partition] the body from the space of the rest of the

[66] See above for translations.

[67] Section 1.2.1 (above).

[68] Stafford 2005 (undergarments); Mills 1984 & Foxhall 2013: 107-111 (gender-specific clothing).

world, and may shield people from their surroundings," creating a visual partition between individuals.[69] Excluding the texts discussed here and considering instead objects featuring images of women, we can understand that non-Greek cultures likewise have distinctive types of clothing for women; Brosius describes many types of objects that depict women with garments and hairstyles that can be identified as distinctly Persian through comparison with figures depicted on the Persepolis reliefs.[70] A particular visual depiction that combines elements of both gender and foreignness is the motif of Amazons. As summarized by Veness, artistic images of Amazons prior to the Persian Wars...

> [emphasize] their status both as women and as warriors. [...] It adds to the otherness of amazons, the way in which they are unlike Greeks, but this coexists with the amazons' likeness to Greeks. [...] The amazons show that one and the same people can be both outsider and insider at the same time, both foreign and familiar.[71]

She continues to note that foreign dress is an original element of visual representations of Amazons, which leads to the natural shift toward Persian dress (including trousers) following the conflicts of the early 5th century;[72] moving beyond 480 BCE, Amazons become more feminized in art and rarely wear foreign attire at all, relying less on the ethnic distinction and more on their womanhood.[73] Ultimately this trend of combined motifs reveals a tension regarding women in general and how men view them, which can similarly be seen in literary depictions of men dressing in feminine clothing.

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[69] Foxhall 2013: 114; see also Cairns 2002: 73-75 for veiling as a more specific means of separating oneself from surroundings.

[70] Brosius 1996: 84-87.

[71] Veness 2002: 99.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.: 102-103.

Most of the peoples discussed by Herodotus and Ctesias – including Greek peoples – have patriarchal social systems, where men have greater institutional power than women (and eunuchs). Despite this shared structural context and the fact that each author includes two extended descriptions of men dressing as women, the resulting portrayals differ significantly between the authors in terms of how observers identify individuals; the wearers' motivations prove to be meaningfully distinct as well. Herodotus tells of groups of Hellenic men who dress as women for the purpose of deceiving a military enemy;[74] Ctesias describes two individual Eastern leaders who openly portray themselves in a feminine manner, one of whom forces this outer change and lifestyle on another man as well.[75] Herodotus presents Macedonians and exiled Lacedaimonians crossdressing as a means to achieve justice after a greater wrong.[76] Because he describes partially-Greek men enacting agency, he avoids associating these men with the femininity that he (and other authors) associate with foreignness.[77] The visual presentation the Minyai display is temporary, donned only long enough to effect their escape; similarly, Alexander's men dress as women in order to execute an immediate revenge. Ctesias' foreign leaders differ in that they are not prompted by external causes or need for deception but by their own personalities and interests, with disastrous results for their communities as well as

[74] Hdt. 4.146 (the Minyai, Spartiate descendants of the Argonauts, escape from a Lacedaimonian prison); 5.20 (Macedonian boys kill Persians following a violation of ξείνια). These men are "Hellenic" in a vague sense; Sparta and Macedon can both serve as internal Others to an Athenian audience.

[75] Ct. F1b §23.1 & §24.4 (Sardanapallus, last king of Assyria); F6 & F6b (Nanarus, a Babylonian who then compels the Mede Parsondes to do the same).

[76] I use the term "crossdress" throughout as a neutral and descriptive term for the act of wearing the dress that is generally worn by another gender.

[77] E.g. 9.122, in the mouth of Cyrus: φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς γίνεσθαι ("for gentle men tend to arise from gentle lands").

themselves. As depicted in the text, these leaders engage in a more protracted visual modification, but because of their prominent societal roles, their identities are never fully hidden; even when an observer is persuaded that the individual they are viewing is a woman, the truth beneath the clothing is always simultaneously present.

1.3.1 Herodotus

In each scene of crossdressing in the *Histories*, Herodotus describes a group of unnamed men that are somewhat Greek, yet not entirely; their indeterminate national status parallels reflects the fluidity of gendered perceptions that can result from the act of crossdressing. Indeed, Herodotus never depicts any *entirely* Greek man crossdressing. It is always enacted by an anonymous group of ambiguously Greek men, motivated by a short-term desire for freedom; the act of crossdressing is simply a means to an end. The men are never said to take on any feminine qualities other than the clothing, and the deception is further made possible by the display of women beforehand. In the *Histories*, then, crossdressing is presented as acceptable only for men who are partially Greek, and only in situations of dire necessity; even then, it is only at the level of visuality.

In the first of the Herodotean deceptions, the descendants of the Argonauts who call themselves Minyai have returned to their ancestral homeland in Lacedaimon, but after

attempting to gain a share of the rule they are imprisoned by the current Lacedaimonians (4.146.1).[78] Their escape depends entirely on a sartorial exchange:

> ἐπεὶ ὦν ἔμελλον σφέας καταχρήσασθαι, παραιτήσαντο αἱ γυναῖκες τῶν Μινυέων, ἐοῦσαι ἀσταί τε καὶ τῶν πρώτων Σπαρτιητέων θυγατέρες, ἐσελθεῖν τε ἐς τὴν ἑρκτὴν καὶ ἐς λόγους ἐλθεῖν ἑκάστη τῷ ἑωυτῆς ἀνδρί. οἳ δὲ σφέας παρῆκαν, οὐδένα δόλον δοκέοντες ἐξ αὐτέων ἔσεσθαι. αἳ δὲ ἐπείτε ἐσῆλθον, ποιέουσι τοιάδε· πᾶσαν τὴν εἶχον ἐσθῆτα παραδοῦσαι τοῖσι ἀνδράσι αὐταὶ τὴν τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔλαβον, οἱ δὲ Μινύαι ἐνδύντες τὴν γυναικηίην ἐσθῆτα ἅτε γυναῖκες ἐξήισαν ἔξω, ἐκφυγόντες δὲ τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ ἵζοντο αὖτις ἐς τὸ Τηΰγετον.
>
> So when they were about to do away with themselves, the wives of the Minyai, being citizens and daughters of the first Spartiates, begged permission to go into the prison and for each woman to speak with her own husband. The [guards] let them pass, thinking that there would be no trickery from them. When the women went in, they did the following: the women handed over all the clothes they wore to their husbands and put on that of their husbands, and the Minyai put on the feminine clothing and went out as if they were women, and having escaped in this manner they settled again at Taügeton. (Hdt. 4.146.3-4)

The wives of the Minyai are allowed to enter, wearing their usual female garb and thus perceived as being harmless; this is not only implied by their clothing but also explicitly mentioned by the narrator (οἳ δὲ σφέας παρῆκαν, οὐδένα δόλον δοκέοντες ἐξ αὐτέων ἔσεσθαι). The wives' attire dictates what is socially expected of them. This perception is of course false, as the women indeed engage in trickery by exchanging clothes with their husbands. Once the husbands are present and wearing the female clothing, nothing more is mentioned regarding the wives; presumably they are left behind in the prison to die in place of their husbands. As the women vanish from the narrative, their husbands take on the feminine role and simultaneously are presented to the audience as both men and women. The men use clothing – specifically clothing that does not belong to their own gender category – to cross a social boundary and to be

[78] In addition to being ethnically Spartan, the Minyai are also deeply connected to their mythic past as Argonauts. This temporal distance highlights their disconnect from the contemporary Spartan population, marking the Minyai as Other even from a Spartan standpoint.

perceived as women, but the very fact that they successfully escape from prison and return home reveals their actual status as men. Once the feminine clothing is removed, any indication or reminder of the wives fully disappears, and the men resettle their ancestral homeland.

A similar gendered deception occurs when Persian envoys arrive at Macedon and dine with the Macedonian royal family (5.17-22). This episode is rather more complex than that involving the Minyai, particularly in terms of ethnic allegiance. Macedon in the fifth century is at the outer edges of the Greek world, not fully foreign but not fully Greek either;[79] for example, Macedonia is ruled by a king, who at this time is Amyntas. The Persian envoys are sent to Macedonia, as they are to many Hellenic centers, to demand obeisance to King Darius, but the Macedonians – the king's son Alexander in particular – consider the greatest offense to be the Persians' treatment of the Macedonian women (5.18), which the Macedonians understand as a violation of ξείνια.[80] Knowing their hosts cannot refuse, the intoxicated Persians attempt to

[79] Whitmarsh suggests that we should "see ancient Macedonians as neither definitively Greek nor non-Greek, but as *constitutively* marginal, define by precisely their liminal position" (2013: 5; emphasis original). In addition, Herodotus may just be repeating a story that he has heard; Badian has argued that the original story was told by the Macedonians to explain their ostensible acceptance of Persian alliance (1994: *passim*). Fearn follows Badian and argues that Alexander, if not the Macedonians more generally, was aligned more strongly with the Persians (2007: 124).

[80] Though the Persians are not Greek, nevertheless their Macedonian hosts invite them to dinner in an understanding of ξείνια and kindliness, as we see from Herodotus' choice of terminology: καί σφεας ἐπὶ **ξείνια** καλέει, παρασκευασάμενος δὲ δεῖπνον μεγαλοπρεπὲς ἐδέκετο τοὺς Πέρσας **φιλοφρόνως**. Ὡς δὲ ἀπὸ δείπνου ἐγίνοντο, διαπίνοντες εἶπαν οἱ Πέρσαι τάδε· «**Ξεῖνε** Μακεδων[...]» ("and [Amyntas] called on them as **guests**, and having prepared a magnificent dinner he welcomed the Persians **in a friendly manner**. And once they were done with dinner, the Persians drank and said the following: 'Macedonian **friend**,'" 5.18.1-2). Likewise, the subsequent insistence on whose custom to follow uses the same word (νόμος) that Herodotus uses throughout for a culture's established practice; Powell calculates that 113 of the 126 uses of νόμος in the *Histories* refer to "law" or "custom" (1960 s.v.).

impose their own gender-based customs in an assumed Greek context, requesting that the currently absent women join the meal and sit intermingled with the men. Amyntas brings in the women of the household, though he seats them across the table from the Persians. When the Persians first see that the women are beautiful (ἰδόμενοι γυναῖκας εὐμόρφους, 5.18.4), they claim that this seating arrangement causes pain to their eyes because they can see the women but not touch them.[81] Because Amyntas is desperately trying to please his guests, he orders the women to sit interspersed among the intoxicated Persians, who immediately begin to touch the women's breasts.[82] The Persians are thus able to use their sense of touch to confirm what their eyes have told them: that they are mingling with beautiful women.

Though the Macedonians are not a fully Greek people, the depiction of ξείνια expectations as well as the Macedonian expectation of Greek symposium norms – i.e. that women should not be present – creates what Fearn calls a "nearly-Greek banquet," reflecting the idea that Greek customs seem to be the normative standard on this occasion. By demanding that the women join the symposium and by subsequently touching them, the Persians have not only made their own cultural norms take precedence, but they have also violated the social contract of ξείνια by breaking with the host's cultural norms. It is the ξείνια violation more than the bodily transgressions toward the women that triggers Alexander's rage and ultimately sparks the

[81] This passage is filled with the language of vision (Hornblower 2013: ad loc.)

[82] Brosius suggests that, although this information comes via a Greek text, it is likely comparable to actual Achaemenid practices, noting that Plato echoes the concept in his *Laws* (1996: 94-95). Plato may have gotten this idea from Herodotus, but it is still a Greek idea of Persian practices as reflected in Greek texts.

upcoming episode of crossdressing.[83] Alexander tells the Persians they are welcome to enjoy the women's company once the women have bathed and prepared themselves for bed:

> **γυναῖκας** μὲν ἐξελθούσας ἀπέπεμπε ἐς τὴν **γυναικηίην**, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἴσους τῇσι **γυναιξὶ** ἀριθμὸν **ἄνδρας** λειογενείους τῇ τῶν **γυναικῶν** ἐσθῆτι σκευάσας καὶ ἐγχειρίδια δοὺς παρῆγε ἔσω, [...] ταῦτα εἴπας ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος παρίζει Πέρσῃ **ἀνδρὶ ἄνδρα** Μακεδόνα ὡς **γυναῖκα** τῷ λόγῳ· οἱ δέ, ἐπείτε σφέων οἱ Πέρσαι ψαύειν ἐπειρῶντο, διεργάζοντο αὐτούς.
>
> he sent away to the women's quarters the women who had entered, and Alexander himself equipped beardless men equal in number to the women with women's clothing and having given them daggers he led them in, [...] having said these things Alexander made a Macedonian man, in the pretense of being a woman, sit next to a Persian man. And they [i.e. the Macedonians], when the Persians attempted to touch them, destroyed them. (Hdt. 5.20.3, 5.20.4)

The gendered aspect of this plan is made clear through Herodotus' language. Γυνή or its compounds are used five times, while ἀνήρ appears three times before becoming the implicit subject of the final clause. Alexander needs a way to deceive the Persians into thinking they are with women, and the simplest and most convincing method is to change the men's appearance with clothing. Both peoples represented in this scene have stable concepts of gender roles: the Macedonian men dine separately from women, and the Persian men dine intermingled with women. The combination and struggle between the two notions of gender roles leads to a destabilization of these roles as the different customs compete for primacy. The intoxicated Persians expect to see women sitting at the table, and their eyes indeed perceived the presence of women, particularly because they have already touched women's bodies. Externally and visually, there are a group of Macedonian women who will sleep with them. Yet there is another truth present at the same time, unknown to the Persains but known to the Macedonians: that there are men present who are waiting for the opportunity to murder them. And indeed, soon enough they

[83] Soares notes the *anomia* of the Persians' request (2014: 231); cf. also Fearn 2007: 101-103.

experience the consequences of their reliance on what they have seen. They trust their eyes, and thus are caught unaware when they are killed by men dressed as women (5.20.5). The combination of genders inherent in the act of crossdressing is what enables each group of men to achieve their immediate goals.

1.3.2 Ctesias

For Ctesias, the casualties resulting from such crossdressing happen to those who crossdress rather than their opponents. In addition to wearing female garments, the crossdressers of the *Persica* take on feminine habits and adornment as well. Both literary and archaeological evidence confirm that the application of cosmetics was a distinctly female practice, often associated in literature with the trope of feminine deception.[84] Moreover, cosmetics also had a connotation of foreignness, as the only men who seem to wear cosmetics are non-Greeks;[85] both Herodotus (e.g. 4.191.1) and Xenophon (e.g. *Cyr.* 1.3.2) depict customary use of cosmetics by foreign men. Indeed, we see that facial cosmetics are used by each crossdressing man in the *Persica*, marking them as distinctly separate from the Herodotean – and culturally Greek – Minyai and Macedonians, whose stories have no mention at all of cosmetics. We do not know whether Ctesias presented any judgment of his foreign crossdressers, but scholars agree that many of the moralizing comments in these passages were additions by the transmitting author rather than Ctesias himself.[86] Despite this, we will see that characters within the narrative certainly look down upon men who dress as women; even when the observer is himself a non-

[84] Lee 2015: 67.

[85] "[T]he conflation of feminine and barbarian underscores the negative connotations of cosmetics" (Ibid.: 68).

[86] Such remarks will be addressed when relevant in the following discussion.

Greek of the same culture as the crossdressing man, the visuality of feminine dress is the dominant element of concern.

In the lineage of Assyrian rulers that begins the *Persica,* Semiramis is succeeded by her son Ninyas, who seems to be a near opposite of his mother;[87] rather than partaking in ambitious military campaigns and building projects, he remains hidden within the palace, which creates the illusion that he is frequently busy with the details of managing an empire. Ctesias is quick to note that Ninyas "spent all his time in the royal chambers, seen by nobody except his mistresses and the eunuchs around him" (ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον διέτριβεν, ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ὁρώμενος πλὴν τῶν παλλακίδων καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν εὐνούχων, Ct. F1b §21.2). The specification that he passes time with women and eunuchs highlights the lack of masculinity that characterizes Ninyas. Though there is no suggestion that he dresses as a woman, he serves as a fitting intermediary in the narrative between Semiramis, a woman who consistently eradicates gender distinctions, and her final descendent, Sardanapallus, who likewise moves fluidly between gender roles.[88] Ninyas is not hidden by a garment, as Semiramis was, but he nevertheless remains visually unknown. While this leads to a successful and peaceful reign, the unseen truth is quite unlike what his subjects perceive:

> ἐζήλου δὲ τρυφὴν καὶ ῥᾳθυμίαν καὶ τὸ μηδέποτε κακοπαθεῖν μηδὲ μεριμνᾶν, ὑπολαμβάνων βασιλείας εὐδαίμονος εἶναι τέλος τὸ πάσαις χρῆσθαι ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ἀνεπικωλύτως. [...] Τὸ δὲ μηδ' ὑφ' ἑνὸς τῶν ἔξωθεν θεωρεῖσθαι τῆς μὲν ἀληθοῦς περὶ αὐτὸν τρυφῆς ἄγνοιαν παρείχετο πᾶσιν, καθάπερ δὲ θεὸν ἀόρατον διὰ τὸν φόβον ἕκαστος οὐδὲ λόγῳ βλασφημεῖν ἐτόλμα

[87] See Gera 2007: 78-79, for a short summation of the comparison between the two in terms of Greek motifs on foreign rulers.

[88] See below on Sardanapallus.

> He desired luxuriance and relaxation and to never be distressed or anxious, supposing that the height of a happy reign was to enjoy all pleasures without restraint. [...] the fact that he was not seen by anyone outside made everyone ignorant of the true luxury around him, and because of fear each person did not dare to slander him in word, as if he were an unseen god (Ct. F1b §21.2, §21.7)

Despite the illusion of propriety and effectiveness that Ninyas has presented to the Assyrians, he is in actuality spending his time reveling in luxuries and indulgences. This facade is no less effective than Semiramis' garment, however; the very act of being unseen by his subjects creates a suggestion that Ninyas is godlike, blurring the division between mortal and immortal.[89] It is in fact the truthful illusion that triumphs for Ninyas, resulting in relative peace with a succession of heirs who model their own rule on Ninyas' example.

The final ruling member of Semiramis' line is Sardanapallus, who combines elements of both Semiramis and Ninyas. Sardanapallus passes into legend as a lover of luxury, thanks not only to Ctesias' report but also a famous funerary statue of the king, accompanied by an epigram encouraging the viewer to delight in luxury, for life is short.[90] For most of the narrative Sardanapallus behaves much like his ancestor Ninyas, though he is less subtle about his love of finery:

> ὑπερῆρεν ἅπαντας τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ τρυγῇ καὶ ῥᾳθυμίᾳ· χωρὶς γὰρ τοῦ μηδ' ὑφ' ἑνὸς τῶν ἔξωθεν ὁρᾶσθαι, βίον ἔζησε γυναικώδη καὶ διαιτώμενος μὲν μετὰ τῶν παλλακίδων,

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[89] Cf. the plurality of Phye's status, Section 1.2.1 above.

[90] Though the epigram is included by Stronk as F1b §23.3 in his edition of Ctesias' fragments (2010: 158 for his justification), Lenfant's edition (2004) omits the text of the epigram, which Diodorus reports as follows:

εὖ εἰδὼς ὅτι θνητὸς ἔφυς, σὸν θυμὸν ἄεξε
τερπόμενος θαλίῃσι: θανόντι σοι οὔτις ὄνησις.
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σποδός εἰμι, Νίνου μεγάλης βασιλεύσας.
ταῦτ' ἔχω ὅσσ' ἔφαγον καὶ ἐφύβρισα καὶ μετ' ἔρωτος
τέρπν' ἔπαθον, τὰ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ὄλβια κεῖνα λέλειπται.
Knowing well that you were born mortal, glorify your spirit by turning to enjoyment: there is no profit for you in death. For I also am dust, having ruled great Ninos. I have such things as I ate and I reveled in and I experienced with the pleasures of love; those riches and prosperity are left behind. (Diod. Sic. 2.23.3)

> πορφύραν δὲ καὶ τὰ μαλακώτατα τῶν ἐρίων ταλασιουργῶν, στολὴν μὲν γυναικείαν ἐνεδεδύκει, τὸ δὲ πρόσωπον καὶ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα ψιμυθίοις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς τῶν ἑταιρῶν ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἁπαλώτερον πάσης γυναικὸς τρυφερᾶς κατεσκεύαστο.
>
> [Sardanapallus] exceeded all those before him in luxuriance and relaxation; for apart from this he was seen by no one outside, he lived a womanly life and spent him time with his mistresses, spinning purple cloth and the softest of wool; he wore a woman's garment, and he equipped his face and entire body with white cosmetics and the other usual things which courtesans use, more delicately than every luxurious woman. (Ct. F1b §23.1)

Whereas Ninyas was described as setting himself apart from the visible role of a monarch, Sardanapallus does so with clothing and cosmetics. Moreover, he does not don women's attire for the purpose of deception or short-term gain, as seen from the vocabulary chosen to describe his habits (βίον ἔζησε γυναικώδη καὶ διαιτώμενος). Unlike the Minyai and the Macedonians described by Herodotus, Sardanapallus is not simply hiding his actual identity behind a disguise; he aims to fully live the lifestyle of a woman. He takes on the visual elements that would create the perception of femininity not only in his attire but also his behavior, going so far as to spend his time with his mistresses spinning fine wool – the most womanly of tasks – and attempts to make his voice sound more feminine.[91] In addition, he applies white cosmetics to his face and entire body, which Thomas asserts is a cultural marker of female beauty for Greeks.[92] Despite his constant work to live his life perceived as a woman, this change from male to female is only superficial for Sardanapallus; the temporary nature of his physical modifications allows for constant fluidity between categories. Even during his time of excessive indulgences, we hear that he enjoys sexual activity with men as well as with women.[93] Just as the visual bodily adjustments

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[91] ἐπετήδευσε δὲ καὶ τὴν φωνὴν ἔχειν γυναικώδη ("and he also trained his voice to be woman-like," Ct. F1b §23.2).

[92] Thomas 2002: 2; she also describes the use of cosmetics to achieve the impossible ideal of whiteness (10-11). cf. also Lee 2015: 67-8.

[93] ἀφροδισιακὰς τέρψεις μεταδιώκειν ἀνδρὸς ἅμα καὶ γυναικός· ἐχρῆτο γὰρ ταῖς ἐπ' ἀμφότερα συνουσίας ἀνέδην, τῆς ἐκ τῆς πράξεως αἰσχύνης οὐδὲν ὅλως φροντίζων ("he pursued the sexual delights of men together with those of

suggest a temporariness, Sardanapallus' behaviors likewise do not remain fixed within one social category.

This consistent state of flux allows Sardanapallus to reside in several social categories simultaneously. Layers of reality and truth can easily become muddled when such transience occurs, but by looking at the final phase of Sardanapallus' story in Ctesias, we can move closer to an understanding of Sardanapallus' presentation and his true identity. His reign is ended by a revolt planned by two ambassadorial generals, the Mede Arbakes and the Babylonian Belesys, who determine that Sardanapallus is unfit to rule due to – as they perceived it – his unkingly behavior:

> Ἐφιλοτιμήθη δὲ καὶ τὸν βασιλέα **κατ' ὄψιν ἰδεῖν** καὶ τὸν ὅλον τούτου βίον **κατασκέψασθαι**· διόπερ δούς τινι τῶν εὐνούχων χρυσῆν φιάλην, εἰσήχθη πρὸς τὸν Σαρσανάπαλλον, καὶ τήν τε τρυφὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν γυναικώδη τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ζῆλον ἀκριβῶς κατανοήσας, κατεφρόνησε μὲν τοῦ βασιλέως ὡς οὐδενὸς ἀξίου.
>
> And [Arbakes] also endeavored **to see** the king **in person** and **to examine** the entire lifestyle of this man; for which reason he gave a golden bowl to one of the eunuchs and was introduced to Sardanapallus, and when he understood the man's luxuriousness and the womanly spirit of his habits, [Arbakes] despised the king as worthy of nothing. (Ct. F1b §24.4)

At its inception Arbakes' plot against Sardanapallus relies on autopsy for proof that the king is unfit, as emphasized in the above passage. Rumor could be unreliable, but Arbakes will believe what he sees.[94] Unfortunately for Sardanapallus, Arbakes sees the king's feminine presentation and presumes that he is observing an objective truth. As mentioned above, however, Sardanapallus does not have a stable societal image, so Arbakes only understands a partial

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women; for he engaged in both types of intercourse without restraint, considering there to be no shame in the deed at all," Ct. F1b §23.2).

[94] Cf., e.g., Candaules' words in Book One: ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν ("for it happens that men's ears are less trustworthy than their eyes," Hdt. 1.8.2).

presentation of the truth, or even what Ellis calls a "fictional truth."[95] Sardanapallus' fluidity of identity becomes manifest during the actual revolt, when he abandons his femininity and fully takes on the role of a militant king, even achieving three victories over the rebels before he is finally defeated (Ct. F1b §25.6). Ultimately, he proves to be successful in both feminine and masculine societal roles.

As Gera succinctly summarizes, "Sardanapallus spends his life in the harem spinning wool at the side of his mistresses, but he fights boldly when his kingdom is threatened. [...] Sardanapallus is both a luxury-loving female impersonator *and* a brave warrior king."[96] It is true that Sardanapallus does isolate himself to live a more feminine lifestyle, but he does not do so at the expense of his kingship and his people. For this reason Ctesias considers Sardanapallus to have died honorably;[97] in addition to the above-mentioned epigram recounting the king's luxuriant attitude, scholars[98] agree that F1b §23.4 is a moralizing interjection by Diodorus as he transmits information from Ctesias that does not align with Ctesias' own presentation.[99] Once the rebellion and fighting start, Ctesias depicts Sardanapallus as a successful king leading his people into battle; even when defeated, Sardanapallus remains in an active role by designing his own means of death so as not to be captured by his enemy, piling all his belongings on a pyre – including his mistresses and eunuchs along with his clothing, the very things and people that

[95] Ellis 2017: *passim*.

[96] Gera 2007: 79-80; emphasis original.

[97] Cf. F1q: Ὁ μὲν οὖν Σαρδανάπαλλος ἐκτόπως ἡδυπαθήσας ὡς ἐνῆν γενναίως ἐτελεύτησεν ("so Sardanapallus, having extraordinarily enjoyed pleasure, died as nobly as he could").

[98] E.g. Bigwood 1980, Lenfant 2004, Gera 2007.

[99] "Ctésias semble, au contraire, avoir trouvé quelque noblesse dans la mort de Sardanapale" (Lenfant 2004: 246 n. 256). cf. also F1pα & F1q, continuous sections of Athenaeus that describe Ctesias' deviation from other authors of Sardanapallus.

cemented his downfall – and throwing himself among them before commanding the pyre be lit.[100] The final days and moments of the king's life reflect his identity as an honorable and masculine king.

The second protracted depiction of crossdressing in Ctesias describes a similar gender-based tension that has the potential to cause political uprising; the satrap of Babylon, Nanarus, lives a luxuriant and feminine lifestyle, for which he is despised by the Median king's influential friend Parsondes, who believes he himself should be satrap in place of Nanarus. Just as Diodorus presented Sardanapallus in a negative light, here he omits the entire narrative involving Nanarus and Parsondes' temporary life as a woman – addingly only the vague phrase "having been grieved by the king in some issue" (ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλεώς ἔν τινι κρίσει λυπηθέντα, Ct. F5 §33.2) – and focuses instead on the more admirable manly courage of Parsondes as general.[101] The masculine image of Parsondes persists in the other fragments,[102] but we also understand more about Nanarus as well, namely that he "makes use of a womanly garment and cosmetic" (στολῇ χρῆσθαι γυναικείᾳ καὶ κόσμῳ, Ct. F6). Again visual perception and observable physical modifications are the stimuli for the outrage: Οὗτος **ὁρῶν** Νάναρον τὸν Βαβψλώνιον διαπρεπεῖ

[100] τὴν βασιλικὴν ἐσθῆτα ("the royal attire," F1b §27.2); ἱμάτια καὶ πορφύρας καὶ στολὰς παντοδαπάς ("clothes and purple cloths and garments of every kind," F1q). While my own study focuses little on the historicity of Herodotus' and Ctesias' texts, it is interesting to note that we do have evidence of an Assyrian king committing suicide by fire in this manner: "le frère d'Aššurbanipal, Šamaš-šum-ukîn, qui était roi de Babylone et s'était révolté contre son frère, fut assiégé dans sa capitale et se suicida dans l'incendie de son palais en 648 avant J.-C." (Lenfant 2004: 247n272). Scholars looking to identify a historical Sardanapallus often consider him to be a literary parallel for Aššurbanipal, who corresponds in name but very little in character (Lenfant 2004: 245n253).

[101] His ἀνδρεία is twice stated explicitly in F5; I translate "manly courage" as a Diodoran emphasis on the masculinity of Parsondes' character, in contrast to what befalls him in Nicholas of Damascus' account (see below).

[102] E.g. ἐν Μήδοις τότε κατά τε ἀνδρείαν καὶ ῥώμην δοκιμώτατος ("most notable among the Medes at that time in manly courage and strength", F6b).

κόσμῳ χρώμενον **ἀμφὶ τὸ σῶμα** καὶ **ἐλλόβια** ἔχοντα καὶ **κατεξυρημένον εὖ μάλα**, γυναικώδη τε καὶ ἄναλκιν, ἔπειθεν Ἀρταῖον ἀφελέσθαι αὐτὸν τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ ἑαυτῷ δοῦναι, δυσχεραίνων σφόδρα τὸν ἄνθρωπον ("This [Parsondes], **seeing** that Nanarus the Babylonian, using distinguishing **ornament about his body** and wearing **earrings** and **being well shaved on his face**, was both womanly and weak, was prevailing upon Artaios to take away Nanarus' position and give it to himself, being extremely disgusted at the man," Ct. F6b). The vision of a feminine Nanarus so thoroughly upsets Parsondes that he asks the king to be made satrap in his place, assuming that Nanarus is unable to be an effective leader. Parsondes' wish to replace Nanarus adds to the heavily gendered difference between the two men and their depictions; moreover, Parsondes believes himself to be superior for this reason.

As when Arbakes views Sardanapallus' feminine lifestyle, Parsondes' autopsy proves to be less trustworthy than he realized. Upon discovering that Parsondes is after his satrapy, Nanarus takes a very active role in affecting punishment against Parsondes; he arranges for merchants to get Parsondes drunk after a hunt and for women to sexually exhaust him, then his men bind the drunk man and bring him to Nanarus.[103] During the subsequent interrogation, Nanarus inquires, "So why are you doing injustices against me, calling me *androgynos* and asking for my rule from Artaios, you who are worth nothing and claim to be noble? Much thanks to Artaios, who was not persuaded to give over the office given to us by Arbakes" (Τί οὖν αὐτὸς ἀδικίας ἦρξας εἰς ἐμέ, ἀνδρόγυνόν τε καλῶν καὶ βασιλείαν τὴν ἐμὴν αἰτῶν παρὰ Ἀρταίου ὡς δῆτα οὐδενὸς ἀξίου αὐτὸς γενναῖος ὤν; Πολλὴ δὲ χάρις Ἀρταίῳ οὐ πεισθέντι τὴν ὑπ' Ἀρβάκεω

[103] In light of the gendered tension of this narrative, it is noteworthy that women have a role in overcoming Parsondes.

δεδομένην ἡμῖν ἀρχὴν ἀφελέσθαι, Ct. F6b §3). Nanarus' words make clear that he does not view his lifestyle as shameful, nor does he understand why Parsondes despises him. This is not to say that Nanarus is ignorant of the perception he creates; indeed, he acknowledges that Parsondes calls him ἀνδρόγυνον. Moreover, by remarking on the fact that Median rule of Babylon is traced back to Arbakes, Nanarus recalls the story of Sardanapallus, a ruler who navigated multiple gender-based categories with ease and, to an extent, success.[104] Nanarus also uses language against Parsondes that was previously used to describe how Arbakes considers Sardanapallus (οὐδενὸς ἀξίου) while emphasizing Parsondes' reputation for nobility (ὡς ... αὐτὸς γενναῖος ὤν), which likewise connected to the manner of Sardanapallus' death in the excerpts from Athenaeus (ὡς ἐνῆν γενναίως ἐτελεύτησεν, Ct. F1q).[105] We have seen that Sardanapallus embodies masculine and feminine roles fluidly; these echoes in the story of Nanarus and Parsondes suggest the same flexible modifications of visible physicality will occur. One may expect that Nanarus, as the male leader who presents a feminine appearance, would be the character who shows the most fluidity, and he does indeed take on a more active role when imposing punishment upon Parsondes. Despite this action, the greater modification occurs for Parsondes.

Nanarus' criticism of Parsondes gives a hint as to the nature of the punishment: εἶτ' οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ, ἔφη, σὺ ὁ τηλικοῦτος ὑπὸ τοῦ χείρονος συνειλημμένος, ἐπειδὴ γαστρὸς ἥττων καὶ αἰδοίων ἐγένου; ("He said, 'Then do you not feel shame, you great man apprehended by an inferior, since you are inferior to your stomach and your genitals?'" Ct. F6b §3). By reducing

[104] I consider him "successful" due to the fact that, when his kingdom was threatened, Sardanapallus threw himself into a masculine military role and achieved several victories on the battlefield; I add the qualifier "to an extent" because he was ultimately defeated.

[105] Nanarus' lines come via Nicholas of Damascus; the narration of Arbakes' view is from Diodorus.

Parsondes and his actions to mere body parts, Nanarus indicates that Parsondes will undergo some physical modification, and it will relate to the cause of Parsondes' assumption of superiority – gender.[106] Nanarus condemns Parsondes to live as a woman, both in terms of his appearance – he is to have his entire body shaved, cosmetics put on his face, and the hair on his head (the only unshaven part) braided "just like women" (ὥσπερ αἱ γυναῖκες) – and in terms of his residence.[107] By the end of the treatment, Parsondes, who was formerly described so often in masculine terminology, looks to all the world like a woman:[108]

> οὐ πολλοῦ χρόνου γίνεται ἄνθρωπός[109] τε λευκὸς καὶ ἁπαλὸς καὶ γυναικώδης, ᾖδέ τε καὶ ἐκιθάριζεν πολὺ κάλλιον τῶν μουσουργῶν (οὐδείς τε ἰδὼν αὐτὸν λειτουργοῦντα ἐν συμποσίῳ Νανάρῳ οὐχὶ γυναῖκα ὑπέλαβε) καὶ πολύ γε ἐκείνων εὐπρεπέστερον, μεθ' ὧν ἑκάστοτε ἐλειτούργει.
>
> In not much time the man became pale and delicate and womanly, he both sang and played the cithara much more beautifully than the music girls (no one seeing him serving Nanarus at a banquet realized he was not a woman) and was much more lovely than those with whom he served on each occasion. (Ct. F6b §3)

Parsondes has fully completed his unwilling visual transformation (οὐδείς τε ἰδὼν αὐτὸν … οὐχὶ γυναῖκα ὑπέλαβε), enacted by a eunuch at the command of an outwardly feminine man. Even after seven years of this life, Parsondes is visually unrecognizable as a man. The perceived visual truth of his identity, that of music girl, permeates through him to such an extent that the king's messenger believes Parsondes to be the most skilled and beautiful of all the music girls (Ct. F6b

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[106] The alteration will also be carried out by a eunuch (Ct. F6b §3) rather than a male.

[107] μοι μετὰ τῶν μουσουργῶν λειτουρῇ γυναικὶ ὡμοιωμένος, μεθ' ὧν καὶ δίαιταν ἕξει λεῖος ὢν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ἐσθῆτα τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ τὴν τέχνην ἔχων ("Since he is like a woman let him serve with my music girls, with whom he will spend his time, being smooth on his body and having the same clothing and skill," Ct. F6b §3).

[108] The word γυνή or its compounds occurs frequently to describe Parsondes hereafter in this narrative until his liberation seven years later.

[109] An inclusive term, rather than the specifically male ἀνήρ.

