

## Chapter 2

# Comparison

Comparison is an interpretive operation that “puts together” two facts for the purpose of explaining one on the basis of its similarity to or difference from the other.<sup>1</sup> That which sparks the comparison is an element of the story. The second term can be also drawn from within the narrative, or it may come from outside of it, such as a past or present fact that belongs to the “real world” of the narration or to another “text” familiar to the narrator and his audience.<sup>2</sup> One of the peculiarities of the *Histories* is that the boundaries of the narrative are especially fuzzy. By virtue of the contract that Herodotus establishes with his audience, everything is at least potentially part of the story he has to tell. In the actual telling, a fact that is brought in incidentally for the sake of comparison or some other reason may become the object of a narrative within the *logos* in a way that is hard to predict. Nevertheless, Herodotus’ references to events after 479, for example, coupled with his evident reluctance to include such references, demonstrate the existence of boundaries as well as their provisional nature.<sup>3</sup> We expect a continuity between the *logos* and the “real world” of the narration in Herodotus that we do not expect from Thucydides, but at the same time, we acknowledge an inside and an outside and, between the two, a necessary break.

Comparison may be implicit or explicit. It is explicit when the narrator directs the recipient of the narrative to consider a fact of the narrative in reference to some other fact by means of a gloss of comparison indicating similarity, analogy, or difference. It is implicit when the recipient of the narrative perceives on his or her own that a fact of the narrative *wants* to

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1. On συμβάλλειν (put together, compare), see “The Texture of the Earth” later in the present chapter.

2. On the relation between a story and its extratextual context or subtext, see, e.g., Bal 1985, 81.

3. Cf. my introduction.

be considered in light of another and that a conceptual relation of analogy or (theoretically) difference links the two.

In and by itself, difference establishes no relation at all. Even employing apples and oranges to denote items that cannot be “put together” at all is somewhat misleading. When two items are mutually related through difference, this can only be because they are similar in other respects. Resemblance lurks in the background every time comparison is an issue. If resemblance overcomes fundamental differences and makes them appear circumstantial, it constitutes analogy.<sup>4</sup>

Comparison and analogy may be activated “horizontally” to bind overlapping, concentric, or parallel classes of similar objects. But they also work “vertically,” through indices and symbols across different levels of reality, as in inductive prophecy. In the *Iliad*, the nine sparrows devoured by a red serpent somehow resemble and therefore represent the nine years of the Trojan War.<sup>5</sup> In Thucydides, extraordinary natural cataclysms, though not ominous, are nevertheless analogous to and symbolic of the upheavals that the Peloponnesian War has produced (Thuc. 1.23.1–3). In Herodotus, the world of animals mirrors the human world, while concrete actions and objects are indices for something different or more intangible. Whereas horizontal analogy is based on the notion that phenomena recur with variations, vertical analogy brings out the similarity of situations on different planes, so that one becomes a sign for the other.

Whether explicit or implicit (and often simultaneously activated along the horizontal and the vertical planes), comparison and analogy are fundamental strategies by which the text of the *Histories* organizes its material. Because the *logos* contains so many story elements that escape the network of causal connections of the plot, classification and the comparative approach that classification entails provide a powerful glue; this in turn also acts on causally connected facts. In the historical narrative, it is most frequently facts belonging to different points of the chronological continuum that are compared to one another (diachronic comparison). The comparative field created by descriptions in the present tense extends not in time but in space (synchronic comparison).

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4. Analogy is defined by Lloyd (1966, 175) as “any mode of reasoning in which an object or complex of objects is likened or assimilated to another.”

5. *Il.* 2.308–32, especially 326–29, cited by Corcella (1984, 33–34). See also Lloyd 1966, 180–85. The language of many oracles reported in the *Histories* also relies on symbolic analogy.

Diachronic and synchronic comparison are largely distinct operations, partly because the material that is being compared in history and ethnography, respectively, belongs to different classes (“apples” and “oranges” in the proverbial sense). It just so happens, moreover, that in the two types of discourse, comparison mobilizes the narrator’s presence to a widely different degree. To put it simply, qualitative diachronic comparison largely imposes itself on the consciousness of the listener through the implicit similarity of the events narrated; synchronic comparison, by contrast, gains momentum by frequent explicit and far-ranging glosses that advertise the notion of qualitative similarity or difference by saying “X is like Y” or “X is different from Y.” What is the meaning of this discrepancy? To what extent are diachronic comparison and synchronic comparison mutually related and complementary strategies? I will begin dealing with these questions by considering comparison in the history.