§5).[110] When his fate is discovered, both the messenger and the king express disbelief that Parsondes would suffer such treatment rather than commit suicide, emphasizing Parsondes' former attributes of honor and strength. Despite the strength of the illusion, he retains his active masculine quality by arranging for his rescue and escape, which allows him to eventually regain his former male lifestyle and plot revenge against Nanarus.[111]

While both Herodotus and Ctesias treat the temporary nature of crossdressing as pivotal to their respective narratives, we have seen that their approaches significantly differ. In the examples narrated by Herodotus, female attire is a short-term disguise, only to be used for a specific goal of self-preservation. In addition, I argue that, because the men he describes are often identified – at least partially – as Greek, they do not take on any additional elements of female dress beyond the basic garment, and thus Herodotus avoids associating these men with the femininity that connotes foreignness in Greek texts. In contrast, Ctesias omits the deceptive element, which makes his characters' motivations and interests less apparent and more complex as they navigate several layers of reality. Despite the differences in how crossdressing is portrayed, the two authors share an interest in visual concealment and the results when autopsy is misconstrued; Anhalt remarks that Herodotus, in his narratives involving women on display, undermines autopsy "[by] demonstrating that visual evidence can mislead when misinterpreted," but her statement applies equally well to the entire Herodotean corpus as well as that of

[110] Cf. also Artaios' reaction: ἑώρα ἀντ' ἀνδρὸς γυναῖκα γεγονότα ("He saw that [Parsondes] had become a woman instead of a man," Ct. F6b §6).

[111] The fragments of Ctesias do not tell us of the revenge, only that "he avenged" (ἠμύνατο, Ct. F6b §6) – the final word of the fragment.

Ctesias.[112] For both authors, crossdressing creates a plurality of truths that complicates identity while also reminding the reader that identification based on eyewitnessing is not to be trusted.

1.4 Conclusions: Uncovering the Body

In the same way that clothing can distinguish and hide individuals, revelation of the body beneath is a means of asserting identity. For the purposes of my discussion, I focus on textual episodes of two types: those that involve complete bodily nudity, and those that overtly describe the genitals, the parts most necessary to hide beneath clothing.[113] In the Greek world there were few appropriate avenues for revealing a nude body, of which there are even fewer depicted in our texts;[114] there is also a distinct gender bias in what can be expected.[115] Although undressing does not involve taking on a new appearance that conceals one's true identity, the removal of the outer layer conveys a sentiment nonetheless, often one of shame.[116] Just as the addition or alteration of clothing can conceal or present a plurality of truths about the clothed individual, the removal of clothing – particularly, as Bonfante reminds us, within societies for whom a clothed body is customary – is not merely a display but an act that communicates a message to an observer.

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[112] Anhalt 2008: 269. The four episodes she discusses do not relate to crossdressing but rather serve as a test case for a greater historiographic tendency.

[113] Consider the Greek term for these parts, τὸ αἰδοῖον/τὰ αἰδοῖα, with its connotations of shame and modesty. Cf. Bonfante 2009: 158, who mentions in addition the Latin equivalent, *pudenda*.

[114] For example, full male nudity is appropriate during gymnastic exercise. See Bonfante (1989: *passim*) for a detailed discussion of acceptable nudity.

[115] "Respectable women did not go out much, they did not attend male symposia, and they certainly did not undress in public. They were in fact protected from the sun, from men's eyes, and from the evil eye by dresses and mantles that covered them from head to foot" (ibid.: 559).

[116] Ibid.

As throughout this chapter, vision and viewing are key qualities in the episodes I discuss below; moreover, because an observer's first impulse on viewing an unclothed body is to notice the gender of that body, gender will also be a large component of my discussion. Indeed, each depiction of nudity examined here will involve the exposure of a woman's body, due mainly to the fact that female nudity would have been more noteworthy for the original Greek audience and thus is represented more distinctly by Herodotus and Ctesias than male nudity. Bonfante notes that female nudity is presented with two aspects, a "sense of humiliation and vulnerability as well as its magic power."[117] This section is organized according to this division; the presentation of full female nudity is heavily laden with connotations of shame, while genital exposure – for any gender – has apotropaic associations in warding off evil, the "magic power" to which Bonfante refers.

1.4.1 Full Nudity

The very first extended narrative in Herodotus' text revolves around the illicit viewing and treatment of a woman's unclothed body.[118] Candaules has such a passionate love for his wife that he feels compelled to ensure that his bodyguard Gyges fully appreciates her physical beauty: Γύγη, οὐ γὰρ σε δοκέω πείθεσθαι μοι λέγοντι περὶ τοῦ εἴδεος τῆς γυναικός (ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν), ποίεε ὅκως ἐκείνην θεήσεαι γυμνήν ("Gyges, I do not

[117] Ibid.: 558.

[118] Though the revelation of a wife's mistreatment by her husband via nudity is not unique within the Herodotean corpus (e.g. 5.92η, where Periander's deceased wife appears to him nude and refuses to give him the information he wants; he believes it is actually her because she accurately reminds him that he had intercourse with her body after she had died and that he did not burn her clothes with the body), we have no similar accounts in Ctesias, nor are there any narratives involving full nudity in his works.

think that you are persuaded by my talking about the beauty of my wife – for men's ears are less trustworthy than the eyes – ensure somehow that you see her naked," Hdt. 1.8.2). Candaules here introduces the concept of ultimate knowledge and truth by acknowledging that man often disbelieve what they only hear and by suggesting therefore that Gyges does not believe the claims about his wife's beauty. Believing rather that eyes are more trustworthy witnesses to the truth, Candaules seeks to provide physical observable evidence before Gyges' eyes in order to convince him. It is for this reason that Candaules insists that Gyges view his wife naked and puts her on display for Gyges to observe. Hazewindus analyzes the focalization of this passage, noting in particular that Candaules and Gyges always refer to this voyeuristic act with a form of the verb θεάομαι (Hdt. 1.8.2, 1.8.3, 1.10.1), which highlights Gyges' role as observer of the passive, unknowing wife; when the narrator refers to the general act of viewing any Lydian unclothed, he uses the more neutral ὀράω (1.10.3).[119] In addition, Candaules does not simply say that Gyges will view the queen once she is already nude, as if accidentally catching sight of her body: κεῖται δὲ ἀγχοῦ τῆς ἐσόδου θρόνος· ἐπὶ τοῦτον τῶν ἱματίων κατὰ ἕν ἕκαστον ἐκδύνουσα θήσει, καὶ κατ' ἡσυχίην πολλὴν παρέξει τοι θεήσασθαι ("a chair lies near the entrance; she will undress and place each of her garments upon it, and it will be possible for you to see her at your leisure," Hdt. 1.9.2). The process of the woman removing her clothing is emphasized, suggesting that it is the act of revelation that will be primarily convincing to Gyges.

The narrator's ethnographic detail tells us what most of the characters must think about Gyges watching the nude queen: παρὰ γὰρ τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι, σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖσι ἄλλοισι

[119] "The words ὀφθῆναι γυμνόν just mean 'to be seen naked'; as they are the statement of the narrator they miss the subjective element of θεήσασθαι γυμνήν spoken by Candaules and Gyges" (Hazewindus 2004: 63 n. 16).

βαρβάροισι, καὶ ἄνδρα ὀφθῆναι γυμνὸν ἐς αἰσχύνην μεγάλην φέρει ("for among the Lydians, and likewise also among the other *barbaroi*, it causes great shame for even a man to be seen naked," Hdt. 1.10.3). Candaules is exempt from this belief because of his excessive passion for his wife (ἠράσθη της ἑωυοῦ γυναικός, 1.8.1), but we know that Gyges believes it to be true, especially for women.[120] Because the men treat Candaules' wife as a mere visual object, they focus on only her observable qualities and the potential for her to experience shame, a cultural result of the display.[121] They disregard her personhood and any potential she has for acting of her own will, an oversight that dooms the king. It is noteworthy that the narrator does not necessarily do the same. As Larson argues, by suppressing the queen's name, Herodotus characterizes her as a respectable woman who acts on behalf of restoring a cultural *nomos* that her husband violated.[122] Hazewindus suggests, however, that the naming convention in this story reflects the social hierarchy of the three main individuals; the king is most important, with his string of patronyms, then Gyges, then the unnamed queen.[123] The two readings are by no means exclusive, and indeed they simultaneously reflect the queen's role within the narrative both as socially inferior to the men of the story and as a successful enacter of vengeance.

By ignoring the queen's personhood, Candaules and Gyges fixate on the wrong observation. Candaules has an elaborate plan to allow Gyges to view the queen naked, but he

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[120] E.g. Hdt. 1.8.3: ἅμα δὲ κιθῶνι ἐκδυομένῳ συνεδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ γυνή ("a woman also takes off her modesty together with her removed garment"), Gyges' immediate response to Candaules' suggestion. This is also the only direct use of the word αἰδώς by Herodotus (Larson 2006: 237-238), but the theme persists throughout the episode.

[121] Hazewindus briefly discusses the vocabulary of shame in this episode (2004: 62-63).

[122] Larson 2006: *passim*; *contra* Boedeker 2011: 213 n. 8. Cf. also Gyges' reply to Cambyses: καί σεο δέομαι μὴ δέεσθαι ἀνόμων ("and I ask you, do not ask me for unlawful deeds," Hdt. 1.8.4).

[123] Hazewindus 2004: 53.

gives minimal advice for Gyges to avoid being seen by the queen, saying only "therefore let it be a concern for you that she not see you as you go through the doors" (σοὶ μελέτω τὸ ἐνθεῦτεν ὅκως μὴ σε ὄψεται ἰόντα διὰ θυρέων, Hdt. 1.9.3). Other than this brief note, both men seem to take for granted that the queen will not discover Gyges. They are of course in error, as it is her act of seeing that betrays Gyges and the plot.[124] The queen's sight causes her to immediately understand what she is being forced to experience and to respond accordingly. From the very moment the queen reveals her body and catches sight of Gyges watching her, the hierarchy established at the start of the story begins to shift, and she becomes an active participant in the narrative. Though her body is what is revealed to Gyges, it is her visual acuity that allows for perception of the actual circumstances. The queen becomes the agent, and Candaules – previously agent – becomes the object of her revenge. In both cases, Gyges maintains his mediary role as enactor of royal command, but he now follows the queen's orders. At the same time, however, his role changes because he witnessed the queen; only her husband may see her naked, so Gyges must become her husband if he wishes to live. Through Gyges, the queen brings about the death of her husband and the establishment of a new regime of power.[125] Candaules' string of patronyms is not enough to prevent him from becoming the final member of that line.

1.4.2 Genital Exposure

The body can also be revealed in part, allowing the majority of the body to remain hidden. As briefly mentioned above, exposure of the genitals usually has an apotropaic quality to

[124] ἡ γυνὴ ἐπορᾷ μιν ἐξιόντα ("the woman looked upon him as he was leaving," Hdt. 1.11.2)

[125] See Boedeker 2011 for this (212-213) and other Herodotean narratives of women creating power shifts (*passim*).

it; this is not only true for the female body, as will be discussed below, but the male body as well. For example, classical Athens was heavily populated by herms, described by Herodotus as "upright statues of Hermes, which have genitals" (τοῦ δὲ Ἑρμέω τὰ ἀγάλματα ὀρθὰ ἔχειν τὰ αἰδοῖα, 2.51.1) during his discussion of Egyptian influences on Greek religious rites; Thucydides refers to the mutilation of hermes during the Peloponnesian War as a "sacrilege" or "impious act" (ἀσέβημα, 6.27.2). The physical shape of the herms highlights the phallus' role in religious apotropaism; rather than a fully anthropomorphic image, the herm is simply a pillar with a man's head and erect phallus. While the herms are an example of phallic exposure as apotropaic gesture, we will see that exposure of the female genitals is presented by Herodotus and Ctesias as similarly apotropaic, while simultaneously having the shame-based connotations that a woman's body usually has for a Greek audience.

One motif of exposure is the *anasyrma*, defined by Bonfante as "holding aside one's dress or tunic to uncover the genitals."[126] The purpose of such a gesture is unclear, though it does have both divine and apotropaic associations, particularly with Demeter.[127] Moreover, in these contexts the *anasyrma* evokes laughter, and as such it can serve a protective function. Herodotus and Ctesias each describe a different *anasyrma* episode, wherein a group of women exposes themselves to a group of onlookers. The two accounts vary in context and thus also in function. The Herodotean *anasyrma* represents the divine connotations of such a revelation; Ctesias'

[126] Bonfante 2009: 158.

[127] O'Higgins 2001: *passim*; Bonfante 2009: 159. The apotropaic gesture is connected with the figure Baubo, the woman who in Orphic poetry causes Demeter to laugh by lifting her clothes up (see O'Higgins 2001: 139 n. 8 for the several Orphic sources, which are primarily extant in early Christian writings); the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* gives the woman's name as Iambe, who jests with the goddess but does not expose herself (190-205).

version is more mundane, intended to startle the observers. However, when considered together, they encompass both aspects of the *anasyrma* and its facets of exposure and mockery.

Herodotus describes the actions of women taking part in the most zealous Egyptian festival as follows: ἐπεὰν δὲ πλέοντες κατά τινα πόλιν ἄλλην γένωνται, ἐγχρίμψαντες τὴν βᾶριν τῇ γῇ ποιεῦσι τοιάδε· αἱ μὲν τινὲς τῶν γυναικῶν ποιεῦσι τά περ εἴρηκα, αἱ δὲ τωθάζουσι βοῶσαι τὰς ἐν τῇ πόλι ταύτῃ γυναῖκας, αἱ δὲ ὀρχέονται, αἱ δὲ ἀνασύρονται ἀνιστάμεναι (When they have sailed and come along some other city, they bring the boat near the land and do the following: some of the women do the things I have said [i.e. clap and sing], others taunt and shout at the women in that city, others dance, and others stand and pull up their clothes," Hdt. 2.60.2). The repeated feminine article and participial forms reinforce that the actions depicted are entirely performed by women, and indeed for a female audience (αἱ δὲ τωθάζουσι βοῶσαι τὰς ἐν τῇ πόλι ταύτῃ γυναῖκας). Moreover, given the foreign ritual context, these actions correspond to the cultic associations of the *anasyrma*, not only for this Egyptian setting in honor of Artemis but also to Near Eastern and Etruscan parallels.[128] The shouting and jesting that often accompany the ritual gesture are also present,[129] suggesting that Herodotus represents the expected and appropriate setting for the *anasyrma*.

On the other hand, Ctesias gives a vastly different setting for his *anasyrma* episode, yet it too contains the expected elements of exposure and jest. Rather than taking place as part of a

[128] In her survey of what she terms the "Baubo gesture", Bonfante 2009 includes an image depicting Ishtar performing the *anasyrma* (159) as well as descriptions of several Etruscan images of divine couples (160-161). In addition, Olender remarks on "the impossibility of finding any trace of a ritual *anasyrma* in Greece", despite the potential connections with Demeter (1990: 93).

[129] O'Higgins 2001: *passim* (but especially 138-139).

religious procession, Persian women use the gesture to mock their husbands during battle against the Medes:

> ἔνθα δὴ κάμνοντες ὑπὸ του πλήθους οἱ Πέρσαι ἔφευγον ἐπ' ἄκρον τὸ ὄρος, ἵνα αὐτοῖς αἱ γυναῖκες ἦσαν. αἱ δὲ ἀνασψράμεναι ἐβόων· 'ποῖ φέρεσθε, ὦ κάκιστοι; ἢ ἄχρι ἂν εἰσδύητε ἔνθεν γεγένησθε;' [...] οἱ δὲ Πέρσαι καταισχυνθέντες ἐφ' οἷς εἶδον καὶ ἤκουσαν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους
>
> Indeed hard-pressed by the multitude, the Persians fled to the top of the mountain, where their wives were. And the women exposed themselves and shouted: "Where are you going, you most worthless men? Are you going all the way into the place from which you were born?" [...] and the Persians, put to shame by what they saw and heard, turned toward the enemy. (Ct. F8d §43-44)

Again a group of women shouts and lifts their garments to reveal their genitals. Unlike during the Bubastis procession, however, these women have no religious impulse in their exposure, nor are they performing the gesture for other women. The Persian women use the *anasyrma* to startle and deride their husbands into turning away to rejoin the fight in a literal manifestation of apotropaism. Although the divine connotations are absent from Ctesias' account, the aspect of exhibition remains.[130] The men return to fight due to the vision of their wives' genitals and the sound of the taunts. In addition, the mockery links itself to the women's bodies by emphasizing the function of the revealed parts; the genitals are primarily for procreation and childbirth, highlighted by the women shouting that the men should return whence they came, i.e. the womb.[131] The gesture here has the intended effect of spurring the Persian men to fight again, ultimately resulting in their victory on behalf of Cyrus.

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[130] The episode does follow immediately after Cyrus performs a sacrifice and witnesses avian omens (Ct. F8d §41-42), but these are not rites connected explicitly with the *anasyrma*.

[131] Cf. the dreams of Astyages (Hdt. 1.107-8) and of Argoste (Ct. F8d §9), where a variety of emanations represents the birth of Cyrus. The symbolism is again true for men as well; Psammetichos addresses a group of men who have

The notion of femininity via the female form is often a method of shaming men,[132] even when not part of an *anasyrma* gesture. Xerxes famously expresses dissatisfaction with his soldiers during the battle at Salamis by saying "my men have become women, and my women men" (οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασί μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες, 8.88), while Semiramis fears for the security of her reign because she is an unmarried woman.[133] The visual of female genitals thus comes to be used as a shorthand for unmanliness, as can be seen in Herodotus' record of Sesostris' expansion:

> ὁτέοισι μέν νυν αὐτῶν ἀλκίμοισι ἐνετύγχανε καὶ δεινῶς γλιχομένοισι περὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίης, τούτοισι μὲν στήλας ἐνίστη ἐς τὰς χώρας διὰ γραμμάτων λεγούσας τό τε ἑωυτοῦ οὔνομα καὶ τῆς πάτρης, καὶ ὡς δυνάμι τῇ ἑωυτοῦ κατεστρέψατο σφέας· ὅτεων δὲ ἀμαχητὶ καὶ εὐπετέως παρέλαβε τὰς πόλιας, τούτοισι δὲ ἐνέγραφε ἐν τῇσι στήλῃσι κατὰ ταὐτὰ καὶ τοῖσι ἀνδρηίοισι τῶν ἐθνέων γενομένοισι, καὶ δὴ καὶ αἰδοῖα γυναικὸς προσενέγραφε, δῆλα βουλόμενος ποιέειν ὡς εἴησαν ἀνάλκιδες.
>
> However many of those he met were brave and strove cleverly for their freedom, for these men he set up stelai in their lands, saying with words his name and that of his father, and how he subdued these people with his own might; but however many of those from whom he received cities without fighting and easily, for them he inscribed on the stelai the same things as he did for the courageous peoples, and also in addition he inscribed the genitals of a woman, wishing to make it clear that they were cowardly. (Hdt. 2.102.3-4)

The contrast between admirable men and those considered inferior is starkly contrasted here by the narrator; in each case, Sesostris sets up a monument to denote how he values the peoples he has conquered. The stelai themselves would have been identifiable as markers of Sesostris' victories, even if an observer was unable to read the words imprinted thereon to describe the

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deserted from his cause, begging them not to abandon their gods and their wives and children, and one man responds by pointing to his genitals and saying that he will have children wherever his penis is (Hdt. 2.30).

[132] See above discussion of Ninyas, Sardanapallus, and Nanarus.

[133] γῆμαι μὲν νομίμως οὐκ ἠθέλησεν, εὐλαβουμένη μήποτε στερηθῇ τῆς ἀρχῆς ("she did not wish to marry legitimately because she was taking care to never be deprived of her command," Ct. F1b §8.4).

valor of the defeated. More important for Sesostris than honoring those who fought well against him was to dishonor the men who simply surrendered; the added visual detail of female genitals would have signified even to an illiterate observer that Sesostris had subjugated a particularly shameful population. That the notation was a visual image further cements Sesostris' desire to emasculate these peoples and force them into an ideologically inferior position.

What unites these literary images of *anasyrma* and Sesostris' stelai is a common emphasis on the visual, as well as the association with foreign lands. Herms are a form of acceptable nudity for the Greek male, and as a result they are treated with piety and respect; conversely, we have seen that the *anasyrma* gesture is always paired with mockery and humor, while the genitals depicted on the stelai connote shame, particularly for men. The exposed female body thus communicates a message of disrespect, whether because the image is being laughed at or because it causes humiliation for the viewer. In addition, it is the viewer and the context that give the gesture its meaning in each of these episodes; display is a necessary element of exposure, as we have seen in the analysis of Candaules' wife in Section 1.4.1, above. As Lee notes, generally "females do not deliberately display their breasts or genitalia," with the possible exception of *hetairai*.[134] This remark on the atypical nature of female genital exposure leads directly to a consideration of non-Greek bodies, a category that includes all passages discussed in Section 1.4. Foreign men were "by definition outside the parameters of proper Greek society" and thus were not held to the same standard of behavior as Greek men;[135] this is of course an additional aspect of the ideological feminization of foreign men. Women and foreigners alike

[134] Lee 2015: 194.

[135] Ibid.: 192.

were considered to be conceptually excluded from the category of acceptable nudity for the Greek man, and thus we see them depicted using similar motifs, whether clothed or unclothed.

The temporariness of dress permits individuals a great amount of freedom to move between social categories. Despite this transitory tendency, any exterior presented as truth cannot alter the essence of the person who is actually beneath the modification. When perception of the body is modified by the addition or alteration of dress, a combination of potential truth results from the accumulated suggestions. For example, we have seen that Sardanapallus is an Assyrian king who fights bravely to defend his people; this aspect of his identity is the final detail of his story, and as such the reader is left with this as a general truth. For much of his rule, however, Sardanapallus lives the life of a woman, altering his dress and habits to take on a female social role. The men who encounter this Sardanapallus believe he cannot be a decent king, yet the narrative implies the opposite is true. Sardanapallus alters the way he is perceived according to the gendered expectations with which he aligns, and he simultaneously presents multiple modes of truth: he lives as a woman and as a man, fluidly switching roles as required. Although Herodotus and Ctesias differ in their depictions of social mobility using attire, the same qualities of visual presentation and hidden truth are pervasive throughout the works of both authors, regardless of motives presented in the narrative. Even without a visual barrier to conceal a person's physical actuality, autopsy does not supply the entirety of required knowledge to an observer. The instability of categories and the potential failure of autopsy undermines the authors' approach, which claims to privilege autopsy as a means of gathering information.

Chapter Two. Mistreatment of Bodies

2.0 Introduction: The Otherness of Violence

While the previous chapter addressed temporary modifications to the body in order to negotiate and communicate identity, the current chapter will examine permanent modifications made through violent means. The impermanence inherent in dress creates the opportunity to frequently adapt one's identity and how it is perceived, and thus it is able to be practiced by any individual of any nation. Permanent modification of the body itself, on the other hand, is presented in Greek texts as a distinctly non-Greek practice that enacts permanent changes to the body; thus, modification made through violent acts are much less adaptable for negotiating identity-based categories.[1] Nevertheless, such alterations continue to "mark the boundary between self and society, are fundamental to the construction of identities;"[2] in Herodotus and Ctesias, these acts are practiced by non-Greeks, and so modification is one way to mark non-Greeks as Other.[3] For example, tattooing is a permanent modification that marks a body as Other, whether that body belongs to a foreigner outside of the Greek world or, within the Greek sphere, to a slave of foreign origin.[4] It is a physical marker "made visible for other members of society to interpret,"[5] yet for free Greeks, the communicated message is always one of inferiority

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[1] Lee 2010: 155. See also Vlahogiannis 1998: 24.

[2] Lee 2010: 156.

[3] There are occasionally exceptions, of course, such as Pericles' father Xanthippus impaling the Persian Artayctes (Hdt. 9.12; see Bridges 2015: 68-69). The fact that Greeks are also capable of such violent acts only strengthens the argument for abandoning strict labels and considering the histories of Herodotus and Ctesias to be more pluralistic.

[4] E.g. Hdt. 5.6 (elite Thracians are tattooed as a sign of their status), 7.233 (captured Thebans are branded to show that they are prisoners of war, and thus slaves).

[5] Ditchey 2016: 20. Though Ditchey primarily examines tattooing in Mesopotamia, she frequently notes the parallels to Greek perceptions throughout (e.g. 7).

and subordination. In this chapter we will see that, for an audience of any nationality, the impression of subordination is consistently part of the message conveyed through physical violence,[6] though other connotations may arise simultaneously.

Many Herodotean examples of violence have been previously catalogued and analyzed, but these have focused on individual characterization of the perpetrator and their ethno-cultural identity; much less study had been made regarding such depictions in Ctesias.[7] Because many of these violent practices, such as castration and impalement, come to be known as distinctly foreign practices, we already see both Herodotus and Ctesias depicting physical violence as negative and foreign concepts. The otherness of violence is not unique to the historiographic tradition and is well-established by the time Herodotus writes his text; I begin by looking at an important and often-cited passage from Aeschylus' *Eumenides* to demonstrate the pervasiveness of this literary motif before moving to assess episodes of violence in Herodotus and Ctesias.[8] In historiographic texts, the motif becomes a tool for undermining concepts of truth in the same way that temporary sartorial modification does. In some cases, the identity of the altered person is similarly altered, as in the case of males who are castrated and become eunuchs; in all cases, however, the presence of a third party is required for the action itself to carry its intended

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[6] Geltner 2014: 41.

[7] E.g. Strid 2006, who focuses on the silence of victims in Herodotus' text and his lack of emotional framing, and Rollinger 2004, who catalogues instances of violence in the *Histories* and charts them by type, by perpetrator's ethnicity, and by Herodotus' apparent judgment (positive or negative).

[8] The sections I have created in this chapter are particularly nebulous, which is unavoidable. Previous structures have been attempted when discussing violent acts in Herodotus (e.g. Maxwell-Stuart 1976, Rollinger 2004, Strid 2006), but the Greek vocabulary of such acts is often ambiguous and many episodes describe multiple types of violence; my structure therefore is chosen to suit the narrative qualities that I discuss, and any conflation of categories in my project simply reflects the instability of such categories throughout the texts.

meaning.[9] As a result this chapter is concerned with the persuasive impact of viewing physical violence and the permanent marks it leaves on human bodies.

As mentioned above, a passage from Aeschylus outlines the geographic otherness of physical violence and mutilation. As Apollo reminds the Erinyes that they have no role in the "civilized" world of Hellas, he names specific physical offenses that are carried out in the place the Erinyes belong:

> οὔτοι δόμοισι τοῖσδε χρίμπτεσθαι πρέπει,
> ἀλλ' οὗ καρανιστῆρες ὀφθαλμωρύχοι
> δίκαι σφαγαί τε, σπέρματος τ' ἀποφθορᾷ
> παίδων κακοῦται κλοῦνις, ἠδ' ἀκρωνίαι
> λευσμοί τε, καὶ μύζουσιν οἰκτισμὸν πολὺν
> ὑπὸ ῥάχιν παγέντες.
>
> Indeed it is not fitting that you draw near to this home; rather [go to the place] where the penalties are beheadings and eye-gouging and slaughter, and the virility of boys is ruined by disruption of the seed, and amputations and stonings, and where those impaled beneath the spine moan a great lamentation. (Aesch. *Eum*. 185-190)

This is no simple catalogue of violence; each of these acts is presented as a normalized practice (δίκαι) and involves some punishment being enacted on the physical body. The offenses listed here signify a place far from the *polis*, a place "where human life ends in violence [...and] is unnaturally violated with bloodshed."[10] In his commentary on the *Eumenides*, Sommerstein notes the foreign connotations of each punishment Apollo lists, most of which are said to be especially Persian.[11] The presence of this passage in the *Eumenides* is striking, as the play

[9] Cf. Ballengee 2009, who argues that literary representations of torture are dependent on a witnessing audience for rhetorical meaning (*passim*).

[10] Konishi 2009: ad loc.

[11] "Most of the cruelties listed were (believed to be) practised by the Persians, and unknown or very rare among Greeks; all of them involve the shedding of blood" (Sommerstein 1989: loc. cit.). An exception to the foreignness inherent in these acts is that of stoning; while stoning was more common among a Greek audience than the other

provides an etiology for appropriate Athenian justice;[12] the quoted passage also serves to introduce the play's concern with mediating between two extreme representations.[13] Moreover, as a male Olympian, Apollo holds a position of authority over the foreign female Erinyes, hierarchies which Zeitlin correctly notes are reaffirmed in the above passage.[14]

Herodotus himself confirms the notion that the body is best when healthy and intact. Solon's discussion with Croesus early in the *Histories* is often considered an insight into the authorial voice of Herodotus; in particular, Pelling suggests that "we should surely relate Solon's moralizing to Herodotus' own programmatic words."[15] Herodotus' introduction to Croesus as a figure is loaded with intent: ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτω ἢ ἄλλως κως ταῦτα ἐγένετο, τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας [...] τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὧν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τὠυτῷ μένουσαν, ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως ("But concerning these things, I am not going on by saying that in this way or in some other way these events happened, but rather [by telling of] the one whom I myself know was first to take up unjust acts against the Greeks [...] since I have established that nothing about human

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violent deeds in this passage, Sommerstein notes that it was characterized as "an explosion of spontaneous wrath, and this makes it appropriate to associate it with the Erinyes." Moreover, such a loss of emotional control is contrary to Greek ideals of *sophrosyne*, or "self-restraint in response to basic appetites" (Beneker 2012: 4), which does, in fact, mark stoning as a non-ideal act (cf. Lateiner 1985, esp. pp. 97-100).

[12] E.g. Mitchell-Boyask 2009: 98-100.

[13] "The main interest of this play is, therefore, how Athena, standing between the two forces, brings about a reconciliation without depriving the Furies of their honour. In other words, the function of this first episode is to lead the audience from that of the particular cases of the preceding two plays to an understanding of the universal problem of this play" (Konishi 1990: 220).

[14] Zeitlin 1996: 87.

[15] Pelling 2006: 145, who cites Hdt. 1.5.3-4 as a specific example of Herodotus' programmatic language in setting out his purpose.

prosperity remains the same, I will recall both versions in the same way," Hdt. 1.5.3-4). Herodotus here emphasizes the fluidity of human prosperity, which in turn is a focus of Solon's speeches to Croesus, while also suggesting multiple variants with similar validity. Moreover, like Solon, the narrator makes a claim that he knows a certainty about humanity; for Herodotus, the certainty is that Croesus was the first foreigner to directly act against the Greeks, while Solon attempts to teach Croesus that nothing can be definitively stated about a man's fortune until he is dead.[16] The finality and permanence of death is what ultimately fixes one's condition.

Because of these strong connections between Solon's words and those of his narrator, we can look to Solon for affirmation regarding notions of the body. The Greek leader describes the ideal fortunate man as "uninjured, without illness, not suffering bad things, gifted with children and good looks" (ἄπηρος [...], ἄνουσος, ἀπαθὴς κακῶν, εὔπαις, εὐειδής, Hdt. 1.32.6). Most of these qualities relate to the physical body and its condition, i.e. being physically intact and in prime health, as well as attractive. Even the idea that a man should have excellent children is a statement of his physical virility.[17] In addition to these characteristics, Solon tells Croesus that a man must have ended his life well to be considered fortunate, suggesting that even the integrity of the body's existence as a living being must be whole and complete before it can be assessed. In line with these claims, Vlahogiannis has written that much of Athenian literature is imbued

[16] The national contrast is further highlighted by Solon, who "deploys a variety of Greek ideals to set against Croesus' own estimation of himself" (Pelling 2006: 146). In addition, by stating that Croesus "was first to take up unjust acts" (πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων) against the Greeks, Herodotus reinforces violence and a lack of δίκη as distinctly foreign.

[17] Lateiner notes that only seven men in the *Histories* are reported to be childless, five of whom are "strongly condemned," and he describes the act of removing someone's ability to have children as "genocidal destruction" in the eyes of the Greeks (1985: 98).

with a "theme of the rule of the physically strong, [...] based on the notion of an ideal body without blemish or fault, which fulfils the function needs of the state."[18] The many sufferings discussed in this chapter – those presented both by Herodotus and by Ctesias – all violate Solon's description, falling more in line with the aforementioned Aeschylean motif of foreign physical punishments. I will discuss examples of violence that are consistently represented as foreign; when apparent exceptions arise, we will see that the individuals perpetrating violence are nevertheless othered in some way. In addition, there will be a thread woven throughout the chapter that considers the impact that such violence has on witnesses, particularly concerning perceptions of truth.

2.1 Castration and Blinding

Castration is presented by Greeks as one of many normalized practices among foreign peoples, as we have seen from Apollo's words in the *Eumenides*.[19] Both Herodotus and Ctesias mention the general presence of eunuchs throughout their works, suggesting that eunuchs were fully integrated into foreign – particularly eastern – cultures. Though Herodotus does describe several instances of castration used as a coercive threat, neither author gives insight into the everyday pragmatics of castration. The authors seem to take for granted that castration is simply a *barbaros nomos*, practiced by foreign cultures in a manner not unlike circumcision.[20] The only

[18] Vlahogiannis 1998: 16.

[19] As throughout this dissertation, my concern is not whether castration was an actual widespread practice; rather, I discuss the literary motif of castration as a widespread practice.

[20] Herodotus notes that, although several peoples practice circumcision in his time, only the Colchians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians have always done so; other practitioners learned it from those cultures (Hdt. 2.104.2-4). The narrator

overt discussions of castration by Herodotus involve threats and punishment, supporting the foreign alignment of the practice.[21] In fact, the narrator gives us the generalization that "among the barbarians, eunuchs are more valuable than intact men because of their trustworthiness" (παρὰ γὰρ τοῖσι βαρβάροισι τιμιώτεροι εἰσὶ οἱ εὐνοῦχοι πίστιος εἵνεκα τῆς πάσης τῶν ἐνορχίων, Hdt. 8.105.2). This distinction leaves the reader with no doubt as to whether the eunuchs involved are truly castrated individuals or, as the etymology suggests, a chamberlain or guard of the bedroom.[22] They are also contrasted very clearly against οἱ ἔνορχοι, literally "those with testicles attached," so the εὐνοῦχοι must thus refer to castrated men.

In this section, I will begin by discussing the role of eunuchs within the texts of Herodotus and Ctesias, including representations of the act of circumcision as both a punishment and an economic concern.[23] I will then briefly argue for my inclusion of blinding as a metaphorical castration before turning to the depictions of blinding in the literature. The results of unwanted castration on the affected person are clear, in that they enforce changes in the individual's identity that can be observed by a third party. In addition, the idea of castration as a broad practice is used as a threat in order to coerce an observer, with the implication that they must accept the version of truth presented to them, unless they wish to have their bodily integrity and ability for procreation removed.

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goes on to emphasize that Greeks do not practice circumcision, and though the Phoenicians learned the habit from the Egyptians, once they intermingle with Greeks they abandon it (2.104.4). Circumcision is cited by several scholars (e.g. Lee 2010: 173) as an example of bodily mutilation among the foreign Other.

[21] Though Ctesias mentions many eunuchs, both generally and by name, none of the extant fragments depict the practice itself; see also Lenfant 2012.

[22] Hornblower 2003: 48-49.

[23] By "economic concern" I mean the alleged trading and commerce in supplying young boys to become eunuch servants.

2.1.1 Castration

Before looking at Herodotus and Ctesias in particular, some general comments are necessary about eunuchs and castration in antiquity. Though eunuchs are born as fully intact men, castration alters not only their body but also their gender identity. Eunuchs are treated throughout ancient sources as a third gender, neither men nor women.[24] The eunuch is physically distinct from women by having been born with testicles. Due to this origin, they are grammatically masculine, always referred to with the masculine article ὁ and masculine adjectives. This practice is a result of convenience and is not meant to signify actual identity. As mentioned in my previous chapter, when the eunuch Artoxares aspires to be king, he must make himself appear to be a man, with the facial hair that many eunuchs are unable to grow (F15 §54). This passage overtly presents Artoxares as not-male, a person who must change his appearance in order to be perceived as a man.[25] He is hoping that he will not be recognized as a beardless eunuch, but rather as an intact man capable of becoming king. We also see that eunuchs are socially similar to men; in Ctesias' account of Cyrus' youth, Artembares adopts Cyrus as a son, taking on a paternal role despite being a eunuch (F8d §6). Yet in the literature eunuchs are consistently represented as a separate gender, with qualities of both men and women while truly being neither.

[24] Though the current project focuses on Greek sources, the Near Eastern sources also suggest that eunuchs exist outside of a gender binary. Peled, esp. in Chapter 4 ("lú-sag / *ša rēši* and Castration in the Ancient Near East"), gives a thorough discussion of gender ambiguity in Mesopotamian sources, arguing that castrated eunuchs were considered an ambiguous male figure subordinate to (and distinct from) intact and masculine men (2016: 203).

[25] Πώγωνα γὰρ καὶ ὑπόρρινα προσέταξεν αὐτῷ γυναικὶ κατασκευάσαι, ἵνα ὡς ἀνὴρ φαίνοιτο ("For he ordered a woman to fabricate a beard and mustache for him in order that he appear to be a man," F15 §54).

As Herodotus' claim at 8.105.2 suggests, there exists in Greek texts the motif of eunuchs as being highly trustworthy, more so than (intact) men. Many of the eunuchs described by Herodotus and Ctesias share this quality, even when they are not named individuals. When Cyrus is discovered to be alive, Harpagos claims that it is not possible, for he sent his most trusted eunuchs to witness the infant's burial as an extension of himself.[26] Similarly, when the queen mother Parysatis poisons her son's wife, Stateira, the king exacts revenge by mutilating and killing his mother's eunuchs. The eunuchs are treated as part of Parysatis' person and part of whatever plots she herself has enacted. In each of these instances, a eunuch being treated as an extension of a member of the ruling family is analogous to the presentation of slavery, wherein slaves are considered an extension of their master and have no independent personhood. It is unclear from the extant sources whether eunuchs served uniformly as slaves or simply as part of a court hierarchy, but in either case they have the same relationship to their ruler, regardless whether that ruler is also their owner. As Peled states, the Near Eastern evidence shows that eunuchs served "in high-ranking roles in the Neo-Assyrian palace [and] were some of the closest officials to the king,"[27] and as such they would have necessarily been highly trusted.

Unlike in Near Eastern texts, however, Greek literature presents an alternate motif of eunuchs as treacherous.[28] This is especially common in the fragments of Ctesias, even when they are transmitted by various later authors. For example, Photius reports Ctesias' account of the

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[26] ἐπείτε δὲ ποιήσαντος τούτου τὰ κελευόμενα ἐτελεύτησε τὸ παιδίον, πέμψας τῶν εὐνούχων τοὺς πιστοτάτους καὶ εἶδον δι᾽ ἐκείνων καὶ ἔθαψά μιν ("And when this man had done what was ordered and killed the child, I sent the most trusted of my eunuchs and, through them, I saw and buried him [Cyrus]," Hdt. 1.117.5).

[27] Peled 2016: 222; Ctesias' *Persica* covers the Neo-Assyrian period of history, a time which also forms the immediate background to Herodotus' discussion of Achaemenid Assyria in his first book.

[28] "[W]e have no evidence that negative notions prevailed in Mesopotamia concerning castrates" (Peled 2016: 222).

eunuch Matakas despoiling Apollo's temple at Delphi (F13 31), while Semiramis' story comes to an end when she is betrayed by a eunuch (F1b §20.1, via Diodorus Siculus, and F11δ, via Nicholas of Damascus). These impressions correspond to Greek anxiety about eunuchs as difficult to categorize, "in contrast with the Greek notions of body wholeness, and clear social separation between gender categories."[29] The same ambiguous representation is present in Near Eastern texts as well, as catalogued by Peled, who elucidates the many ways that the eunuch's polyvalence contributes to an uncertainty of identification in the texts.[30] In Greek literature we see eunuchs as figures of extreme personality traits, both positive and negative, and not reflective of an actual social group so much as a stereotype of foreign cultures. In both instances, however, eunuchs are presented in terms of the truth and loyalty they espouse after losing their manhood.[31]

Of the eunuchs mentioned by Herodotus, most notable is the extended story of Hermotimos, Xerxes' highest-ranked eunuch advisor (φερόμενον δὲ οὐ τὰ δεύτερα τῶν εὐνούχων παρὰ βασιλέι, Hdt. 8.104.1), and the revenge he performed on Panionios, the man who had castrated him; indeed, "the greatest vengeance of all those whom we know has already happened for him [i.e. Hermotimos], after he was wronged" (τῷ μεγίστη τίσις ἤδη ἀδικηθέντι ἐγένετο πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν, 8.105.1). This story is our only glimpse into the narrator's presentation of castration, which he describes here as "most profane deeds" (ἔργων ἀνοσιωτάτων).[32] We can presume that Hermotimos is aligned with the motif of extreme loyalty,

[29] Peled 2016: 236.

[30] Peled 2016: 203-237.

[31] Both meanings are apt: in the sense of social masculine identity as well as a euphemistic phrase for the genitals.

[32] This phrase is echoed by Hermotimos when he confronts Panionios: οἳ σε ποιήσαντα ἀνόσια, νόμῳ δικαίῳ χρεώμενοι, ὑπήγαγον ἐς χεῖρας τὰς ἐμάς ("[The gods], who follow just practice, have brought you, who did profane

as he – along with Artemisia – has been trusted to escort Xerxes' children back to Persia; we are also told that "of all the eunuchs, [Hermotimos] was especially honored by Xerxes" (πάντων τῶν εὐνούχων ἐτιμήθη μάλιστα παρὰ Ξέρξῃ, Hdt. 8.105.2). The punishment that he exacts reflects the offense that he suffered, certainly in its nature if not in its intensity.[33] Interestingly, we also get an impression of castration focalized through the victim's perspective, which cements the notion that castration is a torturous punishment. Hermotimos has not only been physically altered forever, but his inner identity is altered as well, as he directs his efforts toward avenging the injustice he has suffered. Although he holds a relatively privileged position in his new Persian society, Hermotimos still suffers the unwilling loss of his childhood – and potential adulthood – identity.

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deeds, into my hands," Hdt. 1.106.3; cf. also Hornblower 2003: 47); note again the juxtaposition of castration and justice.

[33] Hermotimos not only forces Panionios to become a eunuch, but all of his sons as well. Hornblower notes the difference in vocabulary between Hermotimos' mutilation and that of Panionios; the verb ἐκτάμνω ("cut out") is the usual word for testicular castration, used here for Hermotimos, but the adjustment to ἀποτάμνω ("cut off") for the suffering of Panionios and his sons suggests, as Hornblower argues, a fuller amputation of the phallus as well as the testicles (2003: 41-43). The difference here could be the additional aspect of revenge, but I would argue that a significant issue is the post-pubescent status of Panionios and his sons. Peled notes that normative castration would occur prior to puberty, which led to the eunuch's distinct physical characteristics (2016: 236). He then raises the question of adult castration; if the castration takes place after puberty, as it would have for Panionios and his sons, this theoretically would not alter their *perceived* identity. It is also likely that such a late-stage castration would have been fatal. Peled concludes his chapter by noting that castration is acceptable only when institutionalized (237), another differentiation between the instances of castration in the story of Hermotimos.

This forceful alteration of identity often appears as a mass coercion tactic by Persians against subordinate populations.[34] When the Persian army is preparing to attack Miletus, they use castration as a threat against the nearby Ionians in an attempt to force the subservience of the Ionian cohort. The Persian commanders instruct the Ionian leaders to convince their cities to rebel from the Milesian cause, and in doing so keep their people safe:

> «εἰ δὲ ταῦτα μὲν οὐ ποιήσουσι, οἳ δὲ πάντως διὰ μάχης ἐλεύσονται, τάδε ἤδη σφι λέγετε ἐπηρεάζοντες, τά περ σφέας κατέξει, ὡς ἐσσωθέντες τῇ μάχῃ ἐξανδραποδιεῦνται, καὶ ὡς σφέων τοὺς παῖδας ἐκτομίας ποιήσομεν, τὰς δὲ παρθένους ἀνασπάστους ἐς Βάκτρα, καὶ ὡς τὴν χώρην ἄλλοισι παραδώσομεν.»
>
> "But if they do not do these things, but enter fully into battle, threaten them and tell them the following things, which very much will befall them: that once they have yielded in battle they will be enslaved, and that we will make their sons eunuchs, and their girls will be dragged off to Bactria, and that we will give their land to others." (Hdt. 6.9.4)

The overt threat is of slavery, but the added details of castrating the boys and sending the girls to Bactria specify the particular nature of this slavery. If the Ionians disobey, they will not only suffer the demotion of their humanity by becoming slaves, but they will endure further debasement as boys becoming eunuchs or as women sent far away from their native lands and families, two gender-particular violations. In addition, this is no empty threat; the Ionians do not join with the Persians, and we learn several chapters later that the Ionians have in fact been enslaved:

> ἐνθαῦτα Περσέων οἱ στρατηγοὶ οὐκ ἐψεύσαντο τὰς ἀπειλὰς τὰς ἐπηπείλησαν τοῖσι Ἴωσι στρατοπεδευομένοισι ἐναντία σφίσι. ὡς γὰρ δὴ ἐπεκράτησαν τῶν πολίων, παῖδάς τε τοὺς εὐειδεστάτους ἐκλεγόμενοι ἐξέταμνον καὶ ἐποίευν ἀντὶ εἶναι ἐνόρχιας εὐνούχους καὶ παρθένους τὰς καλλιστευούσας ἀνασπάστους παρὰ βασιλέα· ταῦτά τε δὴ ἐποίευν καὶ τὰς πόλιας ἐνεπίμπρασαν αὐτοῖσι τοῖσι ἱροῖσι. οὕτω τε τὸ τρίτον Ἴωνες κατεδουλώθησαν.

[34] A notable Greek exception is Periander, who is an atypical and unadmirable Greek leader and does not represent the Greek ideals of democracy (3.48-50). His plan is foiled by the local Corcyran population, but he has already shipped off a group of boys to be castrated in Lydia, so it is clear that he intended to fulfill his plan.

> At that point the Persian generals were not lying about the promises they had threatened to the Ionians camped opposite them. In fact, once they were victorious over the *poleis*, they selected the most beautiful boys and made them eunuchs in place of intact men, and they dragged the most beautiful girls to the king; indeed, they did these things and they burned the *poleis* along with the temples, and in this way the Ionians were reduced to slavery for the third time. (Hdt. 6.32)

The Persians not only enact their earlier threats, but they escalate the punishment by additionally burning the cities and temples of this Ionian population. In doing so, the Persians remove any identity from the Ionians – whether their civic roles as priests and tyrants, or familial roles as daughters and sons – and replace it all with a single new identity, that of slave. The subordination of the Ionians is completed, and the Persians have cemented their own superiority while creating a narrative suggesting that, by not acquiescing to treasonous demands, the Ionians are to blame for their own enslavement.

2.1.2 Blinding as Castration

While the extant fragments of Ctesias give few details about the actual practice of castration, they include many examples – as does Herodotus' text – of a possible symbolic castration. The blinding or gouging of the eyes is often considered analogous to castration in psychoanalytical thought; "a morbid anxiety connected with the eyes and with going blind is often enough a substitute for the dread of castration."[35] My general approach is not a psychoanalytic one, and I will not argue that eyes are meant to directly correspond to the

[35] Freud 1919: 7, followed by a remark that Oedipus "was simply carrying out a mitigated form of the punishment of castration" by blinding himself; see also Ferenczi 1952: 263-264 for similar discussion of Oedipus and the links between blinding and castration.

testicles.[36] Yet there is significance in the comparison between the face and the genitals, and I will continue to use the term "castration anxiety" to refer to the procreative threat. The evidence from Herodotus and Ctesias supports the reading of blinding as a threat of castration, or more specifically a threat to a man's generative abilities. Moreover, blinding also appears as a common punishment for sexual transgressions.[37] The eyes are by no means the only facial feature symbolically linked to the genitals; for example, the nose is upheld by many cultures to communicate suggestions about one's sexual prowess through its metaphorical assimilation to the penis or the clitoris.[38] There are indeed examples of nasal mutilation in the texts of Herodotus and Ctesias, but for the purposes of my discussion I consider optic mutilation in its role as a threat to masculinity and procreation, in the same ways that we have seen castration used as a threat. In addition, the eyes are the sensory organs most associated with acquiring knowledge, and as such the mutilation of the eyes and the resulting incapability for eyewitnessing are an appropriate direction for this project. Indeed, the removal of the potential for autopsy is a primary concern in all of the examples discussed below, while castration anxiety is present in all but a few episodes.

Like castration and other violent actions, blinding is listed by Apollo as one of the hallmarks of foreign activity. Herodotus too tells of a normative blinding practice among the

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[36] See also Miller's comments on Oedipus, who "chose to blind, not castrate himself. [...] His eyes suffered for their own commissions and omissions" (1997: 90).

[37] This is particularly common in mythology. Oedipus blinds himself for the crime of incest as well as lack of understanding (e.g. Soph. *OT*: Devereux 1973); Tiresias is blinded for accidentally seeing Athena bathing (Callimachus, *Hymn* 5: Steiner 1995: 199).

[38] Frembgen summarizes "the close correlation between the olfactory organ and eroticism/sexuality" (2006: 243-244; cf. also Miller 1997: 94).

Scythians: τοὺς δὲ δούλους οἱ Σκύθαι πάντας τυφλοῦσι τοῦ γάλακτος εἵνεκεν τοῦ πίνουσι [...] τούτων μὲν εἵνεκα ἅπαντα τὸν ἂν λάβωσι οἱ Σκύθαι ἐκτυφλοῦσι. οὐ γὰρ ἀρόται εἰσὶ ἀλλὰ νομάδες ("And the Scythians blind all their slaves because of the milk which they [i.e. the Scythians] drink. [...] For these reasons [i.e. the process of milking mares and cultivating the dairy] the Scythians fully blind every person whom they capture. For they are not plowmen, but nomads," Hdt. 4.2.2). All whom the nomadic Scythians capture are enslaved and blinded before being integrated into the social structure. This offhand mention of a normative practice clarifies the very reason that blinding is such an extreme act of violence; not only is it a subconscious threat to male generative power, it also removes the slaves' ability for vision and thus for autopsy. By being unable to see the milking processes going on around them, the slaves would be unable to exert any active control over their situation. Rather, they are the passive victims of the Scythians, who maintain the authority and superior status, both through their non-slave status and their visual ability.

As mentioned above, the removal of autopsy is present in episodes of blinding alongside the implicit threat to male generation, though Herodotus and Ctesias differ in what aspect they foreground. In Ctesias' *Persica,* as punishment for betraying Astyages, the eunuch Petesakas is made to undergo a series of violent trials at the hands of Astyages' daughter, Amytis: ἡ δέ, τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξορύξασα καὶ τὸ δέρμα περιδείρασα, ἀνεσταύρισεν ("And she, after digging out his eyes and flaying his skin, impaled him," F9 §6). Petesakas' punishment is certainly apt for his crime.[39] He had abandoned Astyages in the desert to starve to death, keeping this secret until it was finally revealed through a dream (F9 §6). Rather than simply killing him at once, Amytis

[39] Both flaying and impalement will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

first removes his eyes. This blinding is ironic because Petesakas was the only person who actually witnessed his crime, a fact which allowed him to keep his crime hidden for as long as he did. Moreover, as in this story, when blinding occurs elsewhere in Ctesias' narrative, it is one of a combination of extreme punishments enacted upon a victim.[40]

Similarly, a Carian fighter who struck one of the mortal blows against the younger Cyrus suffers a multifold punishment. Because he was only one of those who killed Cyrus, he received rewards in a secondary position of honor. Feeling slighted, he loudly proclaims that he deserves more honor and that he was the sole slayer of Cyrus. The victorious Artaxerxes wants to kill him immediately, but the king's mother intervenes and asks to give the Carian a "deserved payment" (τὸν ἄξιον [...] μισθὸν, F26 §14.9): ἐπιτρέψαντος δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως, ἐκέλευσε τοὺς ἐπὶ τῶν τιμωριῶν ἡ Παρύσατις λαβόντας τὸν ἄνθροπον ἐφ' ἡμέρας δέκα στρεβλοῦν, εἶτα τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξορύξαντας εἰς τὰ ὦτα θερμὸν ἐντήκειν χαλκόν, ἕως ἀποθάνῃ ("After the king turned him over, Parysatis ordered those who took the man for his punishments to stretch him on the rack for ten days, then after digging out his eyes, to pour molten hot bronze into his ears until he died," F26 §10). We again see punishments that reflect the crime: the Carian tells a version of events that contradicts what his own eyes saw, and in return Parysatis removes his eyes. Indeed, what use are eyes to a man who does not respect the truth of autopsy?

[40] F9 §6 (Petesakas, a eunuch who is also skinned and impaled) and F26 §14.10 (an unnamed Carian, whose head is also covered in molten bronze). The three mentions of blinding (including the unfulfilled threat at F1b §6.10) are all transmitted by different authors (Photius, Plutarch, and Diodorus Siculus, respectively), yet the core aspects discussed in this section remain stable.

These two passages foreground the forceful removal of a victim's potential for autopsy, with no sense of castration anxiety.[41] However, the fear of losing one's generative power is not absent from Ctesias' fragments. When Semiramis masterfully reaches her husband Onnes and the Assyrian army and assists them in taking a Bactrian city, the king Ninus rewards her with gifts, but later desires that she be his queen. Even when an exchange of women is offered, Onnes refuses to give up Semiramis, clinging to the marital bond with this remarkable woman, but soon Ninus threatens him with violence: Δυσχερῶς δ' αὐτοῦ φέροντος, ἠπείλησεν ἐκκόψειν τὰς ὁράσεις μὴ προχείρως ὑπηρετοῦντος τοῖς προστάγμασιν. Ὁ δὲ Ὄννης ἅμα μὲν τὰς τοῦ Βασιλέως ἀπειλὰς δείσας, ἅμα δὲ διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα περιπεσὼν λύσσῃ τινὶ καὶ μανίᾳ, βρόχον ἑαυτῷ περιθεὶς ἀνεκρέμασεν ("But when this man [Onnes] bore it disagreeably, [Ninus] threatened to cut out his eyes if he did not readily obey his commands. And Onnes, at the same afraid of the king's threats and having fallen into some frenzy and mania because of love, put a noose around himself and hanged himself," Ct. F1b §6.10). Ninus does not actually engage in violence against Onnes, but the very threat of such an act is enough to drive Onnes to suicide.[42] He has been put in a situation where, no matter the result, he will be unmanned: either he gives his wife over to Ninus, suggesting Ninus' superiority over Onnes, or he loses his eyes, an act of symbolic castration. In addition, gouging of the eyes (ἐκκόψειν τὰς ὁράσεις) will ensure that Onnes will never physically see Semiramis as his own wife again. The truth is that Ninus has claimed Semiramis for his own, and at the same time he has forced Onnes to accept this truth. Onnes instead reverts

[41] This is particularly true for Petesakas, who is already a eunuch.

[42] Cf. Hdt. 7.18.1, where Artabanus has just received the famous prophetic dream about Xerxes and is jarred awake when the dream threatens to burn out his eyes; the revelation of prophetic truth is overtly connected here with the act of blinding.

to the only means of maintaining control over the narrative of his own life and kills himself rather than live through an unmanning.

This drive to control an individual's "sight" while also threatening his generative ability occurs often in Herodotus, again with either autopsy or loss of generative power as a more overt theme than the other. We have already considered the blinding of slaves in Scythia as a preventative measure against revelation of secrets; Herodotus also tells of blinding as a punishment for failed vision.[43] While acting as shepherd of a flock sacred to the sun, Euenios falls asleep during his watch, allowing wolves to kill dozens of the sheep. Euenios attempts to replace the missing sheep in order to cover up his mistake, "but when [the natives of Apollonia] learned what happened, they brought him before a court and sentenced him to be deprived of his vision, because he slept during his watch" (ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἐπύθοντο, ὑπαγαγόντες μιν ὑπὸ δικαστήριον κατέκριναν, ὡς τὴν φυλακὴν κατακοιμήσαντα, τῆς ὄψιος στερηθῆναι, Hdt. 9.93.3). The connection between Euenios' offense and his punishment is clear. Unlike previous examples of blinding, the punishment of Euenios occurs within a Greek population, which for Herodotus necessitates further elaboration within the narrative. Because the perpetrators of the blinding are Greeks, the action of blinding is shown to be reprehensible and incorrectly enacted. Just as Euenios was robbed of his eyesight, the land of Apollonia is robbed of its fertility: ἐπείτε δὲ τὸν Εὐήνιον ἐξετύφλωσαν, αὐτίκα μετὰ ταῦτα οὔτε πρόβατά σφι ἔτικτε οὔτε γῆ ἔφερε ὁμοίως [καρπόν] ("but when they blinded Euenios, immediately afterward the flocks did not bear young nor did the earth produce [fruit] in the same way," 9.93.3). Here, the blind individual only suffers

[43] This episode is of course comparable to the Oedipus myth, wherein Oedipus blinds himself for not "seeing" or recognizing an objective truth (Soph. *OT*).

the loss of vision for reasons related to a failure at observation. It is those who enacted the blinding who suffer a loss of generative ability, a deficiency that the oracles of both Delphi and Dodona proclaim cannot be resolved until Euenios receives restitution for the unjust blinding (9.93.4). Furthermore, the Apollonians hide the truth of the oracles from Euenios when deciding his compensation (9.94.2-3); for this offense, not only does Euenios receive material remuneration from the citizens, but he also received vision from the gods. His eyes cannot be restored, but he receives the gift of prophecy (ἔμφυτον αὐτίκα μαντικὴν εἶχε), becoming a contemporary Tiresias in his physical blindness and prophetic sight. Though perpetuated as an act of punishment, Herodotus reveals to his audience that the blinding of Euenios was the true offense, as the blinding is what prompted the failure of fertility.

Elsewhere we see that Herodotus maintains the premise that blinding and eye-gouging are a typical foreign practice, and that among foreign people the victims are the primary targets of punishment. An unnamed Thracian king refuses to ally with the Persians and orders his six sons to remain home as well, but the sons betray him and join the army. Herodotus does not clearly state their motivations, but instead notes that their actions affect the king no matter the reason: οἳ δὲ ἀλογήσαντες, ἢ ἄλλως σφι θυμὸς ἐγένετο θεήσασθαι τὸν πόλεμον, ἐστρατεύοντο ἅμα τῷ Πέρσῃ· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀνεχώρησαν ἀσινέες πάντες ἓξ ἐόντες, ἐξώρυξε αὐτῶν ὁ πατὴρ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς διὰ τὴν αἰτίην ταύτην (“But they slighted him, or their mind otherwise happened to look upon battle, and they marched with the Persian. But when they returned, all six being unharmed, their father gouged out their eyes for this reason,” Hdt. 8.116.2). The sons refused their father’s authority, and for their denial of his supremacy, he removed their eyes. Considering the correlation of blinding and castration, the Thracian king’s blinding of his sons threatens their

manhood and punishes them physically while not technically removing their generative abilities. This is perhaps due to the fact that the victims are his own sons, and he must allow them to have children if the family line is to continue. Even more clearly, however, the king is punishing his sons for their lack of foresight and inability to see a truth that he was giving them. This need not refer to an absolute truth, but instead, the truth the sons do not see is that their father has authority over them and their actions, doubly so because he is also their king. In addition, his personal investment as their father restrains him from fully castrating them, resorting instead to blinding as a *threat* of castration while still allowing them to potentially procreate.

2.2 Decapitation and Impalement

I turn now to an additional subgroup of violence that, like castration, is overtly presented by Greek authors as inherently foreign: decapitation and impalement. As will become clear in the current section, the two acts frequently occur in tandem, with a bodiless head being displayed on a pike, and thus they will be considered within the same section. While the motive for beheading can be as simple as removing the victim's identity,[44] decapitation is most often presented as a visual means of asserting authority over the victim. Even in battle, it is not enough to kill one's victim; after all, slaughter is a regular expectation for warfare. To truly debase the enemy, their head must be removed and displayed to a witnessing audience. The victim is silenced by their death,[45] yet that death allows the victor to create an observable moment for other potential

[44] When a thief is caught in Rhampsinitus' trap, he is unable to free himself and insists that his brother remove his head so that he not be identified (Hdt. 2.121β.2).

[45] Xerxes beheads a group of cowardly Phoenicians in order to prevent them from falsely accusing others (Hdt. 8.90.3)

enemies to learn the truth of the victor's supremacy. In her monograph on the rhetorical uses of torture in Greek literature, Ballengee notes that "the communication of meaning via torture corresponds to the *witnessing* of the body in pain by an audience that responds to the spectacle."[46] The same is true for other methods of violence, including decapitation; Ballengee goes on to note that, after torture, "the mutilated body must be presented before an other [sic] or others."[47] The ultimate purpose of decapitation is not simply to punish an enemy who has already died, but rather to evoke a response – usually obedience – from a witnessing party. The head itself is often displayed as a macabre proof that the victim is deceased and serves as a threat to onlookers that they may suffer the same fate.[48]

2.2.1 Decapitation

Herodotus reports that some cultures – namely, the Scythians and Tauroi – regularly take their victims' heads. The Scythians bear the heads off to present them to their king to demonstrate that they have proved themselves in battle and are thus entitled to a share of the spoils (Hdt. 4.64.1). Once the heads have been observed, the Scythians clean the skull of all its flesh and skin, retaining the scalp to dry and collect as a marker of status (Hdt. 4.64.2). As for the

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[46] Ballengee 2009: 6 (emphasis original).

[47] Ibid.

[48] E.g. Hdt. 3.79.1 on the Persian slaughter of the Magian usurpers: οἱ δὲ πέντε αὐτῶν ἔχοντες τῶν Μάγων τὰς κεφαλὰς ἔθεον βοῇ τε καὶ πατάγῳ χρεώμενοι, καὶ Πέρσας τοὺς ἄλλους ἐπεκαλέοντο ἐξηγεόμενοί τε τὸ πρῆγμα καὶ δεικνύοντες τὰς κεφαλάς, καὶ ἅμα ἔκτεινον πάντα τινὰ τῶν Μάγων τὸν ἐν ποσὶ γινόμενον ("And five of them held the heads of the Magians and ran while shouting and clamoring, and they called out to the other Persians, relating the deed and displaying the heads, and at the same time they killed every one of the Magians who happened to be in the way.").

skulls themselves, the Scythians do not preserve all of them, but only those of their greatest enemies, hollowing out the cranium and using it as a drinking vessel; in addition, rich men often gild the skull vessels (4.65.1). Herodotus adds in addition that men often keep the skulls of family members with whom they came into conflict, and display them to threaten visitors (4.65.2). Though these Scythians seem to have many uses for the heads of their enemies, all of these treatments have a common thread. The heads are social capital for the Scythians and provide a means of asserting a man's value in his community and an opportunity to threaten others.

Herodotus also leaves his audience with no doubt that decapitation should be considered a foreign practice. In what is almost a programmatic passage about this violent act, following the battle at Thermopylae in book 7, the narrator tells us that Xerxes has Leonidas decapitated and impaled (Hdt 7.238.1). In his own voice he describes the reasons that Xerxes responds this way:

> δῆλά μοι πολλοῖσι μὲν καὶ ἄλλοισι τεκμηρίοισι, ἐν δὲ καὶ τῷδε οὐκ ἥκιστα γέγονε, ὅτι βασιλεὺς Ξέρξης πάντων δὴ μάλιστα ἀνδρῶν ἐθυμώθη ζῶντι Λεωνίδῃ· οὐ γὰρ ἄν κοτε ἐς τὸν νεκρὸν ταῦτα παρενόμησε, ἐπεὶ τιμᾶν μάλιστα νομίζουσι τῶν ἐγὼ οἶδα ἀνθρώπων Πέρσαι ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς τὰ πολέμια.
>
> It has become clear to me, by many other proofs but also not least by this act, that of all men King Xerxes was most especially enraged by Leonidas when he was alive; for he should not have enacted these outrages upon the corpse, since of the peoples whom I know, the Persians are most accustomed to honor men who are good at war. (Hdt. 7.238.2)

Herodotus uses Xerxes' deed as a proof (τεκμήριον) that he intended to dishonor Leonidas, specifically through the combined acts of decapitation and impalement. The display of Leonidas' corpse is presented as an extreme response through the narrator's juxtaposition of Xerxes' actions against the usual Persian customs. The Greek vocabulary more overtly contrasts the two: οὐ γὰρ ἄν κοτε ἐς τὸν νεκρὸν ταῦτα **παρενόμησε**, ἐπεὶ τιμᾶν μάλιστα **νομίζουσι** τῶν ἐγὼ οἶδα

ἀνθρώπων Πέρσαι ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς τὰ πολέμια. The normative Persian practice is described with νομίζειν, which denotes customary and appropriate practices (νόμοι) throughout Herodotus' text; Xerxes' action is described with παρανομεῖν, which refers literally to going beyond νόμοι. Although Macan, in his commentary on Herodotus, suggests a contrast here with "Hellenic law," the text itself connects Xerxes more closely with the customs of his own people.[49] As a Persian, Xerxes would not be expected to follow Greek νόμοι, but he would be subject to the νόμοι of the Persians as a whole. Considering the entire episode, we see that Xerxes acts to an extreme degree compared to other Persians, and is not simply "a barbarous king [who] might break Hellenic law."[50] Moreover, the connotation of excess is reinforced through the repetition of μάλιστα for both the appropriate and inappropriate actions.

In addition, we are told that Xerxes acts in a state of high emotion (θυμοῦσθαι). Elsewhere in the *Histories*, we see similar descriptions of Xerxes angrily demanding the decapitation of men who he believes have failed him. When he famously whips the Hellespont for not allowing itself to be bridged, he also beheads the engineers who ought to have completed the task (7.35).[51] The connection between excessive emotion and decapitation is further highlighted in a later passage from Herodotus. After the Greek victory at Plataea, Lampon of Aegina suggests to the Spartan king Pausanias, commander of the Greeks, that Mardonius should be beheaded and impaled as an equal revenge for what was done to Leonidas:

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[49] Macan 1908 loc. cit. In addition, νόμοι does not have to mean "laws," which I believe is a misrepresentation by Macan; throughout Herodotus' text, νόμοι often refers to the customary practices of a land or group of people (see section 1.3.1 above), as it does here. Law, whether foreign or specifically Greek, is not the focus of this passage.

[50] Macan 1908 loc. cit.

[51] He also beheads a ship captain who has caused the deaths of many Persians (8.114.4).

> Λεωνίδεω γὰρ ἀποθανόντος ἐν Θερμοπύλῃσι Μαρδόνιός τε καὶ Ξέρξης ἀποταμόντες τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀνεσταύρωσαν· τῷ σὺ τὴν ὁμοίην ἀποδιδοὺς ἔπαινον ἕξεις πρῶτα μὲν ὑπὸ πάντων Σπαρτιητέων, αὖτις δὲ καὶ πρὸς τῶν ἄλλων Ἑλλήνων· Μαρδόνιον γὰρ ἀνασκολοπίσας τετιμωρήσεαι ἐς πάτρων τὸν σὸν Λεωνίδην.
>
> "For when Leonidas died at Thermopylae both Mardonius and Xerxes cut off his head and impaled him; after you pay him back the same, you will get praise first from all the Spartiates, and in turn from the other Greeks; for if you have impaled Mardonius, you will have gained vengeance for your uncle Leonidas." (Hdt. 9.78.3)

In an effort to rile Pausanias to the point that he would decapitate and impale an enemy, Lampon emphasizes the excessive violence that Pausanias' relative Leonidas suffered at the hands of Mardonius. In the part of his speech that precedes the passage quoted above, Lampon begins his appeal with a patronymic address (ὦ παῖ Κλεομβρότου) and repeatedly recalls Leonidas' familial connections to Pausanias, highlighting the personal suffering that Pausanias and his family have potentially experienced. For Pausanias to consider decapitating his enemy, his emotions must be intensified to a point of excess, as we saw was the case when Xerxes ordered the decapitation of Leonidas.

This emphasis on individual suffering in a passage that overtly discusses why decapitation, like similar violent mistreatments, is un-Greek suggests that decapitation is an especially personal punishment. In Herodotus' narrative, Xerxes decapitated Leonidas due to a feeling of personal offense, and Lampon tries to create the same emotions in Pausanias to drive him to decapitate Mardonius. One must not overlook, however, the fact that Lampon is unsuccessful, and Pausanias unambiguously rejects his advice. Where Lampon began his speech with a patronymic, Pausanias addresses Lampon as "friend from Aegina" (ὦ ξεῖνε Αἰγινῆτα, 9.79.1), immediately undercutting Lampon's attempt to amplify Pausanias' familial ties to Leonidas and refocusing on political affiliations, essentially suggesting that his personal lineage

is of no concern to Lampon.[52] Pausanias also refers to the suggested action with moral judgment and more directed vocabulary, calling it "mistreatment" or "outrage" (λυμαίνεσθαι, 9.79.1) rather than a neutral description such as "decapitation" or "impalement." As Pausanias continues, his overall feeling about decapitation is clarified: τὰ πρέπει μᾶλλον βαρβάροισι ποιέειν ἤ περ Ἕλλησι, καὶ ἐκείνοισι δὲ ἐπιφθονέομεν ("it is more fitting for foreigners to do these things [i.e. decapitation and impalement of a corpse] than for Greeks, and we even despise them for it," 9.79.1-2). This passage is one of the most direct comparisons of Greek and foreign practices in the *Histories,* and it seems that, through Pausanias, Herodotus shows a general judgment against violent mistreatment. In addition, just as Xerxes was shown to be an immoderate Persian, Lampon is an immoderate Greek who advocates for going beyond what is customary among his countrymen. Many commentators have noted that this passage represents a distinct anti-Aeginetan attitude that runs throughout Herodotus' work, which deepens the parallels between this passage and the earlier section depicting Xerxes as acting contrary to Persian norms while also contrasting Lampon and Pausanias.

Read in combination, the abuse of Leonidas' corpse (7.238) and the exchange between Lampon and Pausanias (9.78-79) suggest a particularity about the practice of decapitation as portrayed in Herodotus and, as we will see, in Ctesias as well. Decapitation is presented by Greek authors as a punishment chosen when the perpetrator, losing their self-moderation, has taken personal offense at something the victim has done or would have done. The excessive emotion that Xerxes shows indicates that he felt a personal enmity toward Leonidas, and this

[52] The varied connotations of ξεῖνος (e.g. foreigner, stranger) apply to Pausanias' address, since Herodotus uses ξεῖνος instead of a more intimate term for "friend."

impression is confirmed by the narrator when he says that "of all men King Xerxes was most especially enraged by Leonidas when he was alive" (Hdt. 7.238.2). Xerxes expected an easy victory at Thermopylae, but the Spartan-led contingent delayed their attack until the Persian king became impatient and sent his men out first, allowing the Spartans to control the landscape and kill many more of the Persian enemy (7.210-211). Xerxes' emotional involvement is again overt: πέμπτῃ δέ, ὡς οὐκ ἀπαλλάσσοντο ἀλλά οἱ ἐφαίνοντο ἀναιδείῃ τε καὶ ἀβουλίῃ διαχρεώμενοι μένειν, πέμπει ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς Μήδους τε καὶ Κισσίους θυμωθείς, ἐντειλάμενος σφέας ζωγρήσαντας ἄγειν ἐς ὄψιν τὴν ἑωυτοῦ ("But on the fifth day, when they were not departing but appeared to remain, acting with shamelessness and thoughtlessness, [Xerxes] sent both the Medes and the Kissians against them when he became angry, commanding them to take [the enemy] alive and bring them into his sight," Hdt. 7.210.1). Rather than thinking tactically, he thinks that the Spartans are acting foolishly (ἀναιδείῃ τε καὶ ἀβουλίῃ), and his response is to become angry (θυμωθείς) at them, as the narrator later reminds us (ἐθυμώθη, 7.238.2). This is the emotion that leads directly to his decision to have Leonidas decapitated and impaled. These are also the same emotions that Lampon attempts to incite in Pausanias, because a man must be roused to the point of excessive emotion if he intends to mistreat his enemy in such a way.