### Comparison in Time

#### Analogy as an Interpretive Tool

Before I examine the forms and the contexts of glosses, I will briefly recall the role of implicit comparison. Like all the *ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θαυμαστά* [great and wonderful achievements] promised in the programmatic first sentence, each past event of Herodotus’ narrative is strictly speaking a particular and unique occurrence. In general, however, the exceptional historical event that deserves a place in the *Histories* is different mainly for its magnitude rather than for its quality.<sup>6</sup> Superlative evaluations, for example, often serve to advertise narratability (the *axion logou*) by stating that certain story elements possess the greatest amount of a certain quality among others of the same class.<sup>7</sup> Since they underline what is exceptional in a quantitative sense, these markers also indirectly identify classes of qualitatively similar phenomena. Thus Pisistratus’ “most simple-minded device” (1.60.3) and Hermodotimus’ “greatest revenge” (8.105.1) make reference to other acts of deception and retribution across the broad range of

6. *Thoma*, “wonder,” the strongest marker for a qualitatively unique phenomenon, is discussed in chap. 4. In past-tense narrative, *μῦθος* more frequently singles out people who behaved differently from the others in the same situation (see, e.g., 1.147.2, 3.55.1, 7.107.1) rather than “the only time X ever happened” or “the only one who ever did X” in an absolute sense (see, e.g., 1.25.2, 9.35.1).

7. See Bloomer 1993.

the work and outside of it. Through classification, analogy wins the contest with difference.

The proem of the *Histories* implies that several occurrences are similar enough to be grouped under the generalized headings “small city becomes great” and “large city becomes small” (1.5.4). Similarities among different actions, their motives, and their outcomes may emerge from the recurrence of words and concepts within different contexts.<sup>8</sup> Occasionally, speakers compare and contrast. When they discuss circumstances of their present in light of events of their past, they encourage the audience to perform the same sort of analogical operation and apply to their own present the same or other parts of Herodotus’ *logos*.<sup>9</sup> Helped by these clues and by the exceptional diachronic range of the *Histories*, we register the uniqueness of the events narrated, but at the same time, we also overcome it; we regroup facts in different ways on the basis of their mutual resemblance. In the theoretically endless variety of particulars, “X is like Y” over and over again; together these similar facts insistently recall elements of what lies outside of the *logos* and belongs to the real world of narrator and audience. Herodotus’ original listeners had far more practice than the modern reader for receiving the work in this manner.<sup>10</sup>

Assiduously studied, analogy in the *Histories* has provided an indispensable tool for interpreting the work.<sup>11</sup> The repetition of similar events results in a number of patterns or—at the level of discourse—cultural codes that recur throughout the work.<sup>12</sup> Some of the most conspicuous of these patterns have been identified, described, and named. They now represent canonical terms for speaking about the *Histories*: the crossing of geographical boundaries for the purpose of conquest;<sup>13</sup> the “rise and

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8. Cf., e.g., the first mentions of Deioces (1.96.1) and Themistocles (7.143.1): both are individuals rising in power. See Wood 1972, 17.

9. On the comparison between Sparta and Athens partially focalized through Croesus at 1.56–69, see Gray 1997. Artabanus compares Xerxes’ prospective expedition against Greece to the earlier expeditions at 7.10α–γ.

10. See my introduction, n. 10 and corresponding text. For a parallel between tragedy and the work of Herodotus from the point of view of the audience’s receptiveness to analogy, see Raaflaub 1987, 231–32. On the didactic and political dimension of tragedy, see, e.g., all the essays in Goff 1995; Saïd 1998.

11. See Immerwahr 1966; Wood 1972 (especially 17–20); Lateiner 1984 and 1989; Corcella 1984. Cf. Waters 1971, but see Lateiner 1989, 165–67.

12. To the extent that a code is the language the text uses to speak about something, patterns correspond to codes, though the notion of codes is broader. See my introduction, n. 25.