In addition, decapitation and impalement are explicitly linked with display. Xerxes' command to bring the Spartan enemies into his sight (ἄγειν ἐς ὄψιν τὴν ἑωυτοῦ) foreshadows that, in death, their leader Leonidas will indeed be brought into his sight and exhibited before the eyes of the entire army. The head alone is the locus of the individual and a sight by which one can be identified; the head is all that is needed in order to identify Leonidas, and anyone viewing the head would know that this enemy has been irreversibly defeated. A related quality of a

bodiless head is its mobility. Whether or not the head has been impaled, it can be easily transported throughout an army camp, for example, and displayed to a greater number of witnesses than if it remained in one place.[53] Dolce has analyzed the multivalent connotations of displayed heads, suggesting that, at the most basic level, exhibiting an enemy's head conveys simultaneous messages "as definitive proof of the annihilation of the defeated enemy and of the manifest glory of the victor."[54] When Xerxes beheads Leonidas and displays his head, he is visually communicating to his men that he is victorious and the Spartans are an inferior army; the transmission of this message reveals the necessity for witnesses. Without the other Persians to observe Xerxes' display of the head, there can be no message inherent and thus no need for the act.

A similar circumstance occurs for Darius, albeit on a smaller scale. Like his son Xerxes will later do, Darius wishes his enemy to be brought to him alive. Previously in the *Histories*, we learn that Histiaeus is a former Ionian tyrant under Darius, and in fact becomes a close associate of the king after proving his loyalty against the Scythians (4.137-142, 5.11). This close relationship is vital to the story of Histiaeus, which is threaded throughout the narrative. Although Histiaeus is a Greek, he stays true to the Persian king when he has an opportunity to revolt against his leadership; as a result, Darius rewards him with a new city. Rightfully, as we see later in the text, other Persians – particularly Megabazos – are suspicious of a Greek man having such well-situated land and resources, and they insist that Darius recall Histiaeus to Sardis (and then to Susa) in order to prevent any potential uprising (5.23). Darius recalls him,

[53] Dolce 2018: 4-5.

[54] Ibid.: 28.

framing his command as a request for friendship: ἐγνωκὼς ὅτι κτημάτων πάντων ἐστὶ τιμιώτατον ἀνὴρ φίλος συνετός τε καὶ εὔνοος, τά τοι ἐγὼ καὶ ἀμφότερα συνειδὼς ἔχω μαρτυρέειν ἐς πρήγματα τὰ ἐμά ("since I have come to realize that, of all possesstions, the most prized is a friend who is an intelligent and well-disposed man, and I see both qualities in you, as I can bear witness in my own experiences," 5.24.3). He actively cultivates a situation where he and Histiaeus must respect each other. In addition, Darius emphasizes that he has first-hand knowledge of Histiatios' admirable qualities (**συνειδὼς** ἔχω **μαρτυρέειν** ἐς πρήγματα τὰ ἐμά), referring to his earlier support in actions against the Scythians. The vocabulary suggests an element of visuality, using Darius' autopsy as a proof of Histiaeus' loyalty. The implication of the king's autopsy here suggests that he uses his vision to "prove" the truth he believes, that Histiaeus is faithful. Yet, as we will see, this autopsy-based truth is, in fact, false.

In the present scene of persuasion, Darius begins his speech by highlighting his ability to see Histiaeus: Ἱστιαῖε, ἐγώ σε μετεπεμψάμην τῶνδε εἵνεκεν. ἐπείτε τάχιστα ἐνόστησα ἀπὸ Σκυθέων καὶ σύ μοι ἐγένεο ἐξ **ὀφθαλμῶν**, οὐδέν κω ἄλλο χρῆμα οὕτω ἐν βραχέι ἐπεζήτησα ὡς **σὲ ἰδεῖν** τε καὶ ἐς λόγους μοι ἀπικέσθαι ("Histiaeus, I summoned you here for the following reason: as soon as I returned from Scythia and you were out of my sight, I wanted no other thing so much in a short time as I wanted to see you and for you to come talk to me," 5.24.3). The entire speech revolves around vision, particularly of Darius observing Histiaeus. This connects with the other Persians' desire to keep visual watch over Histiaeus; if he is unobserved, they argue, he will incite a rebellion against the king. Herodotus uses this vocabulary of vision to denote trust and honesty, suggesting that Histiaeus' loyalty is only ensured while he is visible. The point is further emphasized when Histiaeus does exactly as Megabazos predicted. Using a

visual deception, he secretly causes his replacement at Miletus, Aristagoras, to rise up against the Persians: Histiaeus tattoos a message to Aristagoras on the shaved head of his most trusted slave, then waits for the hair to grow back before sending the slave to Miletus with a note to shave his head (5.35.3). Even while Histiaeus is at Susa with Darius, in full sight, he still manipulates seen and unseen bodies – in this case, the scalp of a slave – in order to serve his own end. Although Darius has suggested up to this point that his sight reveals what is true, Histiaeus nevertheless manages to subvert Darius' wishes, showing that the king's autopsy was not reliable.

Histiaeus again invokes autopsy when Darius questions him regarding Aristagoras' rebellion and asks how such a thing was possible without Histiaeus' knowledge; Histiaeus responds by blaming his men for taking advantage of his absence, saying "With me out of their sight, the Ionians seem to have done the things which they have longed to do for a while" (Ἴωνες γὰρ οἴκασι ἐμεῦ ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν σφι γενομένου ποιῆσαι τῶν πάλαι ἵμερον εἶχον, 5.106.5). He falsely suggests (διέβαλλε, 5.107.1; ἐξηπατηκώς, 6.2.1) that the Milesians would have remained loyal if they had been able to visually see him, in the same way that Darius believes that Histiaeus' visibility will ensure his loyalty as well. Yet the Milesians have no interest in receiving Histiaeus, and upon discovering that his treachery was revealed to the Persians, he engages in several battles along the Ionian coast (6.26-29) before being defeated and taken prisoner by the Persian general Harpagos (6.28-29). Despite the disloyalty that he has shown to Darius up to this point, Histiaeus still believes that the king will trust him and be merciful in deciding a punishment; the narrator agrees, claiming that Darius would likely have forgiven the

crime.[55] Indeed, the probable clemency that will result from Darius once again laying eyes on Histiaeus is assumed by many Persians as well; along with Artaphrenes, the *hyparchos* of Sardis, Harpagos realizes that the king will spare Histiaeus and that Histiaeus will not cease his treachery (6.30). In order to prove their point to Darius, they kill and decapitate Histiaeus, bringing his embalmed head to Darius. As with the decapitation of Leonidas, there is a multiplicity of conveyed messages in this gesture. Histiaeus is wholly defeated, while Artaphrenes and Harpagos are willing to bypass the king's wishes in favor of what they deem best for Persia. Indeed, they facilitate Darius' face-to-face meeting with Histiaeus, though ironically Darius is only able to see Histiaeus' head. These messages are moreover intended for Darius, though he does not respond positively to the revelation of the head; rather, he is upset that Artaphrenes and Harpagos did not deliver Histiaeus alive "into his sight" (ἐς ὄψιν τὴν ἑωυτοῦ, 6.30.2). Unlike the display of Leonidas' head, which was intended for a mass audience, once Darius receives Histiaeus' head he has it cleaned and buried (6.31). It no longer has meaning after conveying its message.

We see then that decapitation is not only a punishment for those who have offended, but it also is chosen as a punishment for treason. While Histiaeus is with Darius and plotting to overthrow Miletus, Onesilos is carrying out a nearly identical act of betrayal. He secretly works to unite the *poleis* of Cyprus in rebellion from Persia, and is opposed only by the city of Amathous. Just as Artaphrenes and Harpagos act without the king's approval by beheading Histiaeus, prioritizing their feelings of betrayal and fear that Histiaeus will continue to work

[55] Cf. Hdt. 7.194, where Darius weighs Sandokes' good deeds against his crimes to determine his overall judgment (see Section 2.2.2 in the current chapter).

against Persia, the Amathousians behead Onesilos for his directed attacks on their city, yet they later learn that this act was not appropriate (5.114). Onesilos' head is displayed at the city gates, but subsequently is inhabited by bees building honeycombs: τούτου δὲ γενομένου τοιούτου, ἐχρέωντο γὰρ περὶ αὐτῆς οἱ Ἀμαθούσιοι, ἐμαντεύθη σφι τὴν μὲν κεφαλὴν κατελόντας θάψαι, Ὀνησίλῳ δὲ θύειν ὡς ἥρωϊ ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος, καί σφι ποιεῦσι ταῦτα ἄμεινον συνοίσεσθαι ("but after this situation occurred, the Amathousians consulted an oracle about this, who advised them to take down the head then bury it, and to sacrifice to Onesilos as a hero every year, and it will go better for them if they do these things," 5.114.2). On a divine level, the decapitation of Onesilos is inappropriate; those who perpetrated the act are forced to pay respect to the previously-abused head, treating Onesilos as a hero rather than a traitor. Similarly, when Artaphrenes and Harpagos present Histiaeus' embalmed head to Darius, the king responds by having the two men cleanse and bury the head, again considering a formerly mistreated victim to have been wronged. These paired decapitations are both carried out on behalf of Darius, yet in each instance the narrator contrives to assert that the beheading should not have occurred. The perpetrators are reminded – first the Amathousians are told by an oracle, then Artaphrenes and Harpagos are told by Darius – that one's enemy should not be treated in such a base way. This presentation sets up evidence for the description that Herodotus later gives concerning Xerxes (7.238.2; see above). Darius' response to decapitation establishes the Persian νόμοι as stated by Herodotus; as a result, Xerxes' demands for beheading are depicted as even more excessively emotional when contrasted with his own father as an example.

It is thus clear that, for Herodotus, decapitation is not only a distinctly foreign practice, but it occurs in situations of personal offense. But is this a broader consideration of the act – that

is, treated similarly by other ethnographers – or a solely Herodotean interpretation? By considering the instances of decapitation presented by Ctesias, we see that the former is more accurate; each of his mentions of decapitation are in the context of personal offense.[56] In a way similar to Herodotus, Ctesias relates several episodes of victims who are beheaded for deceit and acts of betrayal. While Croesus is a prisoner of Cyrus following the fall of Sardis, he is released from his bonds "without anyone seeing" (ἀοράτως, F9 §5). Cyrus then has Croesus' fellow prisoners beheaded under the assumption that they betrayed him by releasing Croesus. In addition to decapitation based on a false belief of betrayal, this episode also evokes the pattern of visibility in relation to loyalty that we saw in Herodotus' account of Histiaeus. In another similar story, Ctesias reports that the eunuch Izabates betrays the Magian usurper by revealing his true identity, resulting in his decapitation at the hands of the Magian's followers (F13 §15).

Betrayal is treated by both authors as a very personal offense, but it is certainly not the only type of offense that results in decapitation. In an episode that is similar to Xerxes whipping the Hellespont and beheading his engineers (Hdt. 7.35, see above), in the *Persica* Darius has a group of forty men beheaded:

> Δαρεῖος προστάσσει τάφον ἑαυτῷ κατασκευασθῆναι ἐν τῷ λισσῷ ὄρει· καὶ κατασκευάζεται. ἐπιθυμήσας δὲ ἰδεῖν αὐτόν, ὑπό τε τῶν Χαλδαίων καὶ τῶν γονέων κωλύεται. οἱ δὲ γονεῖς ἀνελθεῖν βουληθέντες, ἐπεὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς εἶδον (ὄφεις) οἱ ἀνέλκοντες αὐτούς, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ φοβηθέντες ἀφῆκαν τὰ σχοινία, ἔπεσον καὶ ἐτελεύτησαν. καὶ ἐλυπήθη Δαρεῖος λίαν, καὶ ἀπετμήθησαν αἱ κεφαλαί, τεσσαράκοντα ὄντων τῶν ἀνελκόντων.
>
> Darius ordered a tomb for himself to be established on a smooth mountain; and it was established. But when he decided to see it, he was prevented both by the Chaldaeans and

[56] While it is true that seven of the eight passages are transmitted by Photius, the eighth passage (F20 §13.2, transmitted by Plutarch) gives an account of Cyrus the Younger's beheading that parallels Photius' version (F16 §64), which suggests that the motivations for the decapitation stem from Ctesias' original.

> by his parents. But his parents wished to go up, and they fell and died, because the priests who were drawing them up saw (snakes) and were frightened, and because they were afraid they dropped the ropes. And Darius was extremely distressed, and the heads of the forty men who dropped the rope were cut off. (Ct. F13 §19).

The same pattern emerges here that we saw in Herodotus' depictions of Xerxes. The king has ordered the building of a massive project and suffers disappointment upon the expected completion, Xerxes because his bridge is incomplete and Darius because he is dissuaded from even viewing the tomb. Moreover, the victims in both episodes are not enemies, but men who are working for and trusted by their respective king, which could in fact add a connotation of betrayal when the king is disappointed. Darius suffers further when his parents themselves wish to observe the tomb and enlist the help of the Chaldean priests to assist them; the very people who hindered Darius all disappoint him in this act that results in his parents' deaths and, ultimately, the priests' deaths as well. The entire episode is sprinkled with emotions causing action: the parents have a desire (βουληθέντες) to see the tomb and scale the mountain, the priests are deeply frightened by some snakes (ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ φοβηθέντες) and drop the ropes, and Darius, exceedingly grieving for his deceased parents (ἐλυπήθη Δαρεῖος λίαν), orders the decapitation of the priests. Each emotion and subsequent action increases in intensity as the episode progresses, from the neutral thoughts and action of the parents to Darius' extreme grief and execution orders. The Chaldeans' crime is not necessarily one of betrayal, but it is presented as a cowardly accident that personally affects and upsets the king.

2.2.2 The Vocabulary of Impalement

Many passages about decapitation also feature impalement, combining the two practices due to their shared aspect of exhibition.[57] As mentioned above, severed heads are frequently displayed as a message to one's enemies; the display is often done by means of impaling the head.[58] Even when the victim has not suffered decapitation, impalement always maintains an element of visuality. In examining instances of impalement, the related vocabulary must be addressed. The two primary terms used by Herodotus and Ctesias, ἀνασταυρῶ and ἀνασκολοπίζω, are used synonymously, though they are often translated differently – as "crucify" and "impale" respectively – due to their root meanings.[59] While later authors come to use ἀνασταυρῶ to refer specifically to crucifixion as described by the New Testament authors,[60]

[57] Heads are not displayed on stakes in the extant passages of Ctesias, but (as we will see) impalement continues to be associated with display of corpses and other body parts.

[58] The text does not explicitly say whether it was Leonidas' head or body that was impaled (ἐκέλευσε ἀποταμόντας τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀνασταυρῶσαι., 7.238.1), but the lack of a second specified object strongly suggests that it was his head, as proof that he was indeed defeated; Macan (1908: ad loc.) seems to agree. In addition, impaling the head would increase its potential for mobility and visibility through the ranks, ensuring that its message continues (Dolce 2018: *passim*).

[59] The conflation of vocabulary is not unique to the Greek language, suggesting that the problem of determining the precise punishment is problematic in any (ancient) language. The trilingual Bisitun Inscription by Darius features multiple occasions where Darius claims to have impaled an enemy; the Old Persian phrase *uzmayāpatiy akunavam* (DB §33) is translated variously as "I impaled him" (Frye 1984: 365; Vallat 2013 likewise translates the Elamite as "impaled") and as "I put him on a cross" (Tolman 1908: 15), though the literal meaning would again be "I put him upon a stake" (*uzmayā* is a locative form of *uzma*, "stake, pile" with the suffix *-patiy* meaning "through, within").

[60] In addition, ἀνασταυρῶ is used without exception by Photius; his status as a Christian patriarch likely influenced his preference of this vocabulary, and it may also have affected his perception of the action itself (preferring to understand "crucify" in all instances of impalement).

classical authors – including Herodotus and Ctesias – equate ἀνασταυρῶ with ἀνασκολοπίζω.[61] Because of this interchangeability of terminology, the exact punishment used is often unclear; were victims hung up on a cross or stake to slowly die, or were they simply impaled through the body and immediately killed?

In one instance, ἀνασταυρῶ is used of survival after being impaled, suggesting that the action would be more similar to crucifixion.[62] Darius has the judge Sandokes impaled (ἀνεσταύρωσε, 7.194.1) for judicial corruption, but the king later reconsiders: ἀνακρεμασθέντος ὧν αὐτοῦ, λογιζόμενος ὁ Δαρεῖος εὗρέ οἱ πλέω ἀγαθὰ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων πεποιημένα ἐς οἶκον τὸν βασιλήιον· εὑρὼν δὲ τοῦτο ὁ Δαρεῖος, καὶ γνοὺς ὡς ταχύτερα αὐτὸς ἢ σοφώτερα ἐργασμένος εἴη, ἔλυσε. βασιλέα μὲν δὴ Δαρεῖον οὕτω διαφυγὼν μὴ ἀπολέσθαι περιῆν ("And after he was hanged up, Darius reckoned and found that he had done more benefits than mistakes for the royal court; and after he found this and realized that he had acted more hastily than wisely, Darius released him. And so he survived and did not die, having escaped king Darius in this way," 7.194.2-3). The original impalement was able to be reversed before Sandokes died. The narrator notes that the impalement has already occurred (ἀνακρεμασθέντος), using a term that specifies being hanged up. Sandokes has clearly spent time with his wounded body on display as punishment for his betrayal. Thus after Darius has had time to reflect and alter his command,

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[61] *LSJ* s.v. ἀνασταυρῶ: "identical with ἀνασκολοπίζω" but that "in Rom[an] times, 'affix to a cross, crucify.'" *LSJ* s.v. ἀνασκολοπίζω: "in [Herodotus] 9.78 it is used convertibly with ἀνασταυρῶ." In his entries for both words, Powell 1960 (who also equates the two verbs and defines them as "impale") notes that *LSJ* cites no occurrences earlier than Herodotus.

[62] Unless referring to a situation that specifies being nailed or hung up, I use the term "impale" throughout to concisely reflect the conflation of meaning. My precise definition of the related terms would be "to affix in some way to a piece of wood," which encapsulates the many meanings.

Sandokes has been impaled but continues to live, even going on to command a unit of ships in the king's navy (7.194.1). While we have no indication of the amount of time Sandokes spent hanging, it must have been done in such a way that he suffered no long-term debilitating effects.

The verb ἀνασκολοπίζω is not used in any similar instances that would clarify what is happening. However, while the episode describing Sandokes' punishment portrays a clear example of ἀνασταυρῶ as crucifixion, the verb does not always mean the crucifixion of a living person. Herodotus often uses ἀνασταυρῶ to denote the impalement of an already-deceased victim, such as the decapitated body of Histiaeus by Atraphrenes and Harpagos (6.30.1). In this situation, the head has been removed for presentation to the king, yet the headless body is left behind and put on display. The head is required as proof of the victim's identity, whereas the body is a general threat of what is done to perceived traitors; however, for each part of the mutilated body, there remains a need for display in order for the visual communication of supremacy and defeat to occur. Impalement is a common means for this display, such as when Leonidas' head is impaled and made able to be transported.

2.2.3 Impalement

In Ctesias' *Persica*, a vengeful queen mother frequently orders cruel executions, including impalement; we see two instances that show a unique type of impalement that can perhaps illuminate the processes involved, or at least the intended messages resulting from the displayed corpse. When Amestris I orders the Libyan rebel Inarus to be impaled,[63] she "impaled

[63] For purposes of clarity, "Amestris I" denotes the wife of Xerxes I; Amestris II is the wife of Terituchmes and the daughter of Parysatis and Darius II Ochus.

him on three stakes; and she cut off the heads of fifty Greeks, as many as she was able to take" (καὶ ἀνεσταύρισεν μὲν ἐπὶ τρισὶ σταυροῖς· πεντήκοντα δὲ Ἑλλήνων, ὅσους λαβεῖν ἴσχυσε, τούτων ἔτεμε τὰς κεφαλάς, Ct. F14 §39). The triplicate impalement is a curious detail; it could mean that Inarus' body was laid horizontally across three stakes, or his body may have been severed into multiple parts and displayed a distance from one another. While the former could still refer to a living victim, the latter option would require Inarus to be dead before his body is exhibited. In either case, however, the primary element is a visual display. Inarus is not the only victim of Parysatis' rage in this episode; she also orders fifty men who served under Inarus to be decapitated. The Greeks who fought with him are beheaded, but a more severe punishment and display is required for their leader.[64] This accompanying note suggests that, because the leader is not beheaded but rather impaled, there is a hierarchy of punishments in which impalement is a more severe punishment than decapitation. In addition, the use of three stakes suggests that his entire body is put on display, whereas any display resulting from decapitation would be only a partial body.

Through Plutarch[65] we hear another account of a man impaled upon three stakes, which gives us more details of the intended action. The royal family – mainly King Artaxerxes and his mother Parysatis – enacts a series of violent acts in order to silence the actual truth and perpetuate their own version, that Artaxerxes himself killed his brother Cyrus. As mentioned in a previous section, Parysatis seizes the Carian who delivered Cyrus a fatal blow and has him tortured and his eyes gouged out before he is executed by having molten bronze poured into his

[64] The use of μὲν... δὲ here emphasizes the contrast between punishments.

[65] The previous episode regarding Inarus is summarized by Photius; the following story of Masabates comes from Plutarch's *Artaxerxes*, in a section that is based on Ctesias' text.

ears (Ct. F26 §14.10); we will see in the following section that Mithridates, who was the first to wound Cyrus, likewise suffers an extreme execution for his role in Cyrus' death (F26 §16.7). This list culminates with Parysatis' silencing of Masabates, the eunuch who removed Cyrus' head and hands after death. She wins Masabates in a dice game against Artaxerxes, without telling him the reason for the wager; καὶ πρὶν ἐν ὑποψίᾳ γενέσθαι βασιλέα τοῦ πράγματος, ἐγχειρίσασα τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν τιμωριῶν προσέταξεν ἐκδεῖραι ζῶντα καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα πλάγιον διὰ τριῶν σταυρῶν ἀναπῆξαι, τὸ δὲ δέρμα χωρὶς διαπατταλεῦσαι ("And before the king became suspicious of the deed, she entrusted [Masabates] to her punishers and commanded them to strip off his skin while he was alive, and to impale the body sideways on three stakes, and to nail up the skin separately," Ct. F26 §17.7). Here, our transmitter employs terminology that clarifies the triple impalement beyond what we are told by Photius. The use of ἀναπῆξαι describes the situation definitively as impalement.[66] Yet it is not Masabates as a deceased person, or even his corpse, but simply "the body" (τὸ σῶμα) that is impaled. Parysatis fully removes the personhood of her victim, not only by separating his body into three parts on three stakes, but also by having his skin removed and nailed up (διαπατταλεῦσαι) as a fourth aspect of the punishment.[67] In addition, she ensures that Masabates will suffer and die before Artaxerxes is able to see him (πρὶν ἐν ὑποψίᾳ γενέσθαι βασιλέα τοῦ πράγματος); the king's sight is a threat to Parysatis' plan and is only allowable once her commands have been enforced.[68] Once Masabates is dead, any subsequent punishments are irrelevant to him; the additional abuse of his body is meant to affect others who are to witness his body and skin where they are displayed.

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[66] *LSJ* s.v.: "fix on a spit" is the primary definition, though it is also said to mean "impale, crucify."

[67] Cf. Ct. F9 §6, where Amytis has Petesakas blinded and flayed before impalement.

[68] While ὑποψία comes to mean "suspicion," at its root the term implies vision (ὄψις).

In a similar way, Rhampsinitus hangs thea dead body of a thief on his wall to serve a distinct visual purpose, though he has an added directive: ἀπορεύμενον δέ μιν τάδε ποιῆσαι· τοῦ φωρὸς τὸν νέκυν κατὰ τοῦ τείχεος κατακρεμάσαι, φυλάκους δὲ αὐτοῦ καταστήσαντα ἐντείλασθαί σφι, τὸν ἂν ἴδωνται ἀποκλαύσαντα ἢ κατοικτισάμενον, συλλαβόντας ἄγειν πρὸς ἑωυτόν ("And being at a loss he did the following: he hung the thief's corpse from the wall, and he stationed guards there and commanded them to arrest and bring to him anyone they should see wailing or lamenting," 2.121γ.1). The motivation behind displaying the corpse is overtly described here, where Rhampsinitus uses the body to coerce any witnesses into unknowingly revealing the thief's identity. Though this passage uses the specific term κατακρεμάσαι ("to nail to"), the situation parallels that of Histiaeus' corpse; in both passages, a headless corpse is displayed in order to manipulate a witnessing audience. The act of affixing the body to a stake or plank is done after death, where the duration of suffering has no relevance. In fact, the story of the thief does not use any terminology of impalement, but rather that of nailing up, as one would hang a votive offering.[69] This connotation of offerings and commemoration further heightens the visuality of the display. The vocabulary involved in describing scenes of impalement is, in fact, not the primary detail that denotes these actions. Rather, the display of the victim is the central element in order to influence an audience that has not – yet – suffered such a punishment.

[69] Cf. Hdt. 5.77.3: τὰς δὲ πέδας αὐτῶν, ἐν τῇσι ἐδεδέατο, ἀνεκρέμασαν ἐς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν· αἵ περ ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν περιεοῦσαι, κρεμάμεναι ἐκ τειχέων περιπεφλευσμένων πυρὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ Μήδου ("and their shackles, in which they had been bound, they hung in the acropolis; these were even still around for me to see, having been hung from the walls that were scorched by fire at the hands of the Medes").

2.3 "Persian" Punishments

While in previous sections I have addressed types of bodily alteration that are presented by Herodotus and Ctesias as foreign, in this section I will focus primarily on acts that occur among the Persians in particular; of the few incidents that occur among non-Persian peoples, each situation is a clear exception to the pattern that the authors use for portraying Persian violence.[70] For the sake of concision and clarity, I will limit my scope to discussing only two unusual methods of violence that are addressed by both authors: live burial (and its subtypes) and flaying. Live burial is noted in antiquity not only for being a Persian practice, but a particular favorite of Amestris I; yet this assumption is based almost entirely on a passage from Herodotus (7.114.2) that will be discussed below. Moreover, live burial does not explicitly suggest that display is involved. The action is rather about rendering a victim invisible, removing their ability to be witnessed and thus enabling the perpetrator to manipulate what a viewer may see and thus believe to be true.[71] In addition, because the victim in this circumstance is still living, their ability to witness is simultaneously removed by isolating them beneath the ground.

We will also see that live burial can refer not only to inhumation but also to death in the trough; a victim is "buried" above ground by being encased in two troughs and left to die slowly and grotesquely, remaining visible for the entire duration of their suffering. As a sanctioned method of execution, death in the trough is reserved for those who have plotted against the king, allowing him to use such punishments to establish a narrative concerning the stability of his rule

[70] That is, they differ in significant ways other than their ethnic context and thus fall out of the scope of this section.

[71] E.g. Hdt. 8.24-25, where Xerxes orders the Persians killed at Thermopylae to be buried so that his fleet would not know how many men had died in the battle; it is significant for the portrayal of Xerxes as emotionally unstable (see Section 2.2.1, above) that his ruse fails, as the men in the fleet immediately understand what he has done, rendering his attempt to control their autopsy unsuccessful.

while also threatening the remaining populace. Indeed, the common aspect of both types of live burial is that the monarch uses the act to demonstrate his authority and power, particularly over the lives of the witnessing subjects. It should be re-emphasized that the literary depiction of these acts as commonly "Persian" practices is a narrative construct, adopted by Greek authors writing for Greek audiences. As such, many methods of violence depicted in the texts are equally as shocking for the internal Persian audience as for the external Greek audience, as well as modern readers.

Flaying is more clearly a visual act, particularly when the victim's skin is displayed. This practice is a point of departure for Herodotus and Ctesias; in the *Histories* flaying occurs after death, while in the *Persica* skinning is always presented as one aspect of a violent series leading to the victim's impalement. In addition, when the victim's skin is removed, it is often put on display in place of or in addition to the remainder of the corpse, creating a protracted message of the perpetrator's dominance; the exceptions to this are when the impalement is foregrounded. In either situation there is a distinct emphasis on displaying the victim's body, where the skin can be a constant reminder of the victim's failings and the ruler's supremacy.

2.3.1 Live Burial

The representation of extreme violence as particularly Persian can be found in Herodotus, as Xerxes marches toward Greece:

> φαρμακεύσαντες δὲ ταῦτα ἐς τὸν ποταμὸν καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ πρὸς τούτοισι ἐν Ἐννέα ὁδοῖσι τῇσι Ἠδωνῶν ἐπορεύοντο κατὰ τὰς γεφύρας, τὸν Στρυμόνα εὑρόντες ἐζευγμένον. Ἐννέα δὲ ὁδοὺς πυνθανόμενοι τὸν χῶρον τοῦτον καλέεσθαι, τοσούτους ἐν αὐτῷ παῖδάς τε καὶ παρθένους ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ζώοντας κατώρυσσον.

> After using these charms and many others in addition for the river, [the Persians] marched to the Nine Ways of the Edonians by way of bridges, since they found that the Strymon was [already] yoked. When they learned that this land was called the Nine Ways, they buried alive that many sons and daughters of the native men in that same place. (Hdt. 7.114.1)

The practice of live burial is only here identified with sacrifice or honor, as Xerxes denotes his progression by sacrificing nine boys and girls at the place named the Nine Ways.[72] The connotation is certainly meant to be supernatural, as this passage begins by describing the burial and other acts in honor of the land with the verb φαρμακεύσαντες.[73] The tone is further solidified by the following description of Amestris I: Περσικὸν δὲ τὸ ζώοντας κατορύσσειν, ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἄμηστριν τὴν Ξέρξεω γυναῖκα πυνθάνομαι γηράσασαν δὶς ἑπτὰ Περσέων παῖδας ἐόντων ἐπιφανέων ἀνδρῶν ὑπὲρ ἑωυτῆς τῷ ὑπὸ γῆν λεγομένῳ εἶναι θεῷ ἀντιχαρίζεσθαι κατορύσσουσαν ("It is a Persian [practice] to bury living people, since I have learned that even Amestris, the wife of Xerxes, when she grew old buried twice seven sons of eminent Persian men on her own behalf as a returned favor to the god who is said to be beneath the earth," Hdt. 7.114.2). Not only does Xerxes' wife Amestris sacrifice children, she does so in order to supernaturally bolster her youth. In addition, the narrator describes the act as specifically Persian (Περσικὸν). On this passage, How and Wells state that live burial does not "seem to have been common in Persia" while also citing three other passages – all in either Herodotus or Ctesias – where Persians perform live

[72] Briant 1996: 896.

[73] Though not occurring elsewhere in the *Histories*, the verb φαρμακεύω is used by Plato (*Rep*. 459c, *Tim*. 89d) and the Hippocratic author (*Art*. 67, *Aph*. 4.12) to refer to medicinal drugs and by Euripides to suggest poisoning (*Andr*. 355). Moreover, Plato also directly associates φαρμακεύω with magic and the supernatural (*Laws* 933d-e).

burial.[74] A lack of evidence certainly cannot be considered proof of absence of a practice, and the question of historicity here is not my focus. Whether or not live burial was widespread in Persia, Herodotus explicitly declares it to be a Persian practice.

His only other example of live burial is an afterthought in the portrait of Cambyses, who is depicted throughout the *Histories* as mentally unstable. By shooting Prexaspes' son in the heart, Cambyses claims that the accuracy of his arrow is proof of his sanity. The execution of Prexaspes' son occurs for no reason other than for the king to assert his own version of the truth, as we hear from Cambyses himself:

> σύ νυν μάθε εἰ λέγουσι Πέρσαι ἀληθέα εἴτε αὐτοὶ λέγοντες ταῦτα παραφρονέουσι· εἰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ παιδὸς τοῦ σοῦ τοῦδε ἑστεῶτος ἐν τοῖσι προθύροισι βαλὼν τύχοιμι μέσης τῆς καρδίης, Πέρσαι φανέονται λέγοντες οὐδέν· ἢν δὲ ἁμάρτω, φάναι Πέρσας τε λέγειν ἀληθέα καί με μὴ σωφρονέειν.
>
> Now learn whether the Persians are speaking true things and if they who have said these things are deranged: for if I happen to strike this here son of yours in the middle of his heart when he is standing in the doorway, the Persians will appear to have said nothing. But if I miss, say both that the Persians are speaking true things and that I am not of sound mind. (Hdt. 3.35.1)

Cambyses establishes a paradox wherein the alleged proof of his sanity can only be acquired by unsound means.[75] In addition, he does this as a declaration in front of witnesses who are observing the entire episode. When Cambyses' arrow strikes its target, Prexaspes' response – not spoken but internal – clarifies the madness of the king: Πρηξάσπεα δὲ ὁρῶντα ἄνδρα οὐ φρενήρεα καὶ περὶ ἑωυτῷ δειμαίνοντα ("and Prexaspes, who saw that the man was not of sound

[74] Hdt. 3.35.5 (Cambyses), Ct. F14 §44 (Amestris), & F15 §56 (Parysatis). Briant also notes that the two passages from Ctesias "obviously involve torture, and this is doubtless also true of the episode concerning Cambyses in Egypt in Herodotus (III.35)" (1996: 896); see also below.

[75] The act of impulsively murdering Prexaspes' son would be considered unsound to both a Greek and Persian audience.

mind and feared for himself," 3.35.2). Cambyses' proof of sanity is, in actuality, the opposite; by claiming authority over what is true, he has instead proven that truth can be subjective. For Cambyses, shooting Prexaspes' son through the heart is definitive evidence of his sanity, but the very same act is evidence of insanity to Prexaspes. Thus we see that violence enacted by authority figures upon their own subjects is an attempt to manipulate what is perceived to be true. At the same time, the very act of altering perceptions of truth shows that truth itself is malleable and not absolute.

Following this apparent evidence of Cambyses' madness, Herodotus briefly mentions that, on another occasion, Cambyses had twelve elite Persians buried alive: Περσέων ὁμοίους τοῖσι πρώτοισι δυώδεκα ἐπ᾽ οὐδεμιῇ αἰτίῃ ἀξιοχρέῳ ἑλὼν ζώοντας ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν κατώρυξε ("He took twelve of the Persians, equal to the most eminent, and buried them alive up to their heads," 3.35.5). For the author and his audience, this act is further evidence for Cambyses' insanity, since he had no reason (ἐπ᾽ οὐδεμιῇ αἰτίῃ ἀξιοχρέῳ) to punish the men.[76] Moreover, the nature of the act itself is unclear, due to the phrase ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν. How and Wells use a similar passage (Hdt. 3.75.3) to claim that ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν should mean "upon the head," suggesting that the twelve men were buried with their heads downward. However, they then note that the more logical translation would be "up to the head," i.e. burying the men upright and leaving only the heads

[76] Because of the use here of live burial as proof of madness, we may wonder what impact this reading has on the previously discussed instances of Xerxes and Amestris I practicing the same. I have mentioned throughout this chapter (particularly Section 2.2.1) that Xerxes is repeatedly shown to be acting without *sophrosyne*, deferring to his uncontrollable emotions; as a foreign queen, Amestris is characterized in the same light, especially when considering her mutilation of Masistes' wife out of misplaced jealousy for "Xerxes' passion" (τὸν ἔρωτα τὸν Ξέρξεω, Hdt. 9.112-133; cf. also Beneker 2012: *passim*, for control of *eros* as a manifestation of a leader's political life in Plutarch's biographies), connecting the two spouses through this motif.

exposed above the ground; for How and Wells, "this is a more usual form of punishment in the East."[77] Whatever the reality of the punishment, Herodotus gives no clear motivation for the violence other than Cambyses' mental instability, presenting it simply as inexcusable.[78]

The two instances in Ctesias of live burial both fall into the same paradigm, a pattern that has already arisen in this chapter: an authority figure feels personally threatened or betrayed and exacts extreme physical revenge. Moreover, each perpetrator is a woman of the royal family acting on behalf of her daughter. In addition to Herodotus' note that Amestris I buried children alive, we have seen also that Ctesias' Amestris I is no stranger to violence, having impaled Inarus and beheaded his men as revenge for her son's death. This inclination is also apparent when Amestris I learns that the doctor Apollonides has taken advantage of Amytis, Amestris' daughter. During his tenure as Amytis' physician, Apollonides falls in love with her and contrives a plan to have intercourse with her: ἔφη εἰς τὴν ὑγιείαν αὐτὴν ἐπανελθεῖν, ἐὰν ἀνδράσιν ὁμιλήσῃ· τῆς γὰρ ὑστέρης εἶναι τὸ νόσημα ("he said that she would return to health, if she would have intercourse with men; for it was a disease of the womb," Ct. F14 §44). This ruse is the first layer of his treachery; he is lying to Amytis in order to achieve his own goal. Apollonides does succeed in convincing Amytis to have intercourse with him, but the narrator suggests that the prescription was not intended to actually cure, as Amytis' health continues to decline even after intercourse, at which point Apollonides "avoided her company" (ἀπέστη τῆς συνουσίας, F 14 §44). Amytis knows that she has been betrayed by the physician and, before she dies, begs her mother to avenge her death: ἡ δὲ λαβοῦσα ἔδησε τὸν Ἀπολλωνίδην, δυσὶ μησὶ

[77] How & Wells 1928: ad loc.

[78] Cf. the live burials carried out by Xerxes and Amestris, who claim to have a (supernatural) reason for their actions.

κολάζουσα· ἔπειτα ζῶντα κατώρυξεν, ὅτε καὶ Ἄμυτις ἀπέθανεν ("And she [i.e. Amestris] took and bound Apollonides while she punished him for two months; then she buried him while he was alive, at the time when Amytis died," F 14 §44). Mother and daughter work together to exact their vengeance against Apollonides. Before dying, Amytis is aware that she has been deceived and that the physician who was summoned to heal her actually brought about her death through this deceit. In addition, Amestris I herself feels betrayed because her daughter was betrayed. She has already avenged the betrayal of her son (by executing Inarus) and now finds herself back in the same position of avenging her child through violence enacted on another individual.

Ctesias' second depiction of live burial closely resembles the first. The perpetrator is again a queen, Parysatis, the wife of Darius II Ochus. Once again, a princess of the royal family is abused by a man to whom she was entrusted: Amestris II, daughter of Parysatis, has been married off to Terituchmes, whose sister Stateira in turn has been married to the future king Artaxerxes II. Despite this arrangement, Terituchmes has fallen in love with his half-sister Rhoxane and plots to kill Amestris II so that he can be with Rhoxane (Ct. F15 §55). The plan is discovered and Terituchmes is killed before any harm comes to Amestris II, but Parysatis insists on punishing his family: ἡ δὲ Παρύσατις τήν τε μητέρα τὴν Τεριτούχμεω καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς Μιτρώστην καὶ Ἥλικον καὶ τὰς ἀδελφάς δύο οὔσας χωρὶς τῆς Στατείρας ζώσας ἐκέλευσε καταχῶσαι, τὴν δὲ Ῥωξάνην ζῶσαν κατατεμεῖν· καὶ ἐγένετο ("But Parysatis ordered Terituchmes' mother, his brothers Mitrostes and Helikos, and his two sisters apart from Stateira to be buried alive, and Rhoxane to be cut apart while alive; and it was done," Ct. F15 §56). The violence is not done to harm Terituchmes, the only person that Ctesias names as having a part in the plot, for he is already dead. Parysatis uses violence as a means of punishing those around

Terituchmes and of discouraging future betrayals. The narrative overtly states that each of her victims was alive when their punishment began by repeating the present participle for each action. By definition live burial is a torturous act, as death comes slowly while the victim is fully aware of their suffering and imminent demise. In the case of Amestris I, we know that Apollonides was tortured before his burial, which again emphasizes the duration of the punishment. Here, though torture is not mentioned separately, we can presume that the burial itself encompasses a torturous process. A connotation of duration is present in the depiction of Rhoxane's punishment as well. While being cut apart could be a method of execution, the addition of ζῶσαν suggests that, if Rhoxane died from this treatment, her suffering was protracted so that she would suffer while alive for as long as possible.

While we cannot be certain of the details concerning live burial, we do have an extended depiction of a subtype of live burial: dying in the trough. Our examples come from Ctesias as transmitted by Photius and Plutarch. While death in the trough is at its core a live burial, this method of punishment entails additional torture to the body before death. In addition, the specificity of the punishment and the equipment required suggest a connotation of an official execution. When Artaxerxes I becomes king, the offenses against his predecessors Darius I and Xerxes I are revealed, and "Aspamitres, who was an accomplice in the murders of Xerxes and Darius, suffered a bitter and very harsh death; for he was laid in the trough and died in this way" (Ἀσπαμίτρης, ὃς ἦν κοινωνὸς ἐπὶ τοῖς φόνοις Ξέρξου καὶ Δαρειαίου· σκαφεύεται γὰρ καὶ οὕτως ἀναιρεῖται, Ct. F14 §34). While the transmitter, Photius, notes that this punishment was "bitter and very harsh," he nonetheless preserves the fact that it was a punitive measure against regicide.

We get no other details from Photius' account, but a later instance of death by trough transmitted by Plutarch gives us the full picture. Soon after the conflict between Artaxerxes II and Cyrus the Younger is resolved, Artaxerxes II commences a propagandistic mission to convince the people that he himself killed Cyrus, which directly contradicts the preceding narrative (F26 §14.5, F26 §16.2). The two men most responsible for the death, Mithridates and an unnamed Carian, both receive rewards in return for their support of the story that Artaxerxes II alone killed Cyrus. Both men, however, turn out to be unable to maintain silence. The Carian immediately becomes "corrupted" (διαφθαρεὶς, F26 §14.8) by the reward and "angrily called upon witnesses and shouted that no one other than he himself killed Cyrus, and that he was being unjustly robbed of his glory" (ἠγανάκτει μαρτυρόμενος καὶ βοῶν, ὅτι Κῦρον οὐδεὶς ἕτερος ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἀπεκτόνοι, καὶ τὴν δόξαν ἀδίκως ἀποστεροῖτο, F26 §14.8). For this offense, Parysatis – once again defending her child's reputation – orders her men "to torture him on the rack for ten days, then gouge out his eyes and pour molten bronze into his ears until he dies" (ἐφ' ἡμέρας δέκα στρεβλοῦν, εἶτα τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξορύξαντας εἰς τὰ ὦτα θερμὸν ἐντήκειν χαλκόν, Ct. F26 §14.10).

Mithridates too is executed for betraying Artaxerxes' reputation; he becomes intoxicated at dinner and tells all the guests, including the eunuch servants of both Parysatis and Artaxerxes II, that he alone killed Cyrus, and deserves greater gifts than the reward he has already received (F26 §15.3-6). Once the king learns of Mithridates' boasting, the king becomes angry (ἠγανάκτησεν, F26 §16.1) and condemns him to die in the trough. In his transmission of Ctesias'

account, Plutarch does not leave off his narrative with the pronouncement, as Photius did;[79] instead, he gives a detailed description of what it means to be laid in the trough to die (F26 §16.3-7). The living victim is entirely encased within two troughs, with only the head, hands, and feet exposed, and he is forced to eat and excrete while the food on his face is left to ferment in the sun; as insects come to feast on the fermented food and human waste, the victim is consumed by the growing number of creatures drawn to his suffering. As with other methods of live burial, death in the trough is a slow and torturous process: οὕτως ὁ Μιθριδάτης ἑπτακαίδεκα ἡμέρας φθειρόμενος μόλις ἀπέθανε ("In this way, Mithridates was slowly corrupted for seventeen days and died," F26 §16.7). While the victim is thus entombed, the process requires at least one attendant – the person bringing food, milk, and honey to the victim, as well as coercing them if they refuse to eat – to bear witness to the suffering. Death in the trough is a more visible means of execution, reserved for those who, like Aspamitres and Mithridates, have directly challenged the king's authority. By killing opponents in this manner, the royal family is able to display their power over any doubters and, as a result, to preemptively quell any opposition by controlling the autopsy of the observers.

2.3.2 Flaying

The process of flaying a victim is an uncommon punishment, yet both authors depict situations where a victim has their skin removed as part of their death. However, Herodotus and

[79] On the punishments of the Carian and Mithridates discussed below, Photius simply states that Parysatis punished the two men without noting the manner of death. Instead, he broadly characterizes the punishments: the queen "tortured then killed the honored Carian" (τὸν τιμηθέντα Κᾶρα αἰκισαμένη ἀπέκτεινεν) and "harshly destroyed" (πικρῶς ἀνεῖλε) Mithridates (F16 §66).

Ctesias both present flaying in different ways. For Herodotus, the victim's death occurs prior to the skinning, whereas Ctesias lists flaying as one of a series of punishments with which a victim is tortured before death.[80] I begin with the victims in Ctesias' narrative because their ultimate punishments – impalement – have already been discussed in this chapter. The two victims are Petesakas, who leaves Astyiagas to die alone and lies about his deed, and Masabates, the eunuch who actually does kill Cyrus II. Both victims are punished by the royal women whose male relatives they have allegedly betrayed. Though each passage was transmitted through a different author, the punishment is treated similarly. Cyrus the Great learns of Petesakas' treachery and hands him over to Amytis I for punishment; "and she, after digging out his eyes and flaying off his skin, impaled him" (ἡ δέ, τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξορύξασα καὶ τὸ δέρμα περιδείρασα, ἀνεσταύρισεν, Ct. F9 §6). There is certainly an element of display in this death, but it derives from the impalement rather than the flaying.

In contrast, Masabates suffers an additional visual debasement in his death: ἐγχειρίσασα τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν τιμωριῶν προσέταξεν ἐκδεῖραι ζῶντα, καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα πλάγιον διὰ τριῶν σταυρῶν ἀναπῆξαι, τὸ δὲ δέρμα χωρὶς διαπατταλεῦσαι ("she entrusted him to her punishers and commanded them to strip off his skin while he was alive, and to impale the body sideways on three stakes, and to nail up the skin separately," Ct F26 §17.7). Here we have further detail involving the flaying of Masabates; not only do we know that he is skinned while still alive, once he is dead his skin is nailed up and displayed next to his skinless corpse. His death involves a duration of torment, as with live burial, wherein he is condemned to suffer extreme bodily pain

[80] Herodotus: 4.64, 5.25, 7.26.3; Ctesias: F9 §6 (Photius), F26 §17.6-9 (Plutarch). The two examples from Ctesias, as well as Hdt. 4.64, have been examined earlier in this chapter regarding the additional punishments enacted.

before death. Moreover, we also hear that his flayed skin will be on view for witnesses. The amplified aspect of Masabates' torture and death is narratively appropriate for his crime. The depiction of his punishment is the culmination of a large-scale tricolon of punishments that Parysatis carries out in order to preserve the king's reputation. In succession, Parysatis punishes the Carian and, immediately afterward, Mithridates for their attempts to reveal their actual roles in the death of Cyrus the Younger. As soon as Mithridates has died, "the remaining mark for Parysatis was the one who cut off the head and hand of Cyrus, Masabates the king's eunuch" (λοιπὸς δ' ἦν τῇ Παρυσάτιδι σκοπὸς ὁ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτεμὼν καὶ τὴν χεῖρα τοῦ Κύρου Μασαβάτης βασιλέως εὐνοῦχος, Ct. F26 17.1). The three deaths are joined not only by position but also by their relation to Cyrus' death and the subsequent silencing by Parysatis and Artaxerxes. As such, the victims all suffer excessive and extreme methods of execution.

Moving to Herodotus, we see a partial parallel to the case of Masabates, in that the flayed skins are displayed, yet the flaying is not necessarily part of the killing process. For example, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the Scythians kill their victims before decapitating and scalping them (Hdt. 4.64). While this is presented as a normalized part of Scythian culture and not as an extreme punishment, the episode retains the visual element of displayed skins. Even the Greeks themselves have a normalized depiction of flaying within their pantheon, as Herodotus notes when describing the city of Kelainai: ἐν τῇ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Σιληνοῦ Μαρσύεω ἀσκὸς ἀνακρέμαται, τὸν ὑπὸ Φρυγῶν λόγος ἔχει ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐκδαρέντα ἀνακρεμασθῆναι ("also in this place the hide of Marsyas the Silenus is nailed up, whom the Phrygian account maintains was skinned and nailed up by Apollo," Hdt. 7.26.2). A passing mention is Herodotus' only treatment of this myth, yet it is loaded with nuance. While it may seem unusual that a Greek narrative would include a

story that conflates a Greek god's actions with those of Scythians and Cambyses, perhaps the worst of the Persian kings, the presentation of the skinning has two essential elements that diminish the potential negativity of the passage. Herodotus distances himself – and his Greek audience – by foregrounding his foreign source of the myth, the Phrygians. Both at the time Herodotus is writing and within the text itself, Phrygia is part of the Persian Empire; by naming Phrygians as the source of Apollo's severe act, Herodotus implicitly suggests that the tale is untrue or, at the very least, exaggerated.

Even before the story of Marsyas' flaying is fully told, Herodotus notes that his ἀσκὸς is displayed. The term ἀσκὸς often refers to an animal skin or a bag made from such hide.[81] As a Silenus, Marsyas is not actually a human, so his skin is referred to as a "hide" (ἀσκὸς) rather than "skin" (δέρμα). Even if the reader disregards the Phrygian source, the skinning of an animal is not only acceptable, but it is in fact a respected element of sacrificing to gods in many cultures within the *Histories*, including that of the Greeks. Heracles is said to have slaughtered and skinned a ram in honor of Zeus Ammon (2.42.5). While this story is also reported by non-Greeks (in this case, the Theban priests of Egypt), it forms a more positive etiology for contemporary sacrifices to Ammon in the guise of a ram, while also forming part of Herodotus' argument that Greek religion originated among the Egyptians. The skinning is not only part of the sacrifice, but the animal's hide becomes part of the worship process.[82] Herodotus gives other examples of the

[81] According to the *LSJ*, the meaning "skin made into a bag" is "usually" the appropriate translation for ἀσκός, and notes that Herodotus uses it this way at 3.9.1 (ἀσκοὺς καμήλων πλήσας ὕδατος, "he filled the skins of camels with water").

[82] The term used for the skin here is νάκος ("fleece").

Egyptians (2.39, 2.40) as well as the Scythians (4.60) flaying sacrifical animals, effectively ensuring that Apollo's skinning of Marsyas does not reflect poorly on Greeks.

It should be no surprise that the only distinctly negative depiction of skinning in Herodotus is perpetrated by Cambyses. We have already seen Cambyses mistreating his subjects for arbitrary means, and this instance is no different.[83] Following immediately after a passage highlighting Darius' friendly invitation to Histiaeus to join him at Susa (5.24), Herodotus mentions that Darius leaves Otanes in charge. He then includes a flashback to the fate of Otanes' father, Sisamnes, under Cambyses' rule as well as the effect that it had on Otanes:

> τοῦ τὸν πατέρα Σισάμνην βασιλεὺς Καμβύσης γενόμενον τῶν βασιληίων δικαστέων, ὅτι ἐπὶ χρήμασι δίκην ἄδικον ἐδίκασε, σφάξας ἀπέδειρε πᾶσαν τὴν ἀνθρωπέην, σπαδίξας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ δέρμα ἱμάντας ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔταμε καὶ ἐνέτεινε τὸν θρόνον ἐς τὸν ἵζων ἐδίκαζε· ἐντανύσας δὲ ὁ Καμβύσης ἀπέδεξε δικαστὴν εἶναι ἀντὶ τοῦ Σισάμνεω, τὸν ἀποκτείνας ἀπέδειρε, τὸν παῖδα τοῦ Σισάμνεω, ἐντειλάμενός οἱ μεμνῆσθαι ἐν τῷ κατίζων θρόνῳ δικάζει.
>
> [Otanes,] whose father Sisamnes, being one of the royal judges, king Cambyses slaughtered and flayed the man's entire skin, because he judged a case unfairly for money, and after peeling off his skin, [Cambyses] cut strips from it and stretched them on the chair on which he used to judge; and after stretching them tight, Cambyses appointed the son of Sisamnes to be judge instead of Sisamnes, who was killed and flayed, and he commanded him to remember on which chair he sits and judges. (Hdt. 5.25.1-2)

The placement of this story, coming as it does after Darius' kindness toward Histiaeus, emphasizes the atrocity of Cambyses' deed. As with the description of Apollo flaying Marsyas, the Sisamnes episode features language that is more suitable for a bestial sacrifice (σφάξας). The action of the skinning comes after Sisamnes and his crime are introduced, and the word σφάξας is the first indication we have of the punishment. While this positioning suggests that what follows will be, at least for the perpetrator, a scene of sacrifice, the words that describe the victim

[83] Hdt. 3.35, discussed above.

overtly draw attention to his humanity. Just as ἀσκός was used for the skin of Marsyas to denote his animal nature, here the skin of Sisamnes is ἀνθρωπέην, which has a clear etymological connection with humans (ἄνθρωποι). By sacrificing Sisamnes as an animal, Cambyses is attempting to remove his victim's personhood and identity.

He continues to treat Sisamnes as inhuman even after death by peeling off his skin to use as leather straps for a chair. Most commentaries on this passage note the difficulty of translating σπαδίξας, a hapax legomenon that appears only in this passage (Hornblower 2013). How and Wells (1912) state that σπαδίξας is equivalent to ἐκδείρας, but I follow Hornblower (2013), whose translation "peeled off" notes a probable etymological connection to σπάδιξ (the bark of a holm-oak, LSJ s.v.).[84] Both commentaries cite Stein's translation of the verb as "tanned," referring to the use of bark in the tanning process. Though I prefer Hornblower's translation, either of these translations points to the same conclusion: by either peeling off or tanning Sisamnes' skin, Cambyses is treating him as a non-human. If we suppose that σπαδίξας refers to the peeling of bark, Sisamnes is analogous to a tree whose bark is removed, possibly in the process of collecting timber for construction. If σπαδίξας refers instead to tanning, then his skin is presented as an animal hide being turned into leather. There is no suggestion here that Sisamnes is still a person. Even in the conclusion of the passage, the narrator repeats that Sisamnes is the man who was killed and flayed (τοῦ Σισάμνεω, τὸν ἀποκτείνας ἀπέδειρε, Hdt. 5.25.2), despite the fact that he has just finished relating the story of the death and subsequent flaying.

[84] Given the etymology and rarity of σπαδίξας, I find it unnecessary to assume that Herodotus is simply using the word as a synonym for ἐκδείρας; to use such a particular word, the author likely has a particular association in mind.

In another important note, Hornblower translates ἐνέτεινε and its variant ἐντανύσας as "strung" because ἐνέτεινε "is the usual word for stringing or bending or drawing a bow, i.e. he stretched the strips of skin tightly as if drawing a bow" (2013: *loc. cit.*). The bowstring connotation is especially meaningful in the context of 5.25. We have already examined Cambyses stringing and stretching a bow (διατείναντα) to enact violence against the son of Prexaspes (3.35), a punishment involving a paternal relationship where a son is murdered in order to affect the father. Here also at 5.25 Cambyses punishes a father-son pair, this time using violence against the father as a message for the son. Here, the king's weapon is the chair of judgment, which he strings just as he strung the bow that killed Prexaspes' son. Another correspondence between the two episodes is a concern with truth. Cambyses shoots Prexaspes' son as a means of "proving" that the Persians spoke falsely. He has his own concept of what is true and uses his position as monarch to assert that truth as authoritative. As for Sisamnes, we are told that he was punished for judicial corruption, which is in essence a failure to endorse the truth in a case. Cambyses again has an idea of what is true – in this instance, it is the just outcome of a trial rather than the unjust judgment that Sisamnes proclaimed for personal gain. The judiciary role in this episode is further emphasized when Cambyses insists that Sisamnes' son take his place. The command to "remember on which chair he sits and judges" is an implicit threat to Otanes; the king is suggesting that Otanes will suffer the same punishment if he should not uphold the truth. The presence of Sisamnes' skin, upon which Otanes will sit throughout his duration as judge, ensures that Otanes will constantly be reminded of the punishment for judicial corruption.

2.4 Conclusions: Self-Representation

In light of my observations on the use of violence to convey a series of messages, it is important to note that this motif is not simply a result of the authors' narration. The individual characters within the text consciously display an awareness of the power that physical violence has to create an impression on witnesses and to persuade them to accept a certain reality or truth. We see three characters in Herodotus, one of whom is also represented by Ctesias, who mutilate themselves rather than another individual.[85] In addition, both Herodotus and Ctesias use their ethnographic works to depict foreigners acting violently, with a supposed "Self/Other" distinction.[86] Within the texts, several characters show their awareness of the persuasive abilities related to violence, and I will examine the self-mutilation of Zopyrus (or, possibly, Megabyzus) in order to highlight the pervasiveness of bodily modification as communication. Moreover, there are several texts and reliefs, created by Persians and Assyrians, that depict Persians and Assyrians doing the very same things of which the Greeks accuse them.[87] All of these non-Greek

[85] Both authors depict the Persian Zopyrus (Hdt. 3.153ff; Ct. F13 26, F14 45); Herodotus also mentions the Spartan king Cleomenes (6.75, who goes mad and mutilates himself until he dies) and Hegesistratus, an Eleian (9.37, who cuts off part of his foot to escape imprisonment and the anticipated torture at the hands of the Spartans). Hegesistratus mutilates himself out of a need for survival rather than as a persuasive tactic. Cleomenes acts out of madness, as does Cambyses elsewhere in the *Histories*, yet (like Hegesistratus) he does not seem to mutilate himself for any witnessing audience, though it is worth noting that he does threaten a helot with violence in order to obtain a knife. At the moment of Cleomenes' death, Herodotus switches his narrative to discuss potential causes of his madness rather than the potential effects on witnesses.

[86] E.g. the overt contrast between Greek and foreign practices mentioned by Pausanias after Leonidas' decapitation (9.79.1-2).

[87] These include castration (the many beardless figures identified as eunuchs, e.g. Peled 2016: 229 fig. 5), decapitation (e.g. Tell Tayinat, Dolce 2018: Figure 1.4), and flaying (e.g. Room 8, slab 25 at Dur-Sharrukin, Albenda 1986: Pl. 78 Flandin) as visual images in (Neo-)Assyrian palatial reliefs, as well as the impalement/crucifixion (e.g. DB §43, §50) and facial mutilation (DB §32-33, where each victim suffers a series of

sources are highly visual monumental reliefs (or inscriptions on such reliefs), which supports the argument that violent acts were intended to be witnessed and to have a calculated effect. Therefore, by assessing these potential contradictions and complications, we will see that the persuasive power of violence in the literature seems to represent historical reality, suggesting that the literary use of violence as a persuasive tactic would have been widely understood.

2.4.1 Self-Mutilation

As mentioned above, we have several episodes that describe self-mutilation, but as a case study I am restricting myself to the single individual that both Herodotus and Ctesias depict, the Persian Zopyrus. While both Herodotus and Ctesias describe Zopyrus, and both authors also tell of a Persian tricking the Babylonians into defeat during their revolt from Persia, the differences in their accounts complicate the issue. Herodotus is most clear about his narrative of events. Darius and his army are besieging Babylon, and one of the Babylonians shouts down that Darius will only conquer the city when a mule bears young (3.151.2). After a year and seven months pass with the Persians no closer to defeating the city, Zopyrus, the son of Darius' co-conspirator Megabyzus, observed a foal that was apparently born to one of his pack mules (3.153.1). He considers this an omen that Babylon can now be conquered, so he contrives a plan to convince the Babylonians that he is no longer allied with Darius:

> ἄλλῳ μέν νυν οὐκ ἐφράζετο ἔργῳ δυνατὸς εἶναί μιν ὑποχειρίην ποιῆσαι, εἰ δ᾽ ἑωυτὸν λωβησάμενος αὐτομολήσειε ἐς αὐτούς. ἐνθαῦτα ἐν ἐλαφρῷ ποιησάμενος ἑωυτὸν

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punishments: his ears, nose, and tongue are removed, one eye is gouged out, and then he is impaled) described in the first-person narrative of Darius at Bisitun.

> λωβᾶται λώβην ἀνήκεστον· ἀποταμὼν γὰρ ἑωυτοῦ τὴν ῥῖνα καὶ τὰ ὦτα καὶ τὴν κόμην κακῶς περικείρας καὶ μαστιγώσας ἦλθε παρὰ Δαρεῖον.
>
> At this point he did not think that there was any other way he would be able to take the city in hand, [other than] if he should maim himself and desert to them. And so, making light of it, he maimed himself with an incurable mutilation: after cutting off his nose and ears, shearing his hair, and whipping himself, he went to Darius. (Hdt. 3.154.2)

Zopyrus enacts extreme violence against his own body and is so successful that, when Darius sees him, the king immediately asks for the perpetrator's name; until Zopyrus explains, Darius never considers the possibility that a person would do that to himself. This first deception proves that Zopyrus will also be able to deceive the Babylonians, telling them that Darius mutilated him in this manner. Zopyrus knows that the Babylonians will not believe his story unless he offers some visual proof of his words. Again, no witness to such violence would anticipate that it was self-inflicted. The mutilated body has become what Ballengee calls "a mark of authenticity or truth" in its tortured state.[88] In her discussion of Oedipus' self-mutilation, she elaborates upon the above remark: "The authenticity that comes from the pain of the tortured or wounded witness – what the pain, perhaps, is meant to signify – expresses the labor of actually witnessing a truth or memory." For Ballengee, the witnessing chorus is thus implicit in the act of Oedipus' self-blinding because they see his suffering "as proof of his guilt." This is precisely the scenario that Zopyrus is attempting to replicate by mutilating himself with the intent to influence witnesses and convince them of a false reality. The permanence of his act is stressed throughout the episode, as both the narrator and Darius remark that Zopyrus' suffering is "incurable" (ἀνήκεστος: 3.154.2, 3.155.3). Because he has actually mutilated himself and not simply used a disguise or other artifice, he is certain to be believed by witnesses.[89]

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[88] Ballengee 2009: 12, in reference to Oedipus throughout the course of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannis*.

[89] At no point does either Zopyrus or Darius suggest that the ruse would not be believed; their certainty is implicit.

Darius accuses Zopyrus of being insane (3.155.3), which we have seen is certainly an inducement to violence elsewhere in the *Histories*,[90] and even of self-mutilation,[91] yet Zopyrus' subsequent explanation of his plot shows that he has planned out every detail of the subterfuge; in fact, his ultimate success in betraying the Babylonians after earning their trust ensures that we view him as sane. Immerwahr too notes an "emphasis on the intellectual element (deliberations) in Zopyrus' behavior."[92] Though he is a character within a narrative, Zopyrus displays a full awareness of his acts as well as of the persuasive power that bodily mutilation can have over a witnessing audience. When he (falsely) tells the Babylonians that Darius was responsible for the mutilations (3.156.3), the narrator assures that we understand the success of the ruse: οἱ δὲ Βαβυλώνιοι ὁρῶντες ἄνδρα τὸν ἐν Πέρσῃσι δοκιμώτατον ῥινός τε καὶ ὤτων ἐστερημένον, μάστιξί τε καὶ αἵματι ἀναπεφυρμένον, πάγχυ ἐλπίσαντες λέγειν μιν ἀληθέα καί σφι ἥκειν σύμμαχον, ἐπιτρέπεσθαι ἕτοιμοι ἦσαν τῶν ἐδέετο σφέων ("And when the Babylonians saw that the man who was most notable among the Persians had been deprived of both his nose and his ears, and had been defiled both by the whip and with blood, they entirely believed that he spoke true things and had come to them as an ally, and they were ready to hand over whatever he would ask of them," Hdt. 3.157.1). The structure of this passage emphasizes the visual effect that Zopyrus' mutilation had on his audience. The Babylonians are immediately established as witnesses to the suffering of a man they knew was highly respected (ὁρῶντες ἄνδρα τὸν ἐν Πέρσῃσι δοκιμώτατον); rather than doubt that Darius would so injure one of his closest associates, the sight before them convinces them at once that Zopyrus is telling the truth. Their

[90] E.g. Cambyses (Hdt. 3.35 et al.).

[91] Cleomenes (Hdt. 6.75).

[92] Immerwahr 1966: 105-6 n. 83.

conviction is delayed until later in the sentence, with Zopyrus' appearance being foregrounded in a textual representation of the event. As soon as we are told that the Babylonians are witnessing the man, we hear a list of his specific injuries, almost as if we – a secondary audience, witnessing Zopyrus along with the Babylonians – are also reacting to the sight. Only after the scene is fully set does the narrator tell us that the Babylonians believe Zopyrus' story. When Zopyrus turns against the Babylonians and lets the Persian army into the city, however, we see that even this most trustworthy act of bodily violence is not a reliable means of ascertaining the truth. The Babylonians see only an impression that they were persuaded to accept as true, which Zopyrus presents in such a way that any other interpretation is unlikely, and in fact not even considered, yet that truth does not represent reality.

It is clear that Herodotus represents Zopyrus using physical violence against himself as manipulation of the truth; what of Ctesias' version? Ctesias does indeed tell of a Babylonian revolt, but in this episode Ctesias and Herodotus disagree on significant details; while Herodotus describes the ruse as a trick by Zopyrus during the second Babylonian revolt, Ctesias seems to locate it during the third Babylonian revolt, under Darius' son Xerxes, and attributes it to Megabyzos, the son of Zopyrus.[93] Of the second revolt, Ctesias reports that Zopyrus was instead murdered by the Babylonians.[94] Because the only consistency in Zopyrus' representation in

[93] This Megabyzus should not be confused with Zopyrus' father of the same name. In addition, Herodotus does not describe the third revolt at all (Immerwahr 1966: 106).

[94] Photius notes that "this is what Ctesias says concerning these things, which are not as Herodotus says. The things which the latter [i.e. Herodotus] says concerning Zopyrus, except that his mule gave birth, [since] the former [i.e. Ctesias] says that in fact all the other things were accomplished by Megabyzus, who was Xerxes' son-in-law by way of marriage to his daughter Amytis" (Οὕτω καὶ περὶ τούτων φησὶ Κτησίας, καὶ οὐχ ὡς Ἡρόδοτος. Ἃ δὲ περὶ

Herodotus and Ctesias is the omen of his mule, and because Ctesias attributes all his other actions to Megabyzus, we can presume that he has also transferred the story of the mutilation to Megabyzus. Moreover, Ctesias claims that Megabyzus is successful in quashing a Babylonian revolt, where Zopyrus is not; the common factor in both successful betrayals – that of Zopyrus in Herodotus and Megabyzus in Ctesias – is the self-mutilation as a persuasive force. The actual perpetrator is less important than the consistent representation of bodily mutilation as a display for both an internal and external audience.

2.4.2 Self-Images

A Persian character expressing self-awareness of the power of violent motifs within a Greek text leads to a second question: how would the Persians represent themselves in regard to violence? While we have few narrative texts extant from Achaemenid Persia or the earlier cultures that were incorporated into their empire, many stone reliefs remain that portray a Near Eastern self-expression. Rollinger has catalogued the various Herodotean methods of violence, and he has found Assyrian parallels for nearly all of them; many violent acts are also depicted in the Bisitun Inscription, a trilingual account commissioned by Darius as an account of his accession and rule.[95] The text of the relief was also disseminated throughout the empire in local translations, ensuring that most areas under the geographic aegis of the Persian Empire would

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Ζωπύρου ἐκεῖνος λέγει, πλὴν ὅτι ἡμίονος αὐτῷ ἔτεκεν, [ἐπεὶ] τά γε ἄλλα Μεγάβυζον οὗτος λέγει διαπράξασθαι, ὃς ἦν γαμβρὸς ἐπὶ τῇ θυγατρὶ Ἀμύτι τοῦ Ξέρξου, Ct. F13 §26).

[95] Rollinger 2004 *passim*. The Bisitun Inscription's three languages are Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. The three versions differ somewhat, but the overall message is consistent.

have access to the text.[96] While Rollinger gives only textual evidence for the instances of violence, because of my focus on the visuality of such acts I will instead highlight the same punishments as found in pictorial media. The visual representation of violence acts as a reminder for the empire's subjects that the monarch's power is far-reaching and absolute. By presenting the message in a non-textual manner, literacy is not required to understand the king's supremacy and ability to punish his subjects.

As with the topic of self-mutilation above, I will focus on a single case study of pictorial representation in order to examine the self-representation of violence. Dur-Sharrukin, a palace built by the Assyrian king Sargon II, was officially dedicated in 706 BCE, though it was soon abandoned in its unfinished state after Sargon unexpectedly died in 705.[97] Despite the city's short occupation, the decade-long building project resulted in monumental architecture copiously adorned with reliefs and inscriptions. Matthiae has noted that the architecture of Dar-Sharrukin varies from other Assyrian palaces and claims that "it seems certain that the Royal Palace of Dur Šarrukin [sic] rather than being a paradigmatic and exemplary specimen of Neo-Assyrian palace architecture, is the accomplishment of a very innovative architect in the great architectural tradition of Assyria."[98] While the reliefs themselves also feature innovative qualities, the wartime scenes are treated by Matthiae as more traditional. Indeed, it is the lengthy processions of royal attendants that is more unusual at Dar-Sharrukin, while

[96]Papyrus fragments found at Elephantine include an Aramaic translation (Greenfield & Porten 1982).

[97] Albenda 1986: 35-37. Many scholars refer to the site by its modern name, Khorsabad; others vary regarding the transliteration of Dur-Sharrukin. I follow Albenda's transliteration.

[98] Matthiae 2012: 479.

> later on, in Sennacherib's and Assurbanipal's time, in the Nineveh palaces, the king will appear, on the contrary, surrounded by few assistants, by his ordinary troops, by his bodyguards, by crowds of musicians, facing innumerable multitudes of defeated enemies, carrying to the king the booty of his victories, or kneeling in front of him.[99]

Because Dur-Sharrukin maintains these militaristic images while also creating new figurative motifs, we can infer that the violent battle scenes are themselves typical of neo-Assyrian reliefs, while they also represent the interests of Sargon II, in particular an attempt to accurately depict the variety of peoples united under his rule while also elevating the position of Assyrian aristocrats.[100] Dur-Sharrukin is an apt site for my case study not only because its art was commissioned by a single ruler – rather than by several rulers over the course of many decades – but also because Sargon lived during the time period addressed by Herodotus and Ctesias in their narratives.

In addition to the procession images, several reliefs highlight a more savage side of the ruler.[101] Among the extant reliefs are decapitated corpses, enemies being trampled and having their throats slit, and one prisoner who is apparently being flayed by an Assyrian soldier. In addition, among the Assyrians and close to the king himself are many beardless attendants; these figures are often read as eunuchs, due to their lack of beard and comparatively rounded faces and bodies. It is not unexpected to find scenes of military triumph in commemorative art such as these reliefs, but the depictions of extreme violence exceed mere subjugation. Most of the violent images occur in scenes of warfare, indicating Sargon's supremacy over his enemies. Visually,

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[99] Ibid.: 491.

[100] Ibid.: 492. Cf. Russell 1999, esp., e.g., 164-165.

[101] In considering the reliefs, we are fortunate to have a series of drawings done of the figures in situ by Botta and Flandin in the 1840s (reprinted in Albenda 1986). Their drawings are necessary to any study of the reliefs at Dur-Sharrukin, as many of the site's works were lost in a shipwreck when being transported to Paris and Berlin in 1855 (Albenda 1986: 29-30, 34).

this is most overt in the several scenes that feature horses trampling upon enemy soldiers. Most of the extant reliefs in room 5 at Dur-Sharrukin depict battle, including slab 1 in door O. This slab was originally inside a door, transitioning between rooms 5 and 6; both slabs in the doorway not only show battle scenes but, in particular, enemies being trampled (see Figure 1). The trampling images are on the top register of the wall, at eye-level to any viewers. Visually, the horses are foregrounded and occupy much of the space; beneath their feet and bodies are the enemy. This is not necessarily meant to portray a specific battle, as each of the two trampled enemies on slab 1 is depicted in very different attire, perhaps iconographically suggesting two of the peoples that Assyria conquered. One enemy falls forward and one backward, yet both are driven to the ground in a distinct motif of military subjugation. These images portray the process of conquest rather than only the resulting situation, where enemies are imprisoned or subsumed into the empire. The viewer is constantly reminded of their position within Assyrian social strata, whether as an elite Assyrian or a foreign subject.