13. See my introduction, n. 26 and corresponding text.

fall of the ruler”;<sup>14</sup> the expedition of a superpower against a tough and poor nation, the so-called primitive opponent;<sup>15</sup> the wise adviser or “tragic warner” mostly unheeded by the recipient of the advice, who rushes to his ruin;<sup>16</sup> the pattern of imperialism;<sup>17</sup> the exile who seeks refuge at the king’s court.<sup>18</sup> An important recent addition is the king-inquirer, a figure of metahistorical significance who by analogy or opposition illuminates the purposes and methods of the *histor* of the *Histories* and his counterpart outside the text, Herodotus himself.<sup>19</sup>

Among the various concentric or overlapping patterns in the *logos*, the monarchical model is especially pervasive, since it tends to subsume many others to itself. This model is constituted by all the specific actions and features that serve as indices of actual or potential autocracy—of an individual’s attempt or ability to rise above a community, his own or someone else’s, and impose his will on it while living himself by different rules. Such actions and features are attributed especially to those who hold royal power or aspire to do so in a literal sense (though rarely, if ever, does a single character exhibit the full repertoire).<sup>20</sup> They may be historically consequential (e.g., political manipulations; subversions of the social order; punishments; conquests; victories and defeats in war), or they may be mostly symbolic or connotative of the abnormal position of an individual within the state (e.g., crossings, mutilations, exceptional marriages, gift giving, athletic victories, trickster actions).<sup>21</sup> An exceptional feature confirms the centrality of monarchy/tyranny as a predominantly negative paradigm in the *Histories*: one of the characters describes the phenomenon, and the components of his theoretical descriptions are

14. See Immerwahr 1966, especially 149–98.

15. See Hellman 1934, 77–98; developed by Cobet 1971, especially 172–76. See also Flory 1987, 81–118.

16. See Bischoff 1932; Lattimore 1939; Dewald 1985. Consider also the pattern of unheeded or misunderstood dreams and oracles (see Corcella 1984, 160).

17. See Evans 1991, 86–87.

18. See n. 74 and corresponding text later in this chapter.

19. See Christ 1994.

20. See Immerwahr 1966; Lateiner 1984; Lateiner 1989, 163–86; Corcella 1984, 163–77; Hartog 1988, 331–34; Gammie 1986; Dewald forthcoming b. For the pattern of monarchy as an archaic and classical Greek cultural stereotype, see McGlew 1993, 24–35.

21. Thus, my monarchical model differs from what Dewald (forthcoming b) calls “the despotic template,” which she defines as “Herodotus’ description of the evils of autocratic rule.” The code of kingship is the broader discourse on kings that shapes and delimits the monarchical model. The subtlety of such discourse has led Flory (1987, 119–49) to detect (wrongly, I think) advocacy in favor of a one-man rule in the text. Gray (1997) rightly emphasizes the variety of internal patterns.

verified by the actions of specific historical rulers throughout the narrative.<sup>22</sup> The problematic of monarchy represents in fact much of what Herodotus' work is about. It provides terms to be taken symbolically as well as literally for presenting the issues of rule (ἀρχή), imperialism, transgression, oppression, and the competitive self-aggrandizing drives of both individuals and states.<sup>23</sup>

The narrative explores monarchy as a historical phenomenon and as a plausible prospect for the future of Greece in the literal sense (we tend to forget, for example, the extent to which Herodotus, with his long-range view of patterns, unwittingly predicted fourth-century monarchical outcomes). This is an especially conspicuous case, however, where the analogical system works not only horizontally but also vertically, that is, metaphorically, by assimilating to monarchy other manifestations of power, leadership, and alienation from the commonwealth.<sup>24</sup> The bilateral equivalence between cities and kings, like the translation of rivers into moral boundaries, also largely depends on the symbolic and semic work of vertical analogy. The implicit interaction between horizontal and vertical analogy conveys the sameness of apparently different kinds of experience through a covert mode of communication akin to that of the *ainos*.

#### Explicit Analogy

While resemblance plays such a large role in the historical narrative, much rarer are metanarrative glosses of comparison that place two specific facts side by side and expressly say that one is somewhat like the other or, for that matter, different from the other. Yet there are other metanarrative clues. Additional *allos* (other) and adverbial *kai* (also) serve as markers of horizontal assimilation. The qualification of events in terms of their position in a series of similar items—for example, first, second, third conquests of Ionia (1.92.1, 1.169.2, 6.32)—brings out the continuity of a historical process potentially down to the time of narration (what about, for example, a *fourth* conquest of Ionia?). Coincidences

22. The character is Otanes in the Constitutional Debate (3.80). See especially Lateiner 1989, 167–81. The other generalized descriptions in the debate are not equally related to the appearance of patterns in the narrative.

23. The topic of empire in the *Histories* has been discussed by Stadter (1992).

24. See discussion of horizontal and vertical analogy earlier in this chapter. The participation of the monarchical model in the symbolic code of the *Histories* is indicated, e.g., by Croesus' words to Cyrus that Solon spoke for all men and especially for those who deem themselves happy (1.86.5).

among mutually autonomous occurrences point to a unitarian historical movement and mysterious interconnections.<sup>25</sup> Two items may follow one another in close narrative sequence on the basis of their similarity. Thus, the narrator consecutively mentions two queens of Babylon (the second “more clever than the one who reigned before,” in an example of quantitative difference highlighting likeness); another time, he recalls two Persian governors in Thrace, Mascames and Boges, both distinguished for bravery.<sup>26</sup> A queen pattern, in the first instance, and a Persian cultural definition of ἀρετή (valor), in the second, emerge from the juxtaposition of similar historical cases.

Occasionally, through a gloss of analogy, the discourse tampers with the story by bringing in a more or less extraneous element, as when the narrator compares different stages of a war.<sup>27</sup> The comparison may attach a new small narrative to one that has just ended: thus, the report of Xerxes’ decision to send the Greek spies home unharmed (7.146.2–7.147.1) attracts the announcement of the narrative of another, similar *gnome* about his releasing enemy ships captured at the Pontus (οἶκε . . . τῆδε ἄλλη).<sup>28</sup> By this compositional principle, the narrative accumulates evidence of a certain type and thereby trains the listener to generalize and interpret.

A more drastic manipulation of the story occurs when the second term of comparison belongs to a different historical context than the first.

The name of this woman who ruled [in Egypt] was the same as that of the Babylonian [queen] [τό περ τῆ Βαβυλωνίη], Nitocris. (2.100.2)

Trivial as it may seem, this comparative back reference provides a significant reading direction, one the text has already suggested by the simple juxtaposition of the two Babylonian queens in the earlier narrative

25. E.g., Cambyses is wounded in the same part of his body where he has wounded Apis (3.64.3); the battles of Himera and Salamis occur on the same day (7.166), and so do those of Plataea and Mycale (9.100.2).

26. 1.184–85.1, 7.106–7. In a continuous dynastic line, a king is frequently compared to his predecessor. See, e.g., 2.124.1 (a reversal with μέν . . . δέ from *eunomie* to *kakotes*), 2.127.1 (similarity), 2.134.1, 1.103.1, and the more elaborate 2.110.1–3.

27. See 9.98.4: the strategy of Leotychides at Mycale was the same as that of Themistocles at Artemisium (see Immerwahr 1966, 256). The battle of Salamis is constantly compared to the battle of Artemisium: see 8.42 (same commander and larger fleet), 8.66.1 (number of enemy not inferior). See Immerwahr 1966, 268. Cf. 1.191.3: to capture Babylon, Cyrus did that which (τό περ) the Babylonian queen had done; cf. 3.152.

28. Cf. 7.144.1, 7.57, 7.114.2, 4.78.1.

(1.184–185.1). Here Herodotus explicitly adds the Egyptian Nitocris to the pattern, as if the homonymy were the sign of other analogies—two women, both Eastern, both rulers, both shrewd, and so on. Despite certain striking differences between them, the narrator establishes the continuity of a type across time and space.<sup>29</sup>

Within the small group of glosses comparing contextually distant items, two are of particular interest. On the formal level, both transform analogy into historical action by assuming mimesis. In other words, the narrator says not that “X is like Y,” but rather that “X imitates Y.” This formulation agrees with his general reluctance elsewhere to exercise authority over diachronic analogy. These glosses almost suggest that the responsibility for bringing two disparate actions together lies not with the collector of the *logoi* but with the historical agents who chose to play someone else’s role.<sup>30</sup> More importantly, both glosses belong to the same broad analogical field whose overarching prominence in the *logos* I have already mentioned—the monarchical model. Though they do not in themselves fulfill an indispensable function, they confirm the symbolic aspect of this analogical network in the *Histories*. Both glosses of comparison and the narratives they respectively introduce serve to justify the analogy between the citizen of a Greek polis and a monarchical ruler.