Even when the reliefs do depict enemies post-battle, the subjugating processes are ever present. Figure 2 shows a relief from slab 1 in door H at Dur-Sharrukin, entering into one of many rooms featuring primarily wartime images. The upper register features a line of beardless attendants, an example of the processional subject innovation described by Matthiae, but the bottom register is a battle scene, portraying a trampling as well as a line of corpses along the very bottom, most of which are decapitated. The corpses visually form a border on the bottom edge of the relief, and the viewer's eye is drawn to it due to the size increase where the ground rises to the right side. In terms of the battle narrative, Albenda describes the corpses' position as strewn around the land, in the foreground of the scene. However, because of the patterning in the

background of this section, as well as the placement of the city atop a hill, the bodies can also be read as buried beneath the earth, clarifying – at least for the two bodies whose heads remain – that these are intended to be corpses. As discussed earlier in this chapter, decapitation can occur for the purposes of concealing an individual's identity; here on slab 1 in door H, we see the inverse in action. Most of the corpses are decapitated, showing that the Assyrians do not only kill their enemies but also display their mutilated bodies.[102] In her analysis of decapitation images on Near Eastern reliefs, Dolce remarks that headless bodies "in perfect anonymity" are a common sight in Neo-Assyrian imagery.[103] Under the hill, however, are two intact bodies; their bodily integrity is what identifies them as enemies. The Assyrians in the chariot have long, squared beards, but the corpses have shorter and more rounded beards. Such differences are used throughout the Dur-Sharrukin reliefs to denote different peoples under Sargon's rule. Rather than simply depicting headless corpses to emphasize the suffering that the king's enemies endure, an additional message is included that specifies that these enemies are not Assyrian and, as Other, are more subject to excessive violence.

The image represented in Figure 2 is a clear example of violence as a method of communicating multiple messages, as have been discussed throughout this chapter. Such narrative images necessarily assume two audiences: an internal audience taking part in the scene depicted, and an external audience viewing the relief. The messages are not necessarily the same for the two audiences, however. Within the image of Figure 2, the internal audience is comprised

[102] Even if the heads themselves are not shown on display, the headless bodies convey the message that, in death, the victims have lost their identity (cf. Section 2.2.1 on decapitation, where the head as identification is discussed).

[103] Dolce 2018: 7. She also notes that heads were often removed from corpses and brought to a central location in order to tally the number of dead (17).

of the enemy soldiers being trampled beneath Assyrian chariots. For them, the sight of headless corpses would be an almost ominous signal that, upon defeat, they will lose their very personhood and identity. Yet the moment depicted is mid-battle, and these enemies will have no chance to alter their fate at this point. Their definite future is as one of the corpses that lie next to them. The external audience, on the other hand, coming to visit the palace, would see these reliefs at a moment when they are still able to prevent such a future from happening. They can see the warning clearly, looking both at the anonymous corpses and the as-yet intact soldiers; Sargon has made his royal authority manifest in the relief images lining his palace. The power of viewing a permanently altered body is equally manifest in the texts of Herodotus and Ctesias, where the witness views the body itself, at least in part, in its altered form.

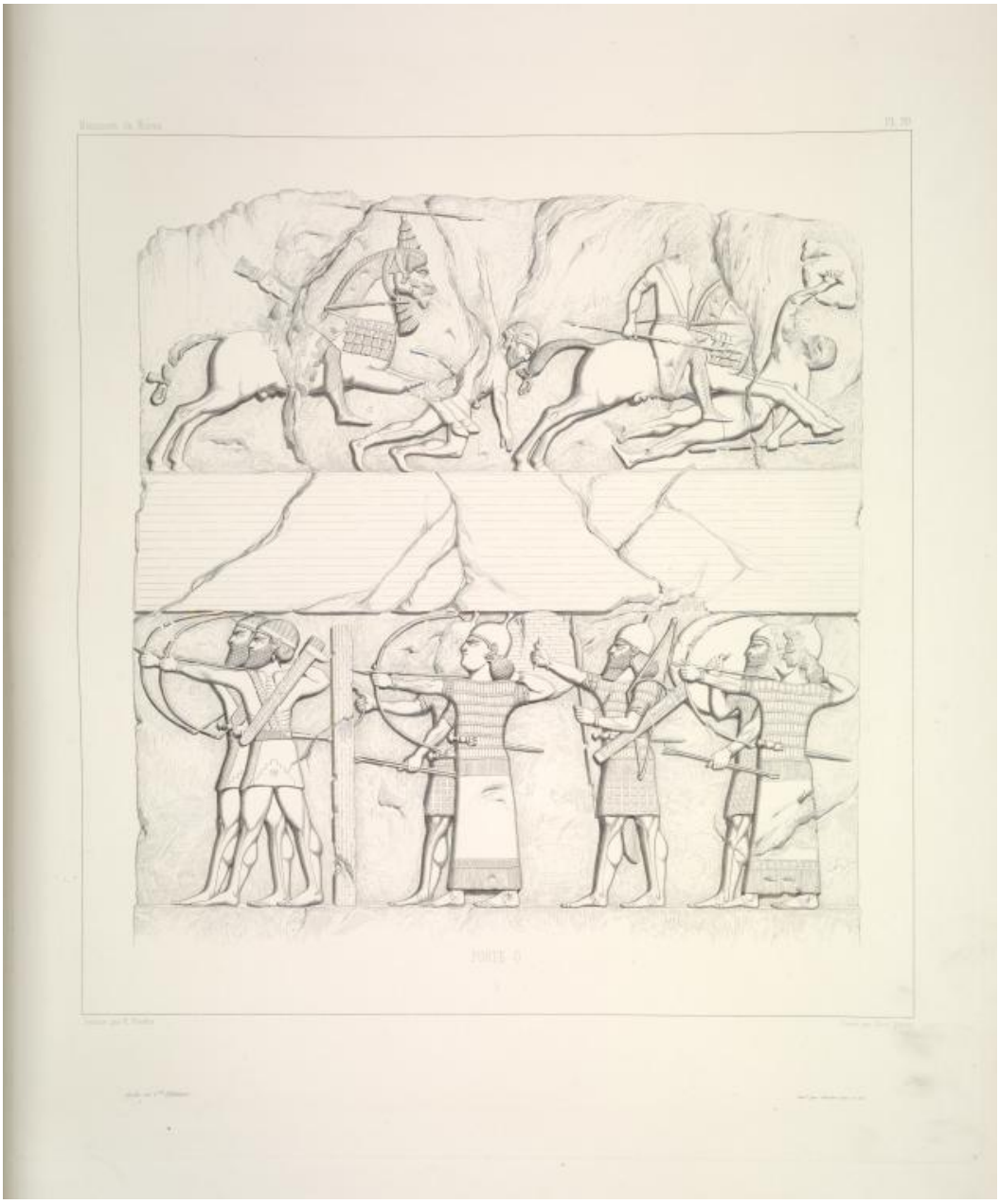

Figure 1. Room 5, Slab 1 in Door O, Dur-Sharrukin. Accessed via New York Public Library Digital Collections (public domain).

Figure 2. Room 2, Slab 1 in Door H, Dur-Sharrukin. Accessed via New York Public Library Digital Collections (public domain).

Chapter Three. The Limits of Humanity & Knowledge

3.0 Introduction: Terminology of the Oikoumene

The first and second chapters focused primarily on the *barbaroi*, the foreign peoples who frequently interact with the Greeks in the writings of Herodotus and Ctesias. However, as I suggested in the introduction to this dissertation and will further discuss below, the term *barbaroi* is not inclusive of all non-Greek peoples. Living beyond the *barbaroi* are the *eschatoi*, people who inhabit the farthest reaches of the inhabited world. I will discuss my terminology and categorization in more depth below, while also remarking on the distinct differences between *barbaroi* and *eschatoi* as they are treated in Greek literature. In general the *eschatoi* are described as similar to one another, no matter which distant region (*eschatia*) they inhabit. Their presentation is oversimplified, simultaneously idealizing and distancing. Distance in this context does not only refer to the spatial distance between Greece and the *eschatiai*; it is also a question of temporality, as the distant lands are generalized in the same way as a mythic past, akin to the Hesiodic Golden Age.

Plutarch makes the connection between time and space in his introduction to the *Theseus*, a biography that is set in such a mythic past:

> Ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς γεωγραφίαις, ὦ Σόσσιε Σενεκίων, οἱ ἱστορικοὶ τὰ διαφεύγοντα τὴν γνῶσιν αὐτῶν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις μέρεσι τῶν πινάκων πιεζοῦντες, αἰτίας παραγράφουσιν ὅτι ‘τὰ δ᾽ ἐπέκεινα θῖνες ἄνυδροι καὶ θηριώδεις’, ἢ ‘πηλὸς ἀιδνής’, ἢ ‘Σκυθικὸν κρύος’, ἢ ‘πέλαγος πεπηγός’, οὕτως ἐμοὶ περὶ τὴν τῶν βίων τῶν παραλλήλων γραφὴν τὸν ἐφικτὸν εἰκότι λόγῳ καὶ βάσιμον ἱστορίᾳ πραγμάτων ἐχομένῃ χρόνον διελθόντι, περὶ τῶν ἀνωτέρω καλῶς εἶχεν εἰπεῖν ‘τὰ δ᾽ ἐπέκεινα τερατώδη καὶ τραγικὰ, ποιηταὶ καὶ μυθογράφοι νέμονται, καὶ οὐκέτ᾽ ἔχει πίστιν οὐδὲ σαφήνειαν.’
>
> Just as in geographies, O Sossius Senecio, the historians push the things that elude their understanding to the margins of their tablets, and write the reasons as “the area beyond is a waterless desert, full of wild beasts” or “dark marsh” or “Scythian frost,” in that same

> way, as to my writing of parallel lives, since I have gone through the time which is attainable for probable reason and which is accessible for a history that tells of events, I could say well about the earlier times, "the area beyond is full of marvels, where tragic poets and mythographers dwell, and it holds nothing trustworthy or understandable." (*Theseus* 1)

Plutarch here evokes many of the themes that will arise in the current chapter, noting that the margins (τοῖς ἐσχάτοις μέρεσι) are places of mystery in geographic thought. Waterless desert[1] and Scythian frost suggest opposing climates, yet they are here grouped together as unknowable regions. Plutarch also suggests that his literary treatment of the distant past is a journey, where he travels beyond more knowable times and events in order to reach the time of Theseus and Romulus.[2] The terminology that Plutarch uses is of utmost importance for this chapter; he refers to the more recent past as "attainable" (ἐφικτόν) and "accessible" (βάσιμον). I will argue that this notion of access is the key element in shaping the literary depiction of the *eschatoi*. Just as one cannot travel to a distant land without passing through the intermediate areas, an ancient author such as Herodotus and Ctesias cannot make claims about the *eschatiai* or their inhabitants without also considering the *barbaroi* that inhabit the regions between the *eschatiai* and Greece. In addition, we will see that the instability of social categories in the *eschatiai* – e.g. the boundaries between *barbaroi* and *eschatoi* as well as of human and animal – contribute to a plurality of possibilities for life in the *eschatiai*.

Before considering the peoples inhabiting the fringes of the earth, we must determine the locations of these peoples in relation to a Greek concept of the world. While the natural term to

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[1] Cf. Herodotus' report that the desert beyond Libya is without water *and* without wild beasts (ἔρεμος καὶ ἄνυδρος καὶ ἄθηρος, 4.185.3).

[2] Though this introduction is from the *Theseus*, the Life is paired with Romulus, and Plutarch addresses the legendary quality of both figures elsewhere in the introduction quoted above.

use for these worldviews is "geography," Harrison is right to point out that "geography" in its modern sense cannot necessarily be applied to Herodotus' time; the term is too broad and flexible to be successfully used without questioning its very definition.[3] For the purposes of my project, I use "geography" as a concise term for not only the spatial layout of the known world but also the ideological concept of relative locations within that layout. Moreover, when considering geography as a literary interest, I follow Romm's suggestion that geography "should also be seen as largely a narrative rather than a merely descriptive genre."[4] The narrative aspect of geography can be seen in the approach of Herodotus and Ctesias regarding foreign populations. Both authors utilize a linear itinerary model for exploration, describing lands in the order a traveler would approach them. The linear approach centralizes the audience at a point from which all other lands extend; for Herodotus and Ctesias, that point is mainland Greece. In addition to conceiving of one's location as the physical center, there is also the phenomenon of "geographical ethnocentrism," the tendency to consider one's own culture as a central standard against which all other peoples must be compared. The combination of these two phenomena ensures that each civilization is its own center.[5] Within his narrative, Herodotus shows evidence of this sort of centrism, saying for example that "the Egyptians call 'barbarians' all those who do not speak the same language as they do" (βαρβάρους δὲ πάντας οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι καλέουσι τοὺς μὴ σφίσι ὁμογλώσσους, Hdt. 2.158.5). The Egyptians schematize the world with themselves as the normalized center, with all other peoples linguistically othered in comparison.

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[3] Harrison 2007: 44.

[4] Romm 1992: 5.

[5] Harrison 2007: 49.

Returning to the traditional Greek concept of the world, what we are really considering is the inhabited world (οἰκουμένη γῆ, hereafter *oikoumene*).[6] The representation of the *oikoumene* depends on locating its center, which for Herodotus and Ctesias would be Greece – specifically Delphi, the navel of the world.[7] As one moves outward from the center, the people encountered become gradually less like oneself. Cole's schematization of the Greek worldview into concentric zones clarifies the slow, geographic transition from Self to Other, particularly when combined with Karttunen's tripartite division of the *oikoumene*.[8] In the zone surrounding the center are fellow-Greeks of other *poleis*; though legislation and habits vary from *polis* to *polis*, all Greeks speak the same language and follow the same religion and thus cannot be classified as *barbaroi*, but rather *xenoi*. *Barbaroi* constitute the next inhabited zone and are those people outside the Greek world who differ in language and religion, including Persians, Egyptians, and Scythians. The material I have discussed thus far in this project has mainly concerned these innermost zones, but in this chapter I continue to move my focus geographically outward to consider the most distant inhabited zone, that of the *agrioi*, or *eschatoi*.[9]

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[6] Cole 2010: 203. The use of *oikoumene* as a term for the entire inhabited world follows convention used by scholars who study ancient representations of the world (e.g. Karttunen 2002, Cole 2010) and originates with Herodotus' own text (Romm 1992: 37, who outlines the connotations of the term).

[7] Cole 2010: 199. cf., e.g., the Ka'ba in Mecca for ancient Arabs (Aslan 2005: 5).

[8] The only foundational difference between the two is that Karttunen includes both the innermost Greeks and their neighboring *xenoi* as part of an "orderly and familiar centre" (Karttunen 2002: 457).

[9] Cole 2010: 199. Cole refers to the inhabitants of this zone as *agrioi*, but I follow Romm's and Karttunen's Herodotean label of these areas as *eschatiai* (e.g. Hdt. 3.106.1), with the people as *eschatoi* (based on Nausicaa's claim of the Phaeacians as ἔσχατοι, Hom. *Od*. 6.205); *eschatoi* carries more neutral connotations and is thus more accommodating to the multiplicity of portrayals of these peoples (Romm 1992, Karttunen 2002).

While we may expect the *barbaroi* and *eschatoi* to be similar in their depictions as non-Greek, there truly exist two distinct traditions. The motifs associated with *barbaroi*, such as excessive violence and hubris, are not present in portrayals of *eschatoi*. Indeed, there is no violence described among the *eschatoi*; though they may be skilled with weaponry, this is only for the purpose of obtaining food (e.g. Ct. F45 §41). Ctesias notes that the inaccessibility of the Kynokephaloi, for example, makes them an unlikely enemy in war.[10] Because the *eschatoi* are so distant and unknowable, they are always generalized; there are no named individuals such as we found among the *barbaroi*.[11] The linear transition from civilized and normative Greek culture moves beyond the unfamiliar yet describable culture of the *barbaroi* into a realm inhabited by populations that are barely recognizable as human. We can see the ideological trajectory moving outward from Greece in every direction, with an intermediate population of *barbaroi* mediating the space between the Greeks and the *eschatoi*. These farthest populations are the focus of this chapter. Because of their distance from the Greek world, the *eschatoi* are rarely – if ever – encountered by Greeks and their closest contacts. While Herodotus and Ctesias could expect that their audience might potentially visit the lands of the *barbaroi*, just as Ctesias may have done when living in the court of Artaxerxes II, it would be extraordinary if this audience had experience with any *eschatoi*. Due to this physical distance in addition to ideological distance, the literary motifs concerning the *eschatoi* are wholly distinct from those concerning *barbaroi*.

[10] ἀπολέμητοι δ’ εἰσὶ διὰ τὸ οἰκεῖν αὐτοὺς ὄρεα ἄβατα καὶ ὑψηλά (“They are not engaged in war because they inhabit inaccessible and lofty mountains,” Ct. F45 §41).

[11] We must not forget that many Greeks, and certainly Herodotus and Ctesias, interacted with *barbaroi* regularly. The shortening of distance required for such interactions lends itself to a more individualized depiction of *barbaroi*, as opposed to the unvisited *eschatiai*.

3.1 The Eschatiai

The concept of *eschatiai* (ἐσχατιαί) as places far from recognizable civilization is already present in the *Odyssey*, a poem overtly concerned with Odysseus being flung far away from the world he knows and attempting to reach his familiar center at Ithaca.[12] When Nausicaa finds Odysseus washed up on the shore of Phaeacia and decides to aid him, she reminds her attendants of Phaeacia's geographic locations and the effects it has on the entire population:

> οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ οὗτος ἀνὴρ διερὸς βροτὸς οὐδὲ γένηται,
> ὅς κεν Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἵκηται
> δηϊοτῆτα φέρων· μάλα γὰρ φίλοι ἀθανάτοισιν.
> οἰκέομεν δ᾽ ἀπάνευθε πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ,
> ἔσχατοι, οὐδέ τις ἄμμι βροτῶν ἐπιμίσγεται ἄλλος.
>
> There will not be, nor has there been, such a mortal man alive who has come to the land of the Phaeacians bearing conflict; for we are very dear to the gods. And we, the farthest people, live far away on the stormy sea, and no other mortals are in contact with us. (*Od*. 6.201-205).

Although these are Nausicaa's words, they are for the benefit of a Greek audience and thus lack the notion of a Phaeacian-based geographic ethnocentrism; the Greeks remain at the center of the worldview represented here. Nausicaa acknowledges that, because the Phaeacians are the most distant of people in the *oikoumene*, their lived experience differs greatly from peoples closer to the Greek center. They experience no trade or cultural exchange with other populations due to their geographic isolation, yet they are also favored by the gods and free from war. These are

[12] "The tension between outer boundaries and a secure center animates the Homeric narrative of Odysseus' homeward journey" (Cole 2010: 199).

some of the very qualities that we see reflected in the works of Herodotus and Ctesias concerning the *eschatiai*.

Because of the vast scope of his text, Herodotus describes many people living at the *eschatiai*: Hyperboreans and Arimaspeans beyond the Scythians to the north, Ethiopians to the south of the Egyptians, and Indians east of the Persians.[13] In addition to these *eschatoi* in the main cardinal directions, Karttunen includes "the Libyan Southwest" and "the Arabian Southeast" as *eschatiai*, arguing convincingly that they too fit the patterns that Herodotus follows for discussing the *eschatiai*.[14] The motifs common to all of these regions are also present in Ctesias' treatment of *eschatoi*, though he includes fewer peoples. From the *Persica* we know of only a few mentions of Indians and Ethiopians, mentioned in terms of their sparse encounters with the Assyrian and Persian empires, but he wrote a separate work dealing entirely with India. The *Indica* highlights various populations among the Indians who exhibit the same stereotypical qualities that the Herodotean *eschatoi* maintain. Across both works, then, we can trace some commonalities that adhere to a twofold pattern where apparently contrasting motifs coexist; the *eschatoi* are simplistic and generally considered "primitive" when compared to Greeks, which can be a positive or a negative simplification.[15] Karttunen notes that a custom shared by Indians (Hdt. 3.100) and Libyan Atlantes (Hdt. 4.184), that of killing no living creature, "is both righteous and primitive;" the notion of benevolence is admirable, yet to kill not even for food is

[13] While he also apparently knew of peoples in the far west, he claims ignorance and a deficiency of reliable sources for any reports coming from that region (3.115). In Section 3.1.3 below, I will discuss such (lack of) representation for the European West in Greek texts.

[14] Karttunen 2002: 468.

[15] Ibid.: *passim*.

an unfamiliar attitude for the Greek audience.[16] The duality of this motif leads to two generalized presentations of the *eschatoi*: they are either violent and inhuman, or they are "just and peaceful, 'noble savages'" in their relationship to nature.[17] This connection to nature manifests itself as a Golden Age sense of fertility, where resources and abundance are freely accessible, in comparison to the difficulties of the Iron Age at the center.[18] Yet, as Karttunen goes on to add, the *eschatoi* are often portrayed as too simple to take advantage of these resources, leading to a continued interest on the part of Greeks and *barbaroi* to venture outward and exploit the natural abundance of the *eschatiai*.[19] The notion of excess applies additionally to the climate and to the land itself, as landscape seems to frequently mark the physical bounds of the *oikoumene*.[20]

An additional element of the *eschatoi*, and one which will be discussed in depth throughout this chapter, is the depiction of subcategories within each *eschatia.* While each region has a most distant part, wherein the inhabitants are the most unlike Greeks, they also contain nearer regions that are as familiar as the areas of *barbaroi* and, thus, more similar to Greeks. For example, Herodotus tells us that Xerxes' army included soldiers from India (7.65), Arabia (7.69.1), and Ethiopia (7.69.1), while Ctesias claims to have seen Indians visiting Persia (F45 §19). Because of Persian expansion and Greek connections with the Persian empire, a Greek

[16] Ibid.: 464. The terminology Karttunen uses is his own; the ancient authors do not overtly characterize the *eschatoi* as such; instead, they indirectly suggest this portrayal through descriptions of habits and customs among *eschatoi*.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Rossellini & Said 1978: *passim*.

[19] Karttunen 2002: 465

[20] e.g. the river Ister marks the northern boundary of inhabitable land north of the Thracians; the other bank of the river is home to either bees or an inhospitably cold climate (5.10).

audience would be somewhat familiar with these *eschatoi*. This familiarity couples with the fact that each *eschatia* has a more distant region that is unfamiliar to the audience, and as a result Herodotus and Ctesias are using familiarity as a bridge to examining the unfamiliar. The breakdown of regions within the *oikoumene* suggests that no region, even the *eschatiai*, is so distant as to be wholly unreachable. Herodotus and Ctesias must maintain the impression that their audiences are potentially and realistically able to visit every land they present, whether familiar or unfamiliar. They are able to achieve this through their depiction of geographic intermediaries.

Cambyses' expedition to the Libyan interior can serve as a case study for the concept of linear geography as representative of the gradual loss of recognizable "civilization."[21] Among other campaigns, Cambyses endeavors to lead his army against the most distant Ethiopians; he sends spies to Ethiopia as a reconnaissance and in order to determine whether the "Table of the Sun" truly exists, demanding an account based on autopsy.[22] The table is an idealized Golden Age motif, a meadow where fresh meat arises from the earth without toil (Hdt. 3.18).[23] When the Persian spies return to Cambyses, they describe a series of marvels present in Ethiopia, including the table; their witnessing of such abundance, as well as a report that the Ethiopian king believes

[21] This episode in the *Histories* can also serve, as Irwin has persuasively argued (2014), as a paradigm for the process of inquiry; Cambyses uses the Ichthyophagoi as a mediation between himself and the Ethiopians, which I argue is a model for the use of intermediaries in the acquisition of knowledge, where one party (the Ichthyophagoi) reports to an inquirer (Cambyses) based on their autopsy of something extraordinary (the table).

[22] Cf. the table's representation in the *Iliad*, Section 3.1.2 below.

[23] Herodotus notes that the meat does not actually appear without human aid, "but the locals say that the earth herself gives up these things each time" (φάναι δὲ τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους ταῦτα τὴν γῆν αὐτὴν ἀναδιδόναι ἑκάστοτε, 3.18).

his own cultural accoutrements to be superior to those of the Persians, convinces Cambyses to march.[24] Even from the start, this expedition is ill-planned: οὔτε παρασκευὴν σίτου οὐδεμίαν παραγγείλας, οὔτε λόγον ἑωυτῷ δοὺς ὅτι ἐς τὰ ἔσχατα γῆς ἔμελλε στρατεύεσθαι· οἷα δὲ ἐμμανής τε ἐὼν καὶ οὐ φρενήρης, ὡς ἤκουε τῶν Ἰχθυοφάγων, ἐστρατεύετο ("neither ordering any supply of grain, nor having given any consideration that he was about to march to the most distant regions of the earth; but being mad in this way and not in his right mind, he marched once he heard from the Ichthyophagoi," 3.25.1-2). Cambyses' lack of forethought and rationality at the start of the journey hints at how the trip will end, particularly in terms of the paucity of food; this introduction also reminds us that Cambyses is not attempting to reach any foreign land, but a land in the most distant regions of the earth (ἐς τὰ ἔσχατα γῆς). As the army gets closer to Ethiopia, and small contingents split off to conquer different regions, the Persians with Cambyses gradually lose their recognizable civilized trappings.[25] Only a fifth of the way to Ethiopia, the army runs out of food and must resort to eating their pack animals. After all the animal meat has been consumed, their diet devolves further and they must eat plants and grasses that have not been milled or cooked in any way. Once they reach desert with its lack of flora, however, the famished Persians kill and eat a tenth of their number. This act of cannibalism so horrifies Cambyses that he orders the army to retreat; Herodotus notes that he had opportunities to retreat at earlier stages of the expedition, yet was so out of his senses (οὐ φρενήρης) that he insisted they continue. In an extreme example of Cambyses' proclivity for transgressing boundaries due to his madness and hubris, his men become almost like the very people he is

[24] His enragement (ὀργὴν ποιησάμενος, 3.25.1) here is another example of his lack of *sophrosyne*, discussed in the previous chapter, esp. Section 2.3.1.

[25] Rossellini & Said 1978: 962-963.

attempting to subdue, the simplistic *eschatoi*: the starving Persians do no work to process their food, eating whatever is at hand even if it breaks with normative acts within the more familiar realm of Greeks and *barbaroi*.[26] Throughout their journey toward Ethiopia, the Persians become influenced by their presence in an *eschatia*, ironically taking on many of the habits they earlier scorned.

While the various *eschatiai* share the same patterns and motifs in Greek literature, I now look at a few regions in particular and the varying ways that their inhabitants are depicted. Although the patterns are maintained, each *eschatia* consists of several peoples who each have their own qualities. In addition, Herodotus and Ctesias contribute to literary traditions that consider each directional *eschatia* separately; as will be discussed below, writings on India have their own tradition separate from writings on the European west. Yet as I have mentioned above, there are important commonalities among the portrayals of *eschatoi*. For example, unlike when discussing *barbaroi*, geographic authors never name individuals; *eschatoi* are represented only in terms of their communal identity. In this section I will consider three *eschatiai* in terms of their traditional treatment in Greek literature as well as the portrayal of their inhabitants by Herodotus and Ctesias. I begin by considering India, the only *eschatia* that is discussed on a large scale by both authors, before examining Ethiopia and, finally, Iberia in the far west.

[26] Karttunen refers to cannibalism as "perhaps the most repulsive form of human behaviour known to the Greeks [...and thus] belonged only to hoary antiquity and to the fringes of the world" (2002: 461).

3.1.1 India

As mentioned above, India is the only *eschatia* that both Herodotus and Ctesias represent fully in their texts. As we know from an epitome by Photius, Ctesias wrote an entire monograph (*Indica*) on the land and peoples of the Indus valley. Ancient authors as early as Aristotle derided Ctesias' work as unreliable and full of lies, and this approach has persisted through the centuries. Karttunen and Stronk, among others, have shown, however, that inaccuracies and credulity do not render a text useless.[27] Karttunen in particular reminds us that it was common practice to denounce one's literary predecessors as false, even while using them as credible sources, and that we should also consider the ancient context of the term ψεῦδος as separate from our modern concept of "lie."[28] Though we do not know whether Ctesias claimed to believe many of the things he reports, he nevertheless presents many wonders that were believed by his sources. Herodotus too often presented marvels as fact, and even Megasthenes and the historians travelling with Alexander "were branded liars by later critics" despite having actually been in India.[29] In this context Ctesias remains a valuable source for Greek ideas of foreign lands, regardless of historicity. Indeed, the Greek concept of India, for example, is a truth in itself because it tells us a potential truth about what Greeks believed.

Before Herodotus, we know of only two Greek authors who treated India at length in their works, Scylax of Caryanda and Hecataeus of Miletus.[30] Herodotus tells us that Scylax, an

[27] Karttunen 1981, 1989, 1991; Stronk 2010.

[28] Karttunen 1989: 81-82.

[29] Ibid.: 82.

[30] Ibid.: 66ff.; Auberger 1995: 337.

Ionian Greek, was sent by Darius to sail down the Indus River, around the Arabian peninsula, and up the African coast to Egypt (Hdt. 4.44). He wrote a *Periplus* chronicling his journey, which likely included ethnographic details about the indigenous populations of the Indus valley.[31] None of the extant fragments or references give details as to the content of the *Periplus* beyond that Scylax wrote about Indians. A fragment transmitted by Harpocration in the 2nd century C.E. tells us that Scylax mentioned a group of people living under the earth called Troglodytes, but without any context from the *Periplus*, we cannot know whether the Troglodytes lived in India or, instead, are the cave-dwelling (τρωγλοδύται) Pygmies that Herodotus (4.183) and Aristotle (*Hist. an.* 597a4-10) describe as inhabitants of Ethiopia and Libya.[32] Hecataeus' *Periegesis* also exists mainly in references from later authors, and we know almost as little about its content as we do with Scylax' *Periplus*. Herodotus rarely mentions Hecataeus by name (e.g. 2.143, 6.137.4), but he is generally considered to be a significant written source for Herodotus' work.[33] Despite the broad literary influence, we cannot truly know the extent to which Herodotus relied on Hecataeus or how much the *Periegesis* discussed India. There is evidence of descriptions of Indian place names and peoples,[34] but beyond these names we have no indication that Hecataeus included any ethnographic details of the type that

[31] E.g. Scylax F5 (*FGrH*) (=Aristot. *Pol*. 1332b): ὡσπερ ἐν Ἰνδοῖς φησι Σκύλαξ εἶναι τοὺς βασιλέας τοσοῦτον διαφέροντας τῶν ἀρχομένων ("Just as Scylax says that, among the Indians, kings differ so greatly from their subjects"). See also Karttunen 1989: 66.

[32] Harp. s.v. ὑπὸ γῆν οἰκοῦντες ("[people] living beneath the earth") =Scylax F6 (*FGrH*): τοὺς ὑπὸ Σκύλακος ἐν τῷ Περίπλῳ λεγομένους Τρωγλοδύτας ("those who are called 'Troglodytes' by Scylax in the *Periplus*"). I address the conflation of India and Ethiopia in Section 3.1.2 below.

[33] See, e.g., Meeus 2017: 182 on the use of one's predecessors in historiography.

[34] For example, Jacoby lists several locations as Indian based on Hecataeus' report (F294-295, 297-299 *FGrH*).

Herodotus and Ctesias write. Of the four authors on India – Scylax, Hecataeus, Herodotus, and Ctesias – only Scylax ever visited India and had an opportunity to write based on autopsy, a point to which I will return later in this chapter.

Though he never visited India, Herodotus gives us the earliest extant Indian *logos*. Like his other *logoi*, the excursus on India features descriptions of dietary habits and clothing among the various Indian peoples, yet he also includes common motifs of the *eschatiai*. Herodotus frequently uses superlative language to describe the Indians, who he says are the most populous nation (3.94.2) and have animals bigger than those of any other land (3.106.2). He also notes that India has an abundance of gold, both washed down in rivers and underground, which they either dig up or, as Herodotus narrates in detail, by collecting sand mixed with gold dust from the burrows of giant ants (3.102-105). In the account of the giant ants, Herodotus does not claim that the story is true; he repeatedly notes that his version of the story originated with the Persians.[35] Throughout most of the account he seems to be accepting of the idea that giant ants exist and burrow into the gold-bearing desert, narrating the Indians' expedition in a straightforward descriptive style.[36] Yet near the end of the episode his credulity is strained when he reports on the supposed dangers of the venture. Once the Indians have filled their bags with gold dust, they depart immediately:

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[35] Herodotus' use of λέγεται when introducing the incredible elements of the ant story is significant; Lateiner has shown that λέγεται is "a legitimate warning, easily passed over, that Herodotus does not vouch for what follows" in the text and "separates the historian from a report" that is particularly unbelievable (1989: 22-23).

[36] His assertions are clear in phrases such as "and so in such a way and by making use of such a yoked team, the Indians ride toward the gold, taking care that they will be in the process of seizure during the hottest time of day" (οἱ δὲ δὴ Ἰνδοὶ τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ καὶ ζεύξι τοιαύτῃ χρεώμενοι ἐλαύνουσι ἐπὶ τὸν χρυσὸν λελογισμένως ὅκως καυμάτων τῶν θερμοτάτων ἐόντων ἔσονται ἐν τῇ ἁρπαγῇ, Hdt. 3.104.1).

> αὐτίκα γὰρ οἱ μύρμηκες ὀδμῇ, **ὡς δὴ λέγεται ὑπὸ Περσέων**, μαθόντες διώκουσι. εἶναι δὲ ταχυτῆτα οὐδενὶ ἑτέρῳ ὅμοιον, οὕτω ὥστε, εἰ μὴ προλαμβάνειν τοὺς Ἰνδοὺς τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐν ᾧ τοὺς μύρμηκας συλλέγεσθαι, οὐδένα ἂν σφέων ἀποσώζεσθαι. [...] τὸν μὲν δὴ πλέω τοῦ χρυσοῦ οὕτω οἱ Ἰνδοὶ κτῶνται, **ὡς Πέρσαι φασί**.
>
> For the ants smell them at once, **as is in fact said by the Persians**, and after perceiving [the Indians] they give chase. And [they say] that their speed is like nothing else, to such an extreme that, unless the Indians start off first while the ants are gathering, no one of them would get away. [...] indeed the Indians acquire most of their gold in this way, **as the Persians say**. (Hdt. 3.105.1-2)

Only here at the end of the passage does Herodotus mention that he heard the story from the Persians, distancing himself from the most unbelievable aspect of the anecdote, the speed and ferocity of the ants. Puskas also suggests that Herodotus here is highlighting the Persian source of the story, but she says more broadly that he distances himself throughout the account rather than only at the end.[37] Herodotus does mention the Persians earlier in connection to the ant narrative, but he says only that "after [the ants] are caught in that place [i.e. the Indian desert] they are held at the palace of the Persian king" (εἰσὶ γὰρ αὐτῶν καὶ παρὰ βασιλέι τῷ Περσέων ἐνθεῦτεν θηρευθέντες, Hdt. 3.102.2). The Persians here offer visual proof of the ants' existence, but Herodotus does not suggest that the story is a Persian story; he only mentions the Persians as informants when discussing the Indians' escape, and he does so twice in a single chapter. The relative frequency of the phrase suggests that he is willing to admit only part of a report as fact. He is actively critical of his sources – whoever they are – and does not need to wholly accept a story for it to be worth repeating.

The insertion of Persia as an intermediary between Greece and India also highlights the relativity of the *eschatiai*. From a Hellenocentric worldview, India is one of the most distant

[37] "Herodotus himself keeps a certain distance from his informants emphasising that all had been told to him by the Persians" (Puskas 1983: 205).

lands in the *oikoumene*, but Herodotus' Persian informants may have considered India to be populated by *barbaroi* rather than by *eschatoi*, to use the scheme employed by Herodotus.[38] This connection between Persia and the Achaemenid-governed regions of India, which was a tribute-paying satrapy under Darius (3.94.2), allowed Persians to interact more frequently with Indians. While living at the Persian court, Ctesias had an opportunity to understand India from a Persocentric perspective, yet in his writing he perpetuates the same motifs of the *eschatiai* that his predecessors used.[39] For example, Ctesias' India is populated by several marvelous peoples, many of whom he emphatically idealizes.[40] Although Ctesias was located within the lands of the *barbaroi*, he never actually visited India himself; instead, he uses Persian informants in the same way that Herodotus does, rather than adopting a Persocentric worldview. The result is, as Karttunen summarizes, "something like a Greek idea [...] of a Persian idea [...] of India seasoned with his own observations of some Indian products and people who brought them."[41] Ctesias writes for a Greek audience, after all, and thus his work represents the geographic orientation of his audience rather than himself.

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[38] Karttunen 2002: 470

[39] It is probable that Ctesias was more nuanced than modern scholars assume, but it is impossible to be certain from the summaries of Photius that remain. Karttunen (esp. 1981, 1991) and Bigwood (1993) both demonstrate that Ctesias is remarkably accurate when describing things he himself has seen; Karttunen (1989) and Puskas (1983) have both outlined the Indian oral and literary traditions that Ctesias seems to reflect in the *Indica*. Cf. Waters' recent monograph showing the Near Eastern traditions present throughout the *Persica* (2017).

[40] The marvelous peoples include Pygmies (F45 §21-24 et al.), Kynokephaloi (F45 §37 et al.), and Pandarai (F45 §50; named in F52). The idealization can be seen especially in relation to a just nature, e.g. when he says that the Kynokephaloi "are very just, as are the other Indians with whom they interact" (μέλανες δέ εἰσι καὶ δίκαιοι πάνυ, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι Ἰνδοί, οἷς καὶ ἐπιμίγνυνται, F45 §37).

[41] Karttunen 1991: 80

Despite his adherence to the usual fringe motifs, Ctesias' location in Persia does allow him to make use of the notion of subdivisions of India. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, each *eschatia* can be further broken down by peoples or by relative distance; not only is India comprised of many populations, but I argue that there is also a familiar zone located closer to and governed by Persia as well as a more distant zone that is the subject of wondrous speculation. What we know of the *Indica* from Photius' summary concerns the distant India, perhaps because of Photius' particular interest in marvels, yet many other authors use Ctesias as a reference for more mundane information. For example, Aelian cites Ctesias in a description of hunting methods among the Indians (F45g =Aelian *NA* 4.26), and Aristotle twice criticizes Ctesias' claims about elephant sperm (F48a =Arist. *HA* 523a26; F48b =Arist. *De gen. an.* 736a2).[42] Photius also notes that Ctesias writes, "concerning the Indians, that they are very just; and [he writes] about their habits and customs" (Περὶ τῶν Ἰνδῶν, ὅτι δικαιότατοι· καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐθῶν καὶ νομίμων αὐτῶν, F45 §16). Ctesias' original text likely did not contain only descriptions of marvels and would have included references to geographic and cultural details, including information on the nearer Indians.[43]

The interaction between Persia and the closest regions of India certainly allowed Ctesias to encounter Indians, or at least goods from India. In his discussion on the variety of skin colors among Indians, Ctesias claims "that he himself saw such Indians [i.e. with light skin], two women and five men" (ἰδεῖν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν τοιαύτας Ἰνδὰς δύο γυναῖκας καὶ πέντε ἄνδρας, F45

[42] While many authors (e.g. Aelian and Pliny the Elder) use Ctesias primarily as a source for Indian marvels, the examples above are chosen to show the use of Ctesias for less speculative information.

[43] Karttunen 1991: 77-78; Nichols 2011: 19-20

§18). In addition, gifts from Achaemenid-ruled India seem to have been delivered by Indians themselves rather than by Persian messengers, which allowed for Ctesias' autopsy regarding skin color. He also says that he smelled perfume from the Indian *karpion* tree (F45 §47) and tasted Indian cheese and wine (F45 §48), all of which had been brought to the Persian king; he even claims to have seen a *martichora* that was gifted to the king (F45dβ =Aelian *NA* 4.21).[44] We have no indications that Ctesias claims to have witnessed many of the marvels described in the *Indica*, but he does assert that he has personal experience with many credible elements of the Indian cultures, due to his presence at the Persian court. Thanks to his location, Ctesias is able to establish autopsy-based authority concerning the Indians under Persian control. However, there is little evidence that Ctesias would have delineated the nearer and more distant regions of India, instead conflating them as one land. This allows him to claim authority over the entire country rather than the few small elements that he himself encountered.

Following Ctesias, there are no significant texts concerning India until the time of Alexander's conquests of Persia and India. Many of Alexander's companions (Aristobulus, Nearchus, and Onesicritus et al.) wrote accounts of India based on their travels there, and in the

[44] The *martichora* brought to Persia recalls Herodotus' claim that a giant ant corpse was given to the Persian king from India (3.102.2). Of the things Ctesias asserts to have personally seen, the *martichora* is the only one that lacks credibility (Karttunen 1989: 82-83). Following Karttunen, Nichols reminds us that Ctesias' *martichora* was identified as the tiger as early as Pausanias in the 2nd century C.E. Even the unlikely detail of a stinger at the tip of the *martichora*'s tail corresponds to "a small dermal protrusion like a nail" on the tiger's tail (Nichols 2011: 104). Other details about the *martichora*, such as its human-like face, can be attributed to the observer's inability to get close enough to such a creature; after all, "[w]ho would go into the cage and check the teeth of a living tiger?" (Karttunen 1991: 79). Ctesias' ability to witness the *martichora* may have been limited by self-preservation, which in turn results in a more subjective form of autopsy.

next generation Megasthenes too wrote an *Indica* while stationed in India as ambassador.[45] With Greek authors finally able to access both the familiar and more distant areas of India, we would expect a dramatic shift in the portrayal of Indians and their land. Despite their first-hand experience, however, these authors show little deviation from the now-traditional motifs used by their predecessors.[46] Arora suggests that this new wave of authors would have been familiar with previous accounts and would view India with the intention of confirming them; for example, Nearchus wanted to verify Herodotus' account of giant ants burrowing in gold-digging sand, and "[e]ven a rational author like Megasthenes" included the well-known marvels described in earlier depictions of India.[47]

Perhaps even more surprising, the reports from Alexander's companions and from Megasthenes – which themselves differ little from the earlier accounts by Herodotus and Ctesias, among others – become the main source for authors writing about India during the Roman Empire.[48] With access to the east available, authors such as Arrian, Strabo, and Plutarch continued to use pre-existing traditions concerning India rather than inquiring from the many soldiers and sailors who had by now actually been there.[49] Arora states that contemporary accounts from such men "were considered by the educated Greeks as non-serious" and the

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[45] Karttunen 1989: 89-94, 96-99; Arora 1991: 87-88.

[46] Arora 1991: *passim.*

[47] Ibid.: 89; see also Karttunen 1989: 96-99 & 1991: 75.

[48] "[T]he India of Megasthenes and the literature on Alexander was canonized as the official picture of India and preferred to any contemporary account even in late antiquity some seven hundred years later" (Karttunen 1991: 10).

[49] Arora 1991: 98.

informants themselves as "stupid; from whom serious informations [sic] could be hardly expected."[50] As a result, Greco-Roman texts concerning India show little variance throughout the classical tradition, even as potential for autopsy increases.

3.1.2 Ethiopia & Libya

Because there are no extant classical monographs that deal solely with Ethiopia or the most distant regions of Libya, my examination of Ethiopia's place in the Greek ethnographic tradition will be less involved than that of India. Despite the relative paucity of material, we will see that Herodotus and Ctesias both present Ethiopia with many of the same motifs that they use for India and other *eschatiai*. This may be partially due to a longstanding conflation of India and Ethiopia as a single region. I will discuss the pervasiveness of this confusion before addressing the motifs concerning Ethiopia, both those shared by other *eschatiai* as well as any unique details. I use the term Ethiopia to refer to the region inhabited by peoples explicitly described as Ethiopian in the texts; Libya is a more general term for the entire continent that is now known as Africa.

In the first book of the *Iliad*, Homer mentions that the Olympian gods feast "with the blameless Ethiopians" (μετ᾽ ἀμύμονας Αἰθιοπῆας) who live somewhere near Oceanus (*Il*. 1.423-424; Iris joins the other gods at 23.206); the first book of the *Odyssey* likewise mentions Poseidon among these Ethiopians, adding that they are situated at the farthest edge of the *oikoumene* (*Od*. 1.23-24). The latter passage is the source of the persistent issues with identifying

[50] Ibid.

the Ethiopians in ancient texts. Homer begins the background of his narrative by explaining that Poseidon "was visiting the far-off Ethiopians, the Ethiopians who are divided in two parts, the most distant of men; some dwell at the setting of the sun, the others at its rising" (Αἰθίοπας μετεκίαθε τηλόθ᾽ ἐόντας, | Αἰθίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαίαται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν, | οἱ μὲν δυσομένου Ὑπερίονος, οἱ δ᾽ ἀνιόντος, *Od*. 1.22-24). The partition of Ethiopians into Eastern and Western subgroups causes problems for later authors, who seem to depend upon the Homeric lines as evidence for their own geographic inventions. For example, Aeschylus conflates the Asiatic east with Africa in the *Suppliant Women*:

> Λιβυστικαῖς γὰρ μᾶλλον ἐμφερέστεραι
> γυναιξίν ἐστε κοὐδαμῶς ἐγχωρίαις·
> καὶ Νεῖλος ἂν θρέψειε τοιοῦτον φυτόν·
> Κύπριος χαρακτήρ τ᾽ ἐν γυναικείοις τύποις
> εἰκὼς πέπληκται τεκτόνων πρὸς ἀρσένων·
> ᾽Ινδάς τ' ἀκούων νομάδας ἱπποβάμοσιν
> †εἶναι καμήλοις ἀστραβιζούσας χθόνα†
> παρ᾽ Αἰθίοψιν ἀστυγειτονουμένας,
> καὶ τὰς ἀνάνδρους κρεοβότους τ᾽ Ἀμαζόνας,
> εἰ τοξοτευχεῖς ἦτε, κάρτ᾽ ἂν ἤκασα
> ὑμᾶς·
>
> "For you rather more resemble Libyan women and in no way those of our native land. The Nile would also foster such offspring, and similarly the Cyprian image upon womanly impressions fashioned by male artisans; I hear also that there are nomadic equestrian Indian women †who ride pillion upon camels,† and who dwell in a land neighboring the Ethiopians, and I would especially have compared you to the husbandless flesh-eating Amazons, if you were armed with bows." (Aesch. *Supp*. 279-289)

The Danaids who have fled from Egypt are here told that they do not have a Greek complexion, but that they have the darker skin that is characteristic of several foreign lands, including Libya,

Egypt, and an unspecified land that is home to the Amazons. The Amazons are traditionally located in Asia, often a subgroup of nomadic Scythians, yet here Aeschylus claims that they are neighbors to the Ethiopians. We understand then that the author imagines Ethiopia and Asia to be connected, though I would not go so far as Arora, who says that Aeschylus here refers specifically to the Indians.[51]

Herodotus also separates the Ethiopians into Eastern and Western groups, but he additionally considers the Indians separately.[52] There is no overt conflation of the continents in his writing, but we do see the Eastern Ethiopians closely associated with the Indians in one contingent of Xerxes' army (7.70). Moreover, the Western Ethiopians are not stationed on their own either, but they serve along with the Arabians (7.69). In the *Histories,* the Eastern Ethiopians have straight hair, but the Western Ethiopians are referred to as Libyan and "have the curliest hair of all men" (οὐλότατον τρίχωμα ἔχουσι πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 7.70.1). While the delineation of Ethiopians has always been present in terms of directionality, Herodotus clarifies that the subgroups of Ethiopians differ in their physical appearance and some aspects of their culture, i.e. language. The Ethiopians thus are not a homogeneous group with a scattered dispersal, but rather a conglomeration of multiple peoples living in one broad geographic region, much like the Indians. Elsewhere Herodotus emphasizes the geographic delineation by distinguishing between one group of Ethiopians, whose homeland borders Egypt (3.97.2), and a

[51] Arora 1982: 131.

[52] Herodotus does not explicitly refer to an East-West basis for the division; he does distinguish the Asiatic Ethiopians as being from the East, and by calling the other Ethiopians Libyan, he suggests that they are thus located to the West (though perhaps 'southwest' would be a more accurate representation). See also Ferguson 1969: 22-23.

second group described as "long-lived" (τοὺς μακροβίους Αἰθίοπας, 3.97.2), who seem to correspond to the Homeric Ethiopians.

Though Ctesias' texts do not focus on Ethiopia or any other African lands, there are two passing mentions in the *Persica* which confirm that Ctesias follows the Homeric model of mythical Ethiopians. The narration of Semiramis' subjugation of Egypt and Ethiopia includes a series of paradoxical descriptions that put one in mind of Ctesias' *Indica*, while his discussion of the Trojan War mentions an Ethiopian contingent among the Trojan soldiers, led by Memnon as general. I will look at both of these passages briefly to establish a fuller idea of how Ctesias represents Ethiopia and its inhabitants. At the point in the Semiramis narrative where Ethiopia enters the picture, Ctesias has related most of the queen's military conquests, which include all of Asia with the exceptions of Bactria and India (which he will later address in F1b §16ff). She now turns her imperial gaze southward to Egypt, conquering it as she moves through on her way to Ethiopia (F1b §14.3). Diodorus' transmission of the Egyptian conquest is rather brief, giving only the detail that Semiramis visited the oracle at Ammon to discover her fate, as so many foreign rulers do.[53] Quickly the focus shifts to Ethiopia, which merits a small ethnographic *logos* that relates unique funeral practices (F1b §15.1-4) and local marvels (παράδοξα, F1b §14.4). The primary marvel of interest is a lake noted for its deep red color and the sweetest possible fragrance, with a "marvelous ability" (δύναμιν παράδοξον): τὸν γὰρ πιόντα φασὶν εἰς μανίαν ἐμπίπτειν, καὶ πανθ' ἃ πρότερον διέλαθεν ἁμαρτήσας ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖν ("They say that

[53] For example, Lenfant discusses the notion that Semiramis' visit was included later in the text after the model of Alexander, but she asserts that this is unnecessary; Herodotus has Croesus consult the oracle, and as a result the parallel with Alexander "n'était donc pas nécessaire pour imaginer une consultation de l'oracle par Sémiramis, qui reflète plutôt le renom du sanctuaire à l'époque de Ctesias" (Lenfant 2004: 243 n. 211).

someone who has drunk it falls into a mania, and he confesses all the things which earlier he had done wrong and not been caught," F1b §14.4). Waters with similar properties are featured in the *Indica*, marking this as a typical quality of *eschatiai* for Ctesias; there is, for example, an Indian fountain that produces the very same effect as the lake in Ethiopia (F45 §31).[54] Likewise, the mention of cinnabar as the water's color evokes the *Indica*, wherein the color is frequently used to describe marvels.[55] For both Karttunen and Romm, the presence of marvels is a significant factor in the conflation of India and Ethiopia, and Romm specifies that "the bizarre behavior of springs and rivers" defines both lands as distinctly foreign.[56]

The episode involving Memnon is less concerned with marvels, but it affirms the concept of Ethiopia as an Eastern land. Memnon is cast here as general of an Asian group of Ethiopians sent by the Assyrian king to aid in the Trojan War (F1b §1-2). Memnon is also the son of Tithonus; while this historical account simply notes that Tithonus was general of Persis at the time (F1b §3), Ctesias' audience would have known the mythological accounts of Tithonus as a lover of Eos ("Dawn"), a union that resulted in Memnon's birth.[57] As son of the dawn, Memnon is inherently tied to the sun and the east. This notion of Ethiopia as an Asian locale is brought to

[54] Similar marvelous bodies of water can be found at F45 §9 (a square fountain from which liquid gold is drawn) and F45 §20 (a fountain in Naxos which produces superlatively sweet wine, also a property of the Phasis River in the same passage).

[55] Lenfant 2004: 243 n. 214.

[56] Romm 1992: 82; Karttunen 1989: *passim*. Other characteristics shared by India and Ethiopia include unusual plant and animal life (Romm & Karttunen), civilization based around a single large river (Karttunen), and inhabitants with dark skin (Karttunen; see also Vasunia 2016: *passim*).

[57] Hesiod, *Theogony* 984-985; Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* 218-238.

the forefront by Diodorus, who adds to Ctesias' information by saying, "but the Ethiopians near Egypt disagree, saying that this man originated in their own lands" (ἀμφισβητοῦσι δὲ καὶ οἱ περὶ τὴν Αἴγυπτον Αἰθίοπες, λέγοντες ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῖς τόποις γεγονέναι τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον, F1b §22.4).[58] We lack Ctesias' original statement, but Diodorus' addition suggests that Ctesias was not considering the Western Ethiopians as part of his narrative.

3.1.3 Western Europe

Perhaps the most distinct quality of western Europe in the Greek tradition is that it is hardly represented. Herodotus mentions a tripartite geography, with the continents of Asia, Libya, and Europe, but he states that he will not discuss the western *eschatiai* of Europe because he is "unable to speak with precision about the *eschatiai* in Europe which are to the west" (περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ τῶν πρὸς ἑσπέρην ἐσχατιέων ἔχω μὲν οὐκ ἀτρεκέως λέγειν, 3.115.1). He goes on to mention several details that he has heard from the West but has been unable to confirm; this *praeteritio* ensures that the audience is nevertheless familiar with the unconfirmed information. Nenci claims that Herodotus omits the West from his narrative because there was no report of marvels, and the brief discussion of the West in the *Histories* certainly lacks the usual marvellous stereotypes that are associated with other *eschatiai*.[59] Yet in itself this is an insufficient explanation; after all, there are few – if any – marvels reported among the Scythians,

[58] "Comme tous les témoignages sur Memnon africain sont postérieurs à Ctésias, ce §4 n'est probablement pas tiré de son oeuvre" (Lenfant 2004: 54 n. 249).

[59] Nenci 1990: 315.

the subjects of one of the most detailed *logoi* in the text.[60] Karttunen argues that the absence of western Europe correlates to Herodotus' purpose of depicting the conflicts between Greece and the Persian Empire, omitting Europe because it never fell under Persian dominion.[61] Again, however, there are other lands that Herodotus mentions that likewise were outside the Persian area of influence.[62] In addition, his assertion that there is no wealth in the west suggests that there were reports of abundance to which he is directly responding, particularly as riches are another common quality associated with *eschatiai*.[63] In the passage immediately preceding the *praeteritio* of western Europe, Herodotus concisely relates the qualities of westernmost Libya and the Ethiopians who live therein, including superlative humans and environmental fertility (3.114). To shift directly from that very general statement of distant abundance to a similar claim of abundance, only to deny the latter claim, only highlights the uniqueness of the European west.

What, then, marks western Europe as unique in comparison to other *eschatiai*? There are in fact two related factors that affect the representation of all *eschatiai* in Herodotus. The first is natural topography, which – in the case of the European west – Gómez Espelosín outlines in the context of the Mediterranean coast of Iberia.[64] He argues that the mountainous coastal regions of

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[60] θωμάσια δὲ ἡ χώρη αὕτη οὐκ ἔχει ("This land [Scythia] has no marvels," Hdt. 4.82). Cf. Hartog 1988: 230-237.

[61] Karttunen 2002: 471.

[62] e.g. the most distant areas of northeast Europe, where the one-eyed Arimaspians dwell beyond the Scythians and even beyond their closest northern neighbors, the Issedones (4.27).

[63] Tartessus is mentioned by Herodotus as being a land of wealth (4.152), and while criticising the details of "Tin Islands" and the Eridanus River, he asserts that "certainly tin and amber are imported to us from the most distant land [of Europe]," (ἐξ ἐσχάτης δ᾽ ὧν ὁ κασσίτερος ἡμῖν φοιτᾷ καὶ τὸ ἤλεκτρον, Hdt. 3.115.2).

[64] Gómez Espelosín 1993: 133-134

Iberia prevented Greeks from establishing colonies further inland, confining their settlements and thus their knowledge to the shore. In particular, Gómez Espelosín describes the historical circumstances that led to exposure to and knowledge of other foreign lands, i.e. colonization along the Mediterranean coasts of Asia and Libya. Establishment of these colonies allowed for interactions with local populations, which in turn created a chain of communication that ultimately leads to the *eschatiai*. This idea of continuous exchange leads to the second aspect of western Europe's omission from Herodotus: there is no intermediary link between the Greeks and the native Iberians. For each of the other *eschatiai* that Herodotus and Ctesias mention, details are gained through successive chains of people reporting information. In order for a Greek author to learn about the most distant Indians, he must ask the Persians, who in turn would have had their information from Bactrian merchants; the Bactrians could tell about the nearer Indians with whom they were in contact (as could the Persians), but even those nearer Indians would have had stories to tell about the most distant Indians.[65] Moreover, each of these stages in the chain would add its own aspect of truth, leading to a somewhat mutated form of the original information, yet one imbued with many different truths. There are intercultural links like this in each direction: information on Libya is filtered through the Ethiopians and the Egyptians, while tales of the Arimaspeans to the north were transmitted through the Issedones and Scythians on their way to Persia and Greece. Herodotus' narrative reflects this linear trajectory when he lists out neighboring peoples in a single outward direction.[66]

[65] This example is oversimplified; there could be numerous intermediaries between, e.g., the Greeks and Persians.
[66] e.g. 4.168-180 (Libyan peoples from the direction of Egypt and moving west)

Each of these access points can be traced to Greek colonies along the Mediterranean coasts of Asia and Libya. We do know that such colonies were established on the Iberian coast, but no contact was made with the native peoples inland. The Mediterranean would not necessarily have been the only direction of approach for exploration; extant texts tell of nautical expeditions beyond the Pillars of Heracles, though these sailors tend to move south around the Libyan coast.[67] Herodotus reports a Carthaginian tale of the Persian Sataspes, who is sent by Xerxes to sail around the continent of Libya as punishment for raping the unwed daughter of Zopyrus; starting from Egypt, he sails through the Pillars and begins a southward trajectory, but after journeying to a land of Pygmies, he claims that his ships were unable to proceed and he returned to Xerxes (4.43). The Carthaginians also report an expedition of their own, undertaken by Hanno and preserved as a *Periplus* in Greek translation. Hanno sailed through the Pillars of Heracles in order to establish Carthaginian colonies along the northwest coast of Libya, which in turn opened trade to these new locales (Hdt. 4.196). In comparison, we have little information about expeditions that sail north after passing through the Pillars. Herodotus does report an account of Samians who reached Tartessus, a mythical kingdom just north of the Pillars, yet these Samians reach Tartessus only by accident, after being blown wildly off course in their attempt to reach Egypt (4.152.2). The Samians did not intend to journey anywhere near the Pillars of Heracles, much less through them and to the north, and this brief interaction with the wealthy Tartessians does not result in any prolonged relationship beyond importing goods. Since

[67] A reverse of this path is taken by a group of Phoenician sailors, who were sent by king Nekos of Egypt and sailed through the Red Sea and around the African continent and through the Pillars into the Mediterranean and back to Egypt; Herodotus reports this tale but claims that it cannot be accurate (4.42).

the Samians do not engage with the Tartessians in such a way as to learn about the Iberian interior, no chain of communication exists to report information, true or otherwise.

3.2 Observable Bodily Differences

We have seen that the Greeks imagined the layout of the *oikoumene* as a series of concentric circles, wherein the inhabitants gradually begin to have more extraordinary characteristics as the gaze moves outward from the normalized center. In addition, Herodotus and Ctesias never refer to any *eschatoi* as named individuals, but they discuss communities and groups within each *eschatia* as if all inhabitants of one region share the same characteristics. With these patterns in mind, I turn now to considering the physical appearance of foreigners within the works of Herodotus and Ctesias. We will see that the representation of bodies likewise falls into concentric zones, with appearance depending on geographic location. I focus here on two broad modes of describing foreign bodies as different from one's own. The *barbaroi* share a general physical appearance with the Greeks, with some variations in hair or skin color; they are differentiated more on the basis of their attire, as discussed in the first chapter of this project. *Eschatoi*, on the other hand, tend to have more varied body shapes, spanning from humans with only one eye (Hdt. 3.115) to the barely-human Kynokephaloi (Hdt. 4.191.4, Ct. F45 §37ff.). As the distance from Greece increases, the bodies of *eschatoi* become more unfamiliar, with the boundary between human and animal simultaneously becoming less distinct. I consider these two patterns of physical motifs separately, focusing on how bodies are described and how this is affected by both geography and potential for autopsy.

3.2.1 Barbaroi *and Climatological Effects*

The notion that a country's natural environment affects its inhabitants is pervasive in Greek ethnographic discourse.[68] Herodotus famously ends his *Histories* with a statement that "soft men usually come about from soft lands; for nothing of the same land can produce both marvelous fruit and men good at warfare" (φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς γίνεσθαι· οὐ γάρ τι τῆς αὐτῆς γῆς εἶναι καρπόν τε θωμαστὸν φύειν καὶ ἄνδραςἀγαθοὺς τὰ πολέμια, Hdt. 9.122.3). This concluding remark emphasizes the author's tendency throughout the *Histories* to attribute human characteristics to the effects of the area's geography.[69] For example, in the Egyptian *logos*, Herodotus overtly connects the environment and climate of Egypt to the customs of its inhabitants: Αἰγύπτιοι ἅμα τῷ οὐρανῷ τῷ κατὰ σφέας ἐόντι ἑτεροίῳ καὶ τῷ ποταμῷ φύσιν ἀλλοίην παρεχομένῳ ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι ποταμοί, τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ἔμπαλιν τοῖσι ἄλλοισι ἀνθρώποισι ἐστήσαντο ἤθεά τε καὶ νόμους ("Along with a climate which is particular to them and a river which exhibits a nature unlike other rivers, the Egyptians have instituted both customs and laws that are contrary to other people in almost every way," Hdt. 2.35.2). Egypt's climate and geography are unique, and as a result the Egyptians have developed customs that are unique and the reverse of other known cultures. This "relativity of human institutions" directly connects human life to the land, particularly in comparison to Greece, as the narrator continues by listing many of the "opposite" habits of Egyptians.[70] As Macan points out, Herodotus

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[68] This category includes not only Herodotus and Ctesias, but also the Hippocratic treatise *Airs Waters Places* (see below) and other texts that report on foreign populations to a Greek audience.

[69] How & Wells 1928: ad loc.

[70] Macan 1908 on Hdt. 9.122

introduces each cultural *logos* with a description of the area's geography.[71] This structure suggests that knowledge of the environment is necessary for understanding the customs of the inhabitants.

In addition to habits and customs, Herodotus proposes that climate also affects natural physiology. Herodotus begins a tale by alerting the reader that it is astounding (θῶμα μέγα), yet must be presumed to be true, as he has witnessed it himself (εἶδον, 3.12.1). After a battle between Persians and Egyptians, the corpses of the deceased were examined, revealing unique differences between the two: αἱ μὲν τῶν Περσέων κεφαλαί εἰσι ἀσθενέες οὕτω ὥστε, εἰ θέλεις ψήφῳ μούνῃ βαλεῖν, διατετρανέεις, αἱ δὲ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων οὕτω δή τι ἰσχυραί, μόγις ἂν λίθῳ παίσας διαρρήξειας ("The skulls of the Persians are so weak that, if you wished to hit them with only one pebble, you would shatter them; but the skulls of the Egyptians are in fact so strong, you would hardly crack them if you struck them with a stone," 3.12.1). The Egyptians have a cranial structure very different from that of the Persians. Following conversation with locals, Herodotus comes to the conclusion that the natural environment – in combination with the resulting customs – is the cause of the variation in skulls. The Egyptians shave their heads from a young age, and the increased exposure of the scalp to the sun strengthens the bone inside; "this in fact is the reason why they have strong skulls" (δὴ τοῦτο ἐστὶ αἴτιον ἰσχυρὰς φορέειν τὰς κεφαλάς, 3.12.4). Conversely, the Persians not only keep their hair long but also cover their heads with caps, limiting sun exposure, weakening their skulls as a result (3.12.4). The contribution of climate to physical attributes likewise affects animals as well as humans; Herodotus mentions that the extreme cold of Scythia causes the livestock to have no horns, citing

[71] Ibid.

a verse of Homer to suggest that, in Libya and other lands of extreme heat, the animals' horns grow swiftly (4.29).

The notion of environmental determinism is of course not unique to historical texts or even to the Greek tradition.[72] Of most relevance to this project is a Hippocratic treatise from the late 5th century titled *Airs, Waters, Places*, which details the various physical and moral effects that climate has on the inhabitants of a region.[73] Because it is connected with the medical writings of Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places* takes a scientific approach to examining many of the same peoples that Herodotus and Ctesias describe.[74] In addition, I will consider it here due to its relevance as a contemporary part of the same Ionian trend of empiricism that the historians follow;[75] we will also see that the *Airs, Waters, Places* provides a more in-depth account of many

[72] The Chinese philosophical text *Guanzi* has a chapter dedicated to types of water and the effects they have on people; e.g. "The water of Chu is gentle, yielding, and pure. Therefore its people are lighthearted, resolute, and sure of themselves" (XIV, 39, 76.11; trans. Rickett). This chapter was most likely written in the 4th c. B.C.E. (Rickett 1985: 99).

[73] Jouanna dates *Airs, Waters, Places* to the second half of the 5th century and attributes its authorship to the school of Cos (1999: 375).

[74] Cf. the Hippocratic author's explicit purpose of comparing Europeans and Asians: βούλομαι δὲ περὶ τῆς Ἀσίης καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης δεῖξαι ὁκόσον διαφέρουσιν ἀλλήλων ἐς τὰ πάντα καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐθνέων τῆς μορφῆς, ὅτι διαλλάσσει καὶ μηδὲν ἔοικεν ἀλλήλοισιν ("Concerning Asia and Europe, I wish to show how much they differ from one another in every way, and concerninging the form of the people, that they differ and in no way resemble one another," Hipp. *Aër*. 12).

[75] Thomas convincingly argues that Herodotus writes within the same cultural and intellectual milieu as the Hippocratic author (2000: *passim*); because Ctesias seems to follow Herodotus' style, as well as his profession as a doctor, we can consider him within the same movement as well.

cultural and climatological details that are only implied by Herodotus and Ctesias.[76] For the Hippocratic author, climate and bodily health are related through the onset of diseases or other acquired conditions; a certain climate will cause a predictable set of illnesses, and the proliferation of this set of illnesses in turn affects human health and lifestyles. Good health is thus a result of climatological moderation, where moderation refers to a balance between warm and cold as well as appropriate proportion of seasons.[77]

After this initial description of climate and disease, the Hippocratic author shifts to a more ethnographic approach in the second half of the treatise, using geography to explain the physical differences between Europeans and Asians (12). The moral effects of climate are considered separately in *Airs, Waters, Places*, with a distinct note of relative superiority when the moral section is introduced: περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀθυμίης τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῆς ἀνανδρείης, ὅτι ἀπολεμώτεροί εἰσι τῶν Εὐρωπαίων οἱ Ἀσιηνοὶ καὶ ἡμερώτεροι τὰ ἤθεα αἱ ὧραι αἴτιαι μάλιστα, οὐ μεγάλας τὰς μεταβολὰς ποιεύμεναι οὔτε ἐπὶ τὸ θερμὸν οὔτε ἐπὶ τὸ ψυχρόν, ἀλλὰ παραπλησίως ("But concerning the people's cowardice and unmanliness, as to why the Asian people are more unwarlike and more gentle in character than Europeans, the seasons are to blame, since they make no great changes either toward warmth or coldness, but [remain] constant," Hipp. *Aër*. 16).[78] We can see here that the author continues to argue that climatological balance is the key to good health and, as a result, good character; he portrays

[76] For example, the example above of Egyptian skulls differing from Persian skulls due to the use of hats can be compared to the physical manipulation of skull shape by the Makrokephaloi through the binding of infants' heads while still malleable after birth (Hipp. *Aër*. 14).

[77] Jouanna 1999: 214-215.

[78] Text of *Airs, Waters, Places* is from Jouanna 1996.

Asian peoples as inferior due to the lack of seasonal changes, which leads the human body to become content. The result, he continues, is that Asian populations are disposed to prefer monarchy because they do not have an active interest in ruling themselves (Hipp. *Aër*. 16). In addition, the qualities the author attributes to the inhabitants of Asia (ἀθυμία, ἀνανδρεία) are presented as negated versions of worthy Greek qualities, which highlights the contrast even further.

While the *Airs, Waters, Places* effectively depicts the role of geography in relation to physical health, I would like to shift my focus now to the notions depicted in the middle sections of the treatise, i.e. climatological effects on the body itself. The causal connection between climate and illnesses is clear enough, but the authors discussed here depict innate effects of climate pertaining to the human body.[79] The Hippocratic author claims that the Scythians have a distinct body type unlike that of any other population due to the unchanging cold temperatures in Scythia, drawing a parallel to the Egyptians' unique bodies as a result of extreme heat (18-19). The Scythians of *Airs, Waters, Places* thus have a uniformly "thick and fleshy" (παχέα [...] καὶ σαρκώδεα, 19) appearance and participate in very little physical activity, including the act of copulation (21). The constancy of their climate causes little to no variation in appearance, even between genders (19). As mentioned above, Herodotus likewise represents the human body as a result of climate and geography, a trend which Jouanna suggests was "already current in Ionian science" prior to both Herodotus and the Hippocratic author.[80] The two texts share an interest in overtly comparing diverse populations to one another based on geographic location. Yet, as

[79] The "authors" I refer to here are Herodotus and Ctesias as well as the author of *Airs, Waters, Places*.

[80] Jouanna 1999: 229.

mentioned above, Herodotus and Ctesias are more concerned with visual differentiation based on dress, rather than body type. The Hippocratic author, perhaps because his work is more consciously medical in its approach, focuses his attention instead on body shape and especially the particular diseases that can result from certain climates.[81]

The *Airs, Waters, Places* primarily addresses bodily differentiation as can be seen in general body type, yet for a modern audience physical othering is more often connected to skin color.[82] In fact it is this categorization that distinguishes the bodies of *barbaroi* from those of *eschatoi* in Herodotus and Ctesias. For the *barbaroi*, whom the Greeks would have interacted with and visually observed, physical differentiation is limited to observable distinctions such as skin color and hair styles. Even then, skin color is not often mentioned for *barbaroi*; our authors rely more on temporary means of modifications such as those discussed in the first chapter of this project.[83] The increased potential for interacting with *barbaroi* removes the need to describe their innate physical differences to an audience that would be able to easily see the *barbaroi* and their skin. The *Airs, Waters, Places* reflects the empirical need for autopsy by stressing the diseases that can be observed by a physician traveling to different locations, and as a result the text describes bodily differences in great detail. In contrast, Herodotus and Ctesias focus more on clothing and hairstyle as qualities that can be changed among peoples who are otherwise visually similar. Indeed, while coloring and hairstyles can vary, the *barbaroi* look similar to the Greeks in

[81] I attribute the difference to genre rather than the author's profession as a doctor; we must remember that Ctesias too was a physician, yet his texts are more distinctly historiographic and are similar to that of Herodotus.

[82] In this section I use "differentiation" to refer to ways of marking another as different from oneself.

[83] E.g. the consistent motif of Persians characterized through the wearing of trousers (Section 1.1.1 above).

their general body type. In the *eschatiai*, however, visual access is limited and Greeks have little, if any, interaction with the inhabitants. As a result, as one moves conceptually farther away from Greece, the people of the *oikoumene* start to lose their human forms, with the inhabitants of the most distant *eschatiai* being almost inhuman.