#### *The Monarchical Model in Athens*

The first gloss leads to the abrupt narrative juxtaposition of Cleisthenes, the tyrant of Sicyon, to the Athenian democratic reformer of the same name. Cleisthenes of Athens enters the *logos* because he belongs to the story entitled “Athenian Ordeals and Achievements after the Fall of Tyranny” (see the introductions at 5.65.5–5.66.1). The section of this narrative where Cleisthenes plays an active role is deceptively dry. After prevailing over his political rival Isagoras and obtaining the support of the people, he replaced the four old Ionian tribes with ten new ones; he named these after ten local eponymous heroes and discarded the old denominations (5.66).

29. The queen pattern is rich in symbolic associations. For related studies, see Dewald 1981; Tourraix 1976; Flory 1987, 23–48; Munson 1988; Dillery 1992.

30. In Herodotus, the verb μιμέομαι refers to animate imitators in the sense of “doing as someone else does or did” and does not necessarily imply awareness or intention to imitate (see, e.g., the analogy drawn by Cambyses’ wife at 3.32.4), but in practice it almost always refers to a derivative imitation (see, e.g., 2.104.4 in an ethnographic context and 4.166.1 in a historical one).



This account of the foundation of the new Athenian democracy, however, bristles with negative signs.<sup>31</sup> It identifies Cleisthenes and Isagoras, respectively, by referring to the former's bribery of the Delphic oracle and to the latter's foreign origins (5.66.1). It denotes their political prominence with a verb (ἐδυνάστευον, "held sway") that is appropriate to narrow oligarchic circles. Herodotus elsewhere applies it to aspiring tyrants and corrupt potentates.<sup>32</sup> The two men "engage in *stasis* for the sake of power" [ἐστασίασαν περὶ δυνάμιος],<sup>33</sup> and Cleisthenes coopts the demos at large to his *hetaireia* (τὸν δῆμον προσεταιρίζεται). Because, in the time of Herodotus, at least, Athenian *hetaireiai* were exclusive aristocratic clubs formed with the aim of forwarding the political advancement of their members, the term here suggests that Cleisthenes' democratic stance was a self-serving maneuver in the context of an aristocratic power struggle.<sup>34</sup> A verbal parallelism confirms Cleisthenes' resemblance to Isagoras, who aimed at establishing himself tyrant in Athens: first Cleisthenes, when he is "losing ground" (ἔσσοῦμενος, 5.66.2; cf. 5.69.2), and then Isagoras, when *he* is "losing ground" (ἔσσοῦμενος, 5.70.1), come up with a special device (see ἐπιτεχνᾶται at 5.70.1). Just as the one elicits the friendship of the Athenian people, the other appeals to the Spartan king, his guest-friend.

Once Cleisthenes, banished by Isagoras and the Spartans, fades from the story and from the narrative, the next section reports the resistance of the Athenians to the Spartan intervention in favorable terms (5.72.1–2), and a conspicuous interpretive gloss praises the resulting democratic order (5.78). The Cleisthenes passage, however, emphasizes the reformer's bid for personal power while representing the reform itself in such reductive terms that its democratic implications either in a practical or in an ideological sense appear unintelligible: "He gave the Athenians ten tribes, whereas they used to have four, discarding the names of the children of

31. See Strasburger 1955, 15; Bornitz 1968, 49–50; Fornara 1971, 55. Cf. Myres 1953, 180–82.

32. On *dunasteia*, see Ostwald 1969, 113, 116–17, citing Thuc. 3.62.3–4. *Dunasteuein* appears in a negative context in the *Histories* at 6.39.2, 6.66.2, and 9.2.3. The verb is used of Athens with similar effect (5.97.1).

33. 5.66.2 *Stasis* (civil struggle) is another oligarchic term (see 3.82.3) and a key negative concept in Herodotus: cf. 8.3.1, quoted and discussed in chap. 3, "The Evils of War."

34. Georges (1994, 160) dubs this expression a "conscious paradox." Cf. the less derogatory formulation of Arist. *Ath Pol.* 22.1. Herodotus' term is anachronistic for the beginning of the fifth century. See Ostwald 1969, 142–43. Ober (1993, 227) renders the tense and the middle form with "Cleisthenes embarked in the process of becoming the demos' trusted comrade"; but the reference to *hetairiai* cannot possibly have benign connotations.

Ion, Geleon, Aegicores, Argades, and Hoples, and coming up with [ἐξευθῶν] the names of another group of heroes, all native of the land except for Ajax” (5.66.2). The verb ἐξευθίσκειν here connotes a contrivance, something new and invented for the sake of expediency but at the same time ostensibly recovered from the traditional past.<sup>35</sup> After the narrative has done its work through connotation, the coup de grâce arrives in the form of a gloss of comparison that introduces the account of a reform by the tyrant of Sicyon by stating that it provided the model for that of the Athenian Cleisthenes.

In this [i.e., the replacement of the old tribes in Athens], this Cleisthenes it seems to me [δοκέειν ἐμοί] was imitating [ἐμιμέετο] his maternal grandfather Cleisthenes the tyrant of Sicyon. (5.67.1)

The self-referential δοκέειν ἐμοί identifies both Cleisthenes’ mimesis and the resulting similarity as interpretations of the narrator. The family relation and the homonymy (which we will never be allowed to forget; cf. 6.131.1) serve as corroborating evidence for the one and the other, respectively. Herodotus often attaches one story to another incidentally, by exploiting an intrinsic story connection; he adds the pretext of the *axion logou*, narratability, as he lets the thematic correspondences take care of themselves.<sup>36</sup> Here, however, he openly says that the tyrant of Sicyon is brought into the *logos* not because the narrative about Cleisthenes of Athens provides an opportunity for talking about his famous grandfather but because of the tyrant’s thematic relevance to the present context of the democratic reform. The juxtaposition would have been enough to trigger the analogy, and the narrator did not have to be and normally is not as explicit as he chooses to be in this case.

The analeptic narrative introduced by the gloss of comparison compounds the damage for the Athenian Cleisthenes, whose policy it purports to explain by analogy and derivation. The section on the reorganization of the tribes in Sicyon, which is the essential point of the similarity between the Athenian democratic reformer and his grandfather, is pre-

35. The verbs ἐξευθίσκειν and εὐθίσκειν are often used positively in reference to a people’s inventions (see 4.46.2, 8.98.1, 2.92.1) but are also applied to constructs (see, e.g., 2.23, 4.79.3). See especially Cambyses’ far-fetched “discovery” of a *nomos* overriding another Persian law that he does not want to obey (3.31.4).

36. For the ways in which narratives are brought into the *logos*, see especially Jacoby 1913, 344–50, 383–92; Pagel 1927, 41–61; Erbse 1961, 243–57; Munson 1986.

ceded by another account. This relates how the older Cleisthenes outlawed Homeric recitations (the Homeric poems being full of the glory of the Argives) and managed to expel the Homeric hero Adrastus, who happened to be buried in Sicyon. Consulted on the matter, the Pythia forbade it and declared that whereas Adrastus had been the king of the Sicyonians, Cleisthenes was their lapidator (λευστήρα, 5.67.1–2). Reference to the typical despotic action of “killing men without trial” is thus, through the voice of the oracle, inserted into an account of violations of a religious *nomos*.<sup>37</sup> To circumvent the Delphic interdiction, Cleisthenes “invented” a device for making Adrastus leave on his own. The verb ἐξευρίσκω (5.67.2) connotes once again subversive manipulation of tradition, as in the case of the new heroic names of the younger Cleisthenes’ Athenian tribes. The two actions are in fact parallel, since the Athenian Cleisthenes, according to Herodotus, abolished the four heroes as namesakes of the city tribes, while his grandfather found a way to get rid of one hero as the recipient of cult in the city. The “device” of Cleisthenes the Elder (μηχανήν; cf. μηχανῶται applied to the religious ruse of Pisistratus at 1.60.3) consisted in importing to Sicyon from Thebes the hero Melanippus, who had been Adrastus’ worst enemy, and in transferring Adrastus’ solemn festivals, sacrifices to him, and his choruses to the god Dionysus (5.67.2–5).

The survey of these blatant violations of the city’s time-honored traditions (cf. 5.67.4–5) is followed by the account of how the tyrant changed the names of the Dorian tribes in Sicyon “in order that Sicyonians and Argives would not have the same ones.” He mocked (κατεγέλασε, a term crucially related to violations of customs at 3.38.1–2) the Dorians of Sicyon, by choosing for them new denominations derived from the words for “pig,” “swine,” and “ass.” For his own (non-Dorian) tribe, however, he reserved a dignified name, “Archelaioi,” referring to his own *arche*, “rule” (5.68.1). This reform outlived Cleisthenes only by sixty years (5.68.2). After this pointed reference to the tyrant’s fall, the narrator reemerges to bring us back to the younger Cleisthenes in Athens with a resumptive gloss that reiterates almost obsessively analogy and its supportive story elements—imitation, kinship, and homonymy.