In the earlier discussion of geography in this chapter, I mentioned the concept of each *eschatia* having a more familiar zone as well as a most distant region. This paradigm also applies to the inhabitants' physical appearances. In his description of the Nile's path, Herodotus mentions the Ethiopians who border Egypt, saying that "the people are black because of the burning heat" (οἱ ἄνθρωποι ὑπὸ τοῦ καύματος μέλανες ἐόντες, 2.22.3). Similarly, when discussing the Indians, he notes that they all have black skin and semen, just like the Ethiopians (3.101). The comment that "all the Indians" that he has discussed have black skin correlates to the broad generalizations of an entire population that are expressed in the *Airs, Waters, Places*, yet at the same time Herodotus uses this passage to transition between discussing different subgroups of Indians and their relative geographic locations: οὗτοι μὲν τῶν Ἰνδῶν ἑκαστέρω τῶν Περσέων οἰκέουσι καὶ πρὸς νότου ἀνέμου, καὶ Δαρείου βασιλέος οὐδαμὰ ὑπήκουσαν. (102) ἄλλοι δὲ τῶν Ἰνδῶν Κασπατύρῳ τε πόλι καὶ τῇ Πακτυϊκῇ χώρῃ εἰσὶ πρόσουροι, πρὸς ἄρκτου τε καὶ βορέω ἀνέμου κατοικημένοι τῶν ἄλλων Ἰνδῶν ("These Indians live far away from the Persians to the south, and never submitted to King Darius. But other Indians border both the city of Caspatyrus and the Pactyican country, toward the north and are settled more northerly than the other Indians," Hdt. 3.101.2-102.1). The use of μέν and δέ across the two chapters directly connects the two sentences and distinguishes the two subsets of Indians within the narrative. While a cursory reading would suggest that Herodotus is claiming that all Indians have black

skin, Lenfant is right to point out that he is only discussing southern Indians at the time.[84] The narrative distinction between subgroups that immediately follows the mention of skin color supports her argument, as the δέ at the start of chapter 102 introduces a parallel yet different group.

The skin color of Herodotus' Indians is additionally noteworthy because it represents one point with which Ctesias overtly engages, possibly denying the impact of environmental determinism. We know that Ctesias describes India as extremely hot (F45 §17-18), yet Photius reports that he also says that "the Indians are black not from the sun but by nature; for [Ctesias] says that there are among them both men and women who are generally very light-skinned, even if they are fewer" (οἱ Ἰνδοὶ οὐχ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου εἰσὶ μέλανες ἀλλὰ φύσει· εἶναι γάρ φησιν ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας λευκοτάτους πάντων, εἰ καὶ ἐπ' ἔλαττον, F45 §19). While Herodotus is not named here as a source that Ctesias is refuting, both Lenfant and Nichols note in their commentaries that this is likely a reference to Herodotus' remark on "all Indians" having black skin.[85] Lenfant says that this is "sans doute" an attempt at correcting Herodotus, though she also reminds the reader that Herodotus was in actuality only describing southern Indians.[86] Ctesias' insistence on this point is perhaps due to his residence in Persia, where he claims he saw (ἰδεῖν) Indian men and women with lighter skin (F45 §19). Ctesias is not only engaging with Herodotus' claims; he is also positioning himself as a more authoritative source than Herodotus,

[84]Lenfant 2004: 305 n. 818; see also the following discussion of Ctesias' text.

[85]Ibid.; Nichols 2011.

[86] "Sur ce point aussi, Ctésias croit peut-être réfuter Hérodote, qu'il aurait alors lu rapidement. Ce dernier dit, en effet, que tous les Indiens *du Sud* ont la peau noire (III,101), sans donner de précision sur ceux du Nord (III,102)" (Lenfant 2004: 305 n. 818; emphasis original).

who makes no such claims of autopsy regarding skin colors of Indians. The individualization we see in the *Indica* is a direct result of Ctesias' presence in Persia, allowing him access to some Indians and the ability to witness them for himself. His autopsy here corrects the usual portrayal of *eschatoi* in generalized terms, as we see with Herodotus' statement on southern Indians.

3.2.2 Blurred Humanity

In the next section of this chapter I will return to the question of authorial positioning and relationship to autopsy, but for the moment I would like to consider the less-human inhabitants of the *eschatiai* and their relationship to the notions of relative distance that I have been discussing throughout the chapter. In particular, we see that physical bodies gain more extraordinary qualities as one moves farther from Greece. The *barbaroi* vary primarily in hair style and clothing, while the nearer regions of the *eschatiai* differ in their innate features as well, i.e. their skin color. These *eschatoi* do not look so different from the Greeks and *barbaroi*, having their general appearances and body shapes in common. But as the gaze continues outward to the most distant *eschatoi*, innate physical features become even more unusual to a Greek audience. At this point, Herodotus and Ctesias implicitly raise the issue of what it means to be human.

We have seen already that, for both authors, the manipulation of appearance through clothing and the perpetration of extreme violence are both modes of geographic otherness. However, the same paradigm does not apply to the *eschatoi*; they continue to have unique attire, yet the most distant *eschatoi* do not seem to engage in the same methods of violence and

excessive punishment as the *barbaroi*.[87] Their spatial isolation allows them to be ideologically removed from the accessible and thus knowable areas of the *oikoumene*, which we can see in the motif of the *eschatiai* as Golden Age realms of general peace and fecundity.[88] It is this unknowability that renders the distant *eschatoi* as physically distinct, since most of the described qualities are impossible at worst and, at best, improbable. The authors' geographic distance from the *eschatiai* directly relates to their reliance on a different set of motifs for portraying *eschatoi*. This brings my argument to the most distinct quality associated with *eschatoi*, i.e. their extraordinary bodies.

In his *Histories* Herodotus states that, for the Athenians in his narrative, geographic unity can be assigned through "shared blood, shared language, shared religious institutions and rites, and shared customs" (ὅμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἱδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα, Hdt. 8.144.2). While on the surface this passage refers to an Athenian self-definition in common with other Hellenic peoples, we can extrapolate the expression of cultural commonality to each group of people, such as all Egyptians sharing lineage, language, religion, and customs. Indeed this example suggests that Herodotus considers these to be the unifying features of every population. Language is in fact one of the more notable distinctions made between peoples throughout the works of Herodotus and, to a lesser extent, Ctesias. Herodotus frequently mentions the use of interpreters to accommodate communication between individuals who do not share a common language, and although this is a narrative creation rather than

[87]E.g. the Pygmies described by Ctesias, whose facial hair grows so long that they in fact wear no clothing, girding themselves instead with their beards (F45 §21); it is the absence of garments that particularizes the Pygmies.

[88] E.g. Hdt. 3.106: αἱ δ' ἐσχατιαί κως τῆς οἰκεομένης τὰ κάλλιστα ἔλαχον ("but the *eschatiai* seem to have been allotted the loveliest things in the *oikoumene*").

reality, the notion persists that language differences form ideological boundaries.[89] Moreover, each language boundary creates an extra step of distance as well as an additional version of the story. On the far-northerly Argippaeans, Herodotus cites both Scythians and travelling Greeks as his sources of information, even clarifying how his informants learned about the Argippaeans: Σκυθέων δὲ οἳ ἂν ἔλθωσι ἐς αὐτούς, δι᾽ ἑπτὰ ἑρμηνέων καὶ δι᾽ ἑπτὰ γλωσσέων διαπρήσσονται ("and those of the Scythians who go to them, they interact through seven interpreters and seven languages," 4.24.1). The reality of the Argippaeans is thus filtered and altered many times before it reaches Herodotus. This chain of transmission suggests a great distance between the Argippaeans and the Scythians, and ultimately the Greeks as well.

Because the *Indica* focuses in so closely on one *eschatia,* Ctesias presents the opportunity for considering how humanity is formulated in connection with language. In particular, we see instances where language boundaries either do not exist or are transgressed by certain inhabitants of the *eschatiai*. The transgressors in these examples additionally break down boundaries of what is it to be human. One of the first depictions we know of in the *Indica* is of a parrot-like bird called the *bittakos,* which can be trained to mimic human voices.[90] This quality is presented through Photius' transmission as if the *bittakos* is able to converse in its own right, but the details clarify that the bird is simply repeating what it has heard: Διαλέγεσθαι δὲ αὐτὸ ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπον Ἰνδιστί, ἂν δὲ Ἑλληνιστὶ μάθῃ, καὶ Ἑλληνιστί ("And it converses in the Indian language just like a human, and also in Greek if it has learned Greek," F45 §8). The *bittakos* does not possess an

[89] Harrison 1998: 13-14.

[90] Ctesias writes "about a bird, the *bittakos*, namely that it has human-like language and voice" (περὶ τοῦ ὀρνέου τοῦ βιττάκου, ὅτι γλῶσσαν ἀνθρωπίνην ἔχει καὶ φωνήν, F45 §8).

innate ability to understand language; nevertheless, its ability to speak like a human in any language it has learned makes the bird seem more human than avian.[91] Nichols connects the bird's description to a particular species, the plum-headed parakeet, due to the specificity of its coloring, which "indicates that he likely saw one in person."[92] Thus Ctesias is not simply relying on a report; he seems to be describing a specific bird that spoke Greek, and Ctesias himself is the most likely resource for the *bittakos* to have learned Greek words. In addition, the bird's ability to speak Indian suggests at the very least that the bird spent time among Indians, and possibly that it was brought all the way from India itself. This linguistic aptitude does not discriminate between languages, as the *bittakos* seems to speak Indian and Greek with equal proficiency. Gera points out rightly that the *bittakos* seems to eliminate the perceived cultural hierarchy between Greeks and "barbarians" because, as an animal, neither is its "native language."[93] The *bittakos* has a human-like ability to mimic languages, but any similarity is only a sensory perception. Its knowledge is rather of "half a language," in Gera's words, "for they are articulate but uncomprehending."[94]

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[91] Herodotus too tells of birds using human-like speech (φωνῇ ἀνθρωπηίῃ, 2.55), but his doves are presented as folk aetiologies for the oracles at Dodona and Libya (oracle of Ammon). He even states his own opinion that the dove at Dodona represents an Egyptian woman, who was said to speak like a bird because she was not speaking the local language (2.56-57; How & Wells ad loc. cite Aeschylus' description of Cassandra's foreign speech at *Agamemnon* 1050). It is interesting that, for Herodotus, the idea of a bird making sounds like a human is impossible to believe: τέῳ ἂν τρόπῳ πελειάς γε ἀνθρωπηίῃ φωνῇ φθέγξαιτο; ("how would a dove utter sounds with a human voice?" 2.57.2).

[92] Nichols 2011: ad loc.

[93] Gera 2007: 90.

[94] Ibid.: 89.

The *bittakos* is not the only inhabitant of India to blur the lines between human and animal through language. Ctesias describes many fabulous populations in India, but one that receives the longest consideration – as least where Photius is concerned – is the Κυνοκέφαλοι, the dog-headed people that are also mentioned by Herodotus as inhabiting the most distant lands of Libya to the west (4.191.4; Ct. F45 §37, §40-43). Herodotus only names the Kynokephaloi in passing as part of a long list of impossible beings, including people with no heads whose eyes lie in their chests (οἱ ἀκέφαλοι οἱ ἐν τοῖσι στήθεσι τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες, 4.191.4). Pliny the Elder tells us that these headless people are also mentioned by Ctesias in a list of Indian inhabitants: *[scribit...] Non longe eos a Troglodytis abesse, rursusque ab his occidentem versus quosdam sine cervice oculos in umeris habentes* ("[Ctesias writes that … the Monocoli] are not far away from the Troglodytes, and again from them back to the west are certain people without a neck, who have eyes on their shoulders," Ct. F51a = Plin. *NH* 7.23). I note the Troglodytes in Ctesias' India because, like the Kynokephaloi and the headless people, Herodotus locates them in Libya (specifically as Ethiopians, 4.183.4). Although Nichols claims that the two accounts are unrelated, there is almost certainly an element of the India-Ethiopia conflation happening here, with Ctesias' India and Herodotus' Ethiopia and Libya featuring many of the same inhabitants.[95] Karttunen likewise insists that the Indian and Libyan Kynokephaloi are two separate traditions.[96] His claim is rooted in the differences between Herodotus and Ctesias in terms of geography and narrative style, as well as evidence for an Indian parallel that suggests their origin is in India.

[95] Herodotus' Kynokephaloi "bear no relationship to the Cynocephaloi [sic] of India" (Nichols 2011 on Ct. F45 §37).

[96] He mentions also a third tradition, that of the Kynamolgoi in Ethiopia (Karttunen 1984: *passim*).

However, his argument does not address the traditional conflation of India and Ethiopia/Libya.[97] The basis for considering Herodotus' Kynokephaloi a separate group is that Herodotus locates them in Africa, lists them in a catalogue with many other fabulous groups, and the catalogue includes several distinctly African characteristics, i.e. lions and elephants; as such, Karttunen asserts that we have "no reason to doubt the Libyan origin of the Herodotean dog-heads."[98] Karttunen neglects to address that the headless people with their eyes in their chest are also common to both authors, as well as the fact that elephants were to be found in both Libya and Asia.[99] The argument that Herodotus' Kynokephaloi must be only Libyan is not strong enough to suggest that there are two separate traditions at play.

While Herodotus presents the Kynokephaloi and other extraordinary peoples with a note of suspicion, we have few indications regarding how Ctesias contextualized his depictions. He describes each population at length, however, so we can surmise that he was less dismissive about the reports he heard than Herodotus. Ctesias' portrait of the Kynokephaloi is one of the longest sections of Photius' epitome, including a description of their physical appearance. They are people with canine heads and tails, as well as teeth and claws similar to those of a dog (F45 §37, §43). Otherwise they appear human, with Ctesias noting that they have black skin like their

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[97] Despite this, he does include an entire section on this tendency in his monograph on India in Greek literature (1989: 134-138).

[98] Karttunen 1984: 34.

[99] Καὶ λέγει μὲν ταῦτα καὶ Κτησίας, ἀκοῦσαι γράφων. Ἰδεῖν δὲ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ὁ αὐτὸς λέγει τοὺς φοίνικας αὐτορρίζους ἀνατρεπομένους ὑπὸ τῶν ἐλεφάντων τὸ αὐτὸν τρόπον ("And Ctesias also says these things, writing down what he heard. But he says that in Babylon he himself saw palm trees overturned from the root by elephants in the same way," F45b; see also F45 §7).

Indian neighbors (F45 §37). However, in an inversion of the linguistic abilities of the *bittakos,* the Kynokephaloi are able to understand human speech – specifically, that of the neighboring Indians with whom they trade – but are unable to produce it. Instead, they communicate with other Indians using dog-like barks and hand gestures. Once again we see an example of a being that has an incomplete grasp on human speech while simultaneously maintaining a bestial identity, at least in part. While speech is generally considered to be a particularly human quality, we see from the *Indica* that this is not the case for Ctesias. The *bittakos* can speak, yet it is still considered an animal; the unintelligible Kynokephaloi are depicted in terms of human society, with attention given to their commerce, clothing, and pastoral activities. Although they lack some common aspects of human civilization, such as cooking fires and weaving of textiles, there is no doubt that the author considers the Kynokephaloi to be a race of people. These humanoid animals and bestial people are only located at the *eschatiai*, with no such beings located in the intermediate regions of the *barbaroi*.

3.3 Accessing Information

The unbelievability and uniqueness of the *eschatiai* can be understood through the narrative motifs that distinguish the *eschatoi* from the neighboring *barbaroi*. Additionally, as in the Plutarch passage quoted at the start of this chapter, *eschatiai* represent unknowable areas which the author cannot directly access. It is this idea of access and knowability that I will now discuss overtly, particularly because Herodotus and Ctesias present these topics in their own works. Many scholars have undertaken to explore where the ancient authors actually learned

their information, so my concern is not to determine the true origins of each bit of knowledge.[100] Rather, I will examine how each author presents his own process of acquiring information within his texts.[101] As throughout the current chapter, in this section I follow Darbo-Peschanski's model of inquiry:

> These are the means by which information is gathered, depending on the degree of physical remove from the event: information gathered through autopsy, i.e. by the historian having witnessed the event himself; the tales gathered through hearing eyewitness testimonies of the event; the stories of stories that supposedly take their origin in an eyewitness testimony, more or less removed in the chain of transmission; and lastly – a further broadening of the field of information available – the stories gathered from those living in the locality of the event, who, without truly being reliable eyewitnesses, could nevertheless be acknowledged to have been witnesses of some sort. We might call this local rumour.[102]

While Darbo-Peschanski primarily uses this scheme for analyzing temporal distance and Herodotus' use of the Oedipus myth, it is equally suitable for spatial distance. The scheme maps onto the geographic concept of concentric inhabited zones as discussed at the start of Section 3.1 of this chapter. The inquiring narrator is at the center of his own world, where he can see and experience events for himself; as he moves farther afield, he is able to talk to foreign people about what they themselves have experienced and heard. As for the *eschatoi*, nearly everything about them reaches the author through rumor, although Herodotus and Ctesias both attempt to

[100] E.g. Armayor (1980 et al.) and Fehling (1971), who both suggest Herodotus lies outright about his autopsy; *contra* Marincola (1987), Lateiner (1990b), Dover (1998).

[101] I do not include characters within the narrative who display processes of learning, as this is well analyzed elsewhere (esp. Provencal 2015 & Darbo-Peschanski 2017).

[102] 2017: 90-91.

apply scientific investigation to these regions.[103] In addition, though their approaches to inquiry and learning are similar, the two authors present their authorial persona very differently within their texts, mainly as a result of each work's focus. I nevertheless examine the authors together in order to assess commonalities regarding the ways they present their own authorship and investigation. By examining how Herodotus and Ctesias represent their methodology, I will show that both authors implicitly present the audience with a notion of truth that does not rely on accuracy and allows for multiple simultaneous possibilities.

3.3.1 Autopsy & Investigation

My primary concern regarding Herodotus' authorial process is his presentation of the first-person narrator as a source of information. He opens the *Histories* by referring to his text as a "display of inquiry" (ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις, proem), which immediately suggests a visible representation in addition to the connotations of scientific research.[104] The term ἀπόδεξις, in addition to publication and proof, generally refers to some sort of exhibition, presentation, or display.[105] Less obvious is ἱστορίη, which is etymologically related to the concepts of sight and knowledge.[106] From these very first words of the *Histories* Herodotus has prepared his audience for a work that relies heavily on observation as a source of knowledge. Indeed, we see this

[103] e.g. Hdt. 4.45, Ct. F45 §20. Cf. also Plutarch's introduction to the *Theseus*, where he claims that he will make myth look like history (*Theseus* 1).

[104] Thomas 2000: 262-263.

[105] Ibid.: 221.

[106] Specifically, the verb οἶδα (ibid.: 164).

continue throughout the work, such as his eye-witness portrait of the labyrinth on Lake Moeris (2.148) or his first-hand description of a massive bowl that is said to hold as many arrowheads as there are Scythians (4.81). Thomas has persuasively shown that, through this preference for autopsy as a primary means of gaining knowledge, Herodotus positions himself alongside the contemporary Ionian trend of scientific inquiry, characterized in large part through the Hippocratic corpus.[107] While Herodotus is not a medical writer by any means, he still engages with this scientific movement as an inquirer attempting to reveal knowledge through visual observation. Yet at the same time, even the programmatic phrase ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις implies different yet simultaneous meanings, as Marincola has shown.[108] Herodotus is displaying the *process* of his inquiry as well as the *results* of that process. Neither meaning should take precedence over the other; they are equally true.

As we move beyond what the author claims to have seen for himself in the regions he supposedly visited, we see that in those locations he frequently interviews locals in order to hear what they have to say about neighboring areas. This corresponds to the second level of information gathering as described by Darbo-Peschanski, where the author himself is not the eyewitness, but he is hearing the information from those who are. There is significant overlap here with Darbo-Peschanski's third circle of access, with information that is transmitted orally through more than one generation, yet is nevertheless rooted in some act of autopsy. The combination of categories here is much like Herodotus' depictions of the *barbaroi* as people he can interrogate for what they themselves have witnessed (the second level) and of the nearer

[107] The *Airs, Waters, Places* opens with direct instructions: ἰητρικὴν ὅστις βούλεται ὀρθῶς ζητεῖν, τάδε χρὴ ποῖειν ("For whoever wishes to correctly investigate medicine, it is necessary to do the following," 1).

[108] Marincola 1987: 121.

eschatoi who are in contact with the *barbaroi,* yet somewhat more removed from Herodotus' area of interaction and accessible through the *barbaroi*. The final method of accessing information, that of local rumor, corresponds with the most distant *eschatiai* as presented in the *Histories*. These are regions with which Herodotus' informants are only slightly familiar, and often they base their reports on what they have heard from others who are not direct witnesses.

Ctesias is approximately a generation younger than Herodotus, yet he too is part of the same Ionian research trend. At the end of his summary, Photius describes Ctesias' methodology and the claims he makes regarding autopsy: Ταῦτα γράφων καὶ μυθολογῶν Κτησίας λέγει τἀληθέστατα γράφειν, ἐπάγων ὡς τὰ μὲν αὐτὸς ἰδὼν γράφει, τὰ δὲ παρ' αὐτῶν μαθὼν τῶν ἰδόντων, πολλὰ δὲ τούτων καὶ ἄλλα θαυμασιώτερα παραλιπεῖν διὰ τὸ μὴ δόξαι τοῖς μὴ τεθεαμένοις ἄπιστα συγγράφειν ("In writing and telling these stories, Ctesias says that he writes very truthfully, adding that he writes about some things that he saw himself, others that he learned from those who saw them, and that he leaves out many others that are more wondrous because he would be writing things that would not seem believable to those who haven't seen them," F45 §51). Again, the author's claims of authority correspond to Darbo-Peschanski's modes of accessing information, with priority on what he has seen himself. In addition, the concluding statement reinforces the visual primacy of knowledge. Ctesias knows that he has written many things that his audience might have difficulty believing, but he includes them because he has seen them himself or spoken with those who had; yet there are other things that are even more incredible, but he omits them on the basis that one could not believe that such things exist without being able to see them. This is not only a concern for Ctesias, as Herodotus makes a similar remark about crops among the Babylonians: ἐκ δὲ κέγχρου καὶ σησάμου ὅσον τι

δένδρον μέγαθος γίνεται, ἐξεπιστάμενος μνήμην οὐ ποιήσομαι, εὖ εἰδὼς ὅτι τοῖσι μὴ ἀπιγμένοισι ἐς τὴν Βαβυλωνίην χώρην καὶ τὰ εἰρημένα καρπῶν ἐχόμενα ἐς ἀπιστίην πολλὴν ἀπῖκται ("I will not make mention how great a size the plant grows from millet and sesame, although I know it; I know well that even the things I have [already] said about grain are much disbelieved by those who have never traveled to the Babylonian country," Hdt. 1.193.4). Herodotus too claims to know more than what he narrates, but omits the details on the grounds that his audience would be more incredulous since they have not seen the grains for themselves. Both authors are acknowledging that their audiences trust them to report, but only up to a certain limit.

Herodotus admits another type of willing omission, stating frequently in the Egyptian *logos* that he knows particular religious details, but he will not divulge their secrets.[109] For example, when mentioning the rites of Osiris at Sais, Herodotus not only refuses to write Osiris' name (2.170.1) but also claims that he knows more about the mysteries (μυστήρια) than he will say (2.171.1). This hesitation on Herodotus' part is not necessarily due to respect for the local religion; he explains the mysteries as the origin of the Athenian Thesmophoria, about which he also claims to know more than he says (2.171.2). If we accept his presentation of the Egyptian mysteries as a precursor to the Thesmophoria, describing its details would be nearly equivalent to divulging the secrets of the Thesmophoria. Even if the two festivals are distinct from one another, Herodotus is using a Greek context to explain a foreign concept in order to ensure his audience's comprehension. This act of cultural translation communicates the narrator's dual understanding, both of Egyptian and of Greek rites. Indeed, throughout the Egyptian *logos* he

[109] With the absence of Ctesias' original text, we cannot know whether he would have made the same type of statement, though it is likely, due to his status at the Persian court.

overtly presents himself in the simultaneous roles of narrator and inquirer, "where Herodotus himself figures as a character in his report"[110] in the same way that Ctesias represents himself as both narrator and internal character (e.g. F28 & F45 §9).

3.3.2 The Unknown and Unknowable

Both Herodotus and Ctesias position themselves as authorities of acquiring knowledge, at least so far as descriptive information. They are also aware that they are not ultimate authorities, acknowledging when they cannot find out details or when they doubt their sources.[111] For Herodotus, many of these admissions refer to questions of motivation, such as his uncertainty as to why the Spartans were hesitant to aid Athens late in the war (9.8).[112] He also claims that he was unable to learn information despite much effort on his part; in addition, these passages are further distinct from those where he explains that *nobody* can know with certainty. We have less evidence of Ctesias claiming not to know information, perhaps because his transmitters were mainly concerned with using his works to affirm information. Nevertheless, we do know of several places where he differs from his contemporaries and takes issue with Herodotus' accuracy, which leads later authors to assess his methodology in comparison with parallel texts. These summations of his methodology are the most enduring aspect of Ctesias' writings, and

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[110] Marincola 1987: 127.

[111] For example, Herodotus acknowledges the greater authority of oracles at 8.77 and, in the Pythia's own voice, 1.47.3.

[112] Cf. also 9.18, where the Persian cavalry turns aside from attacking their unwilling allies, the Phocians, and Herodotus is unsure why.

they will be discussed in this section insofar as they represent Ctesias as a potential authority of accessing knowledge.[113]

The issue of unknowable information is directly tied to an author's methodology, and in particular his autopsy. Many of Herodotus' methodological comments come in his Egyptian *logos*, where he frequently discusses his interrogation of locals and the architecture he has seen first-hand.[114] In fact, an overt example of the link between his presentation of knowledge and his ability for autopsy comes early in this *logos*. Herodotus describes his process of inquiry in trying to learn about the source of the Nile, noting only a single scribe who can tell him anything about it (2.28). While Herodotus doubts the seriousness of the scribe (2.28.2), he nevertheless recounts the man's explanation and delineates the experiment allegedly used by Psammetichus to determine the source's depth. At this point, Herodotus explains that this was the only thing he was able to learn by inquiring, and sums up his process as follows: μέχρι μὲν Ἐλεφαντίνης πόλιος αὐτόπτης ἐλθών, τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τούτου ἀκοῇ ἤδη ἱστορέων ("I went as an eyewitness as far as the city of Elephantine, and the rest after that I investigated by hearsay," 2.29.1). The placement of this claim immediately after the scribe's dubious account of the Nile's source underscores the narrator's doubt while also reaffirming first-hand autopsy as a superior method of accessing knowledge. A few chapters later, Herodotus returns to the question of the Nile's source, saying that "no one is able to speak" about it (οὐδεὶς ἔχει λέγειν, 2.34.1) and that he has told everything

[113] My purpose here, as throughout, is not to analyze either author in terms of "accuracy" or "reliability," but rather in terms of their self-presentation and authorial claims in their texts. In addition, this section is unavoidably weighted in favor of Herodotus, as we have little evidence for Ctesias' self-presentation (which includes himself as a character and actor in certain events).

[114] Marincola charts each of these, focusing heavily on the occurences in Book 2 (1987: *passim*).

he can about its course through Libya and Egypt, "so far as it is possible for me to learn by inquiring" (ἐπ' ὅσον μακρότατον ἱστορεῦντα ἦν ἐξικέσθαι, 2.34.1). Ultimately, for Herodotus, the source of the Nile is unknowable. He has spent much effort investigating the area and its inhabitants, but in the end he can only offer a doubtful version of the answer; because he deems the scribe's answer to be unreliable and was unable to find another satisfactory explanation of the Nile's origins, he decides that the information is impossible to determine. This single case illustrates Herodotus' broader hesitance to claim ignorance, only doing so when he has apparently exhausted all other options.

As mentioned above, it is difficult to speak with certainty about Ctesias' presentation of his own investigations. We do not have his own words to tell us about his process, but we do know of a number of instances where Ctesias disagreed with his literary predecessors. This direct engagement suggests that part of his inquiry was the consultation of early sources, such as the writings of Herodotus, and he treats these accounts in much the same way that Herodotus criticizes his informants; it is also possible that he was consciously modeling his writing on Herodotus' *Histories* when decided him own methodology. We must remember that part of the historiographic tradition is to position oneself in opposition to one's predecessors. The fifth century historians Herodotus and Thucydides are vague when referring to those who wrote earlier, but Ctesias and later historians are happy to name authors with whom they take issue. In addition, Meeus reminds us that such grievances themselves need not be factual; "Greek historians saw each other as competitors and in order to surpass their predecessors they felt the need to deprecate them."[115] These historiographic polemics can muddle our perception of an

[115] Meeus 2017: 183. Cf. Section 3.1.1 above.

author, particularly one such as Ctesias, whose works exist only in excerpts and summaries. It is true that many later authors deride Ctesias for being untruthful in his writing. Plutarch in particular is quick to criticize Ctesias when comparing his account with that of Xenophon, noting for example that one detail "is actually a clear falsehood by Ctesias" (τοῦ Κτησίου λαμπρὸν ἤδη ψεῦσμα, Plut. *Artax*. 13.5 = Ct. F23 §13.5). Yet elsewhere in the same text, he defers to Ctesias' version of the king's name over Dinon's version, based on the fact that Ctesias' presence in Artaxerxes' court provided him with the ability to be a reliable witness.[116] It may seem that Plutarch is inconsistent when privileging Ctesias' autopsy, but when he claims that Ctesias is lying, he is in fact still relying on an author's autopsy. His reasoning is that Xenophon, who was present at many of the same sites as Ctesias at the same time, would have corroborated Ctesias' account, but does not mention his presence. Thus Plutarch continues to rely on an author's autopsy, but he does not always rely on the *same author*'s autopsy. Indeed, he seems to privilege agreeing with Xenophon over Ctesias, but with Ctesias over Dinon.[117] Either way, autopsy is affirmed as a primary means of accessing information.

[116] Ἀλλὰ τὸν Κτησίαν, εἰ καὶ τἆλλα μύθων ἀπιθάνων καὶ παραφόρων ἐμβέβληκεν εἰς τὰ βιβλία παντοδαπὴν πυλαίαν, οὐκ εἰκός ἐστιν ἀγνοεῖν τοὔνομα τοῦ βασιλέως, παρ' ᾧ διέτριβε θεραπεύων αὐτὸν καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ μητέρα καὶ παῖδας ("But it is not likely that Ctesias, even if he has otherwise thrown a multitude of all kinds of unlikely stories and irregularities into his writings, would forget the name of the king at whose palace he was employed as physician for the king and his wife and mother and children," Plut. *Artax*. 1.4 = Ct. T11d).

[117] E.g. Plut. *Artax*. 6.6.

3.4 Conclusions: The Audience's Role

Herodotus and Ctesias both claim that autopsy is their most reliable means of accessing information, particularly information which is located near them. By indicating when they themselves have witnessed something first-hand, they are suggesting that their autopsy ensures the accuracy of the thing witnessed. If they are unable to physically position themselves as eyewitnesses, the next best thing is speaking to those who were eyewitnesses; however, this is thus presented as less reliable than seeing for oneself. Herodotus often cites the people who told him a story, but by framing the narrative with phrases such as "it is told by the Lydians" (λέγεται ὑπὸ Λυδῶν, 1.87.1) or "I am telling things which the Libyans say" (λέγω δὲ ταῦτα τὰ λέγουσι Λίβυες, 4.173.1), he separates himself from the original moment of *opsis* and allows for the possibility of inaccuracy.[118] The practice of distancing oneself from the source of information almost absolves the reporter from having to give a factual account of "truth."[119] Ellis refers to these simultaneous modes of reporting as two different personas that Herodotus maintains, the "historical" persona that relies on empirical inquiry and a "mimetic" or more literary persona that presents stories without any sense of inquiry or empiricism.[120] Following Ellis and Wesselmann, it is not difficult to reconcile the two personas with one another; a multiplicity of approaches results in a multiplicity of truths.[121]

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[118] Darbo-Peschanski 2017: 97, on relaying *opsis.*

[119] Cf. Herodotus on the giant ants of India, Section 3.1.1 above.

[120] Ellis 2017: *passim*.

[121] Ellis 2017; Wesselmann 2017.

There is no single Greek word for truth, and thus there is no stable concept of truth. The noun ἀλήθεια, one of the most common terms used to mean "truth," does not correspond to modern ideas of truth as accuracy. Etymologically, it only refers to something that is not forgotten (ἀ + λήθη), and indeed ancient historians – Herodotus and Ctesias especially – seem to value things which are memorable more than what is accurate.[122] Moreover, Darbo-Peschanski examines ἀλήθεια as used by Herodotus and Sophocles, arguing persuasively that it refers specifically to a truth that is fated or known to the divine, such as the truth spoken by oracles; it is a "reality obtained by way of revelation" and cannot be deduced or proven by logic.[123] The truth presented by historians, on the other hand, is a shared consensus of truth that results from investigation and, occasionally, assumptions.[124] The notion of a shared consensus can be seen in, for example, Herodotus' inclusion of different and sometimes contradictory reports about a single event or idea. In these passages, he either overtly or subtly denotes one version as his own preference, yet he still presents variants that he himself finds unconvincing.[125] Moreover, there are instances where he gives multiple variants and claims that he believes none of them.[126] In considering the combination of ἀλήθεια and inquiry, however, we can understand that even stories that the author believes to be untrue still communicate some sense of truth.[127] The

[122] Wesselmann 2017: 145.

[123] Darbo-Peschanski 2017: 84.

[124] Ibid.: 92.

[125] E.g. he presents three versions of the origin of the Scythians, asserting that he is more inclined to the third (4.5-12).

[126] E.g. at 2.45 and 2.64, Herodotus reports a story with the caveat that he does not agree.

[127] Wesselmann 2017: 137.

audience should not look to these stories for factual accuracy, but rather for another concept of truth that does not rely on a modern notion of "history."

This active role of the audience in searching for understanding is the ultimate impact of an unstable presentation of autopsy. The audience is encouraged to consider multiple types of "truth," which are different yet not incompatible: general truths are equally as informative as specific truths. By demonstrating that autopsy is an unreliable means of accessing information, the author's role as eyewitness and authority is undermined, and information acquired by autopsy ought to have no priority over what is only rumored to be true. In addition, the audience's agency is not merely a modern construct applied to an ancient context; Herodotus advises his readers several times to believe whatever seems most convincing to them, rather than simply taking his word for it (2.123, 3.122). He also mentions several historical details that could be verified by anyone in his own time who were to travel to the appropriate location (1.93, 2.97, et al.). By suggesting that the audience explore in the same way that he himself did, Herodotus is enabling them to access the same information that he, as inquirer, was able to access. As Ctesias was a historian writing very much in the same pattern as Herodotus, particularly regarding descriptions of what he was able to witness first-hand, we can presume that he would have made similar comments on the verifiability of his account.

Although autopsy is not reliable for acquiring objective knowledge, it nevertheless creates and conveys messages to an observer. In my analysis of clothing as a means for affecting how the body is viewed, I have tried to show the ways that such messages can be used to manipulate the observer's perception of reality and truth, both by Herodotus and Ctesias and by the characters within their narratives, to achieve particular goals. As we have seen, the desired

goals include attempts to assert authority, altering the perception of one's gender or other social status, and inspiring awe, while also, in the case of the authors, to create narratives that reveal truths about Greek perceptions of dress. Similarly, in my exploration into the use of violent acts against the body, I presented an analysis of the polyvalent messages that a permanently altered body can convey. While the messages can include implicit or explicit threats to an observer's bodily integrity or their identity, we have seen that the act of one person inflicting violence upon another individual's body suggests a relationship of power, where the perpetrator is in a position of superiority, while also suggesting a plurality of truths to the witnessing party as well as to the readers. Moreover, in considering instances within the texts where autopsy is not possible, I hope to have shown that, when the observer or author is located at a great distance from the bodies he describes, social labels for identity likewise become unreliable. Though the *barbaroi* and *eschatoi* both fall into the category of non-Greeks, we have seen that they are portrayed with different sets of motifs, suggesting that a single category is often comprised of multiple smaller, fluid categories. Autopsy may be unreliable for understanding an object truth, but the manipulation of an observer's autopsy can nevertheless convey a series of truths that are equally relevant for the ancient and modern audiences.

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