37. See 3.80.5. On the term *λευστήρα*, see Elayi 1979, 224–27; Ogden 1993. McGlew (1993, 16) notices that Cleisthenes’ expulsion of Adrastus constitutes a reversal of the expulsion of the deceased tyrant’s bones *extra fines*. In Herodotus’ narrative, it also constitutes a reversal of the expulsion of the Alcmaeonids (5.72.1: same verb ἐβάλλειν) as a result of their ancestral curse. On the political dimension of hero cults, see Boedeker 1993.

This is what Cleisthenes of Sicyon had done [retrospective conclusion]; and, indeed, with regard to the Athenian Cleisthenes, who was the son of the daughter of this one from Sicyon and was named after him, it seems to me [δοκέειν ἐμοί] that he also despising the Ionians and so that the Athenians would not have the same tribes, imitated [ἐμιμήσατο] his namesake Cleisthenes. (5.69.1)

This second gloss of comparison further enhances the relevance of the preceding narrative about Cleisthenes of Sicyon to the younger Cleisthenes. The tyrant, for example, made sure to reserve a special place in the city for his own tribe (5.68.1): this casts doubt on the impartiality of the tribal reform of the democratic leader.<sup>38</sup> Herodotus' attribution of anti-Ionian bias to the Athenian Cleisthenes (parallel to the anti-Dorian intent of Cleisthenes of Sicyon) makes reference to the hostility among different groups of Greeks and to later hegemonic struggles.<sup>39</sup>

I have stopped to discuss this explicit comparison because the analogy it brings into the open affects Herodotus' overall representation of modern democratic Athens—born at this historical point after the fall of tyranny and risen to greatness through the Persian Wars and beyond. Tyranny, as it has been often repeated, is viewed by fifth-century Greek thought as antithetical to Greece.<sup>40</sup> In Herodotus, two elements favor the assimilation between Greek sixth-century tyrants and Eastern monarchs: a deliberate confusion in his use of the terms *turannos*, *basileus*, and *mounarchos*;<sup>41</sup> and his attribution of similar features to kings and tyrants, despite all the variety of his representations in individual cases. The analogy between the two Cleisthenes, however, undermines the notion that the “tyrannical” stage in the political development of the Greeks has come to an end. As the creator of Athenian democracy is moved closer to the opposite tyrannical/barbarian camp, the monarchical model begins vertically to affect the new Athens as well, firstly through its leadership and secondly through the demos, both of them “tyrannical” in a broad metaphorical sense.

After representing Cleisthenes' bid for primacy as analogous to the

38. Some modern historians have tried to explain the apparent territorial oddities of Cleisthenes' reorganization by speculating that the Alcmaeonids may have received special treatment. See Fornara and Samons 1991, 39–56, for a discussion of the problem.

39. Here Herodotus' analogy may not be as misleading as Macan argues (1895, 1:211). See Hall 1997, 53–54.

40. See, e.g., Georges 1994, 37–46.

41. See Ferrill 1978; Dewald forthcoming b.

factionalism of the time of Pisistratus, the narrative partially recruits to the monarchical model subsequent Athenian democrats who seek or exercise power with high-handed methods, albeit in a constitutional setting. Secrecy and self-interest mark the essential alienation of each from the commonwealth of citizens. At the same time, however, the demos, whom Cleisthenes has coopted to his ambitions, has inherited power in internal and external affairs, including, at the time of narration, his hostile policy toward the Ionians.<sup>42</sup> With democracy, king and city have to some extent become one, because while separate from the city and a threat to its institutional integrity, each “tyrannical” or potentially tyrannical leader at the same time often expresses the will of the demos.

The city is both the victim of an individual’s schemes and his willing accomplice—both subject and ruler, in a metaphorical sense. This contradiction emerges from the cases of Miltiades and Themistocles. Miltiades plans an imperialistic venture against Paros on his own by keeping the Athenians in the dark as to its destination and deceiving them about its goals. The sovereign democratic assembly, however, decides on the expedition (6.132). When the expedition fails, they assert their authority over the leader by bringing him to trial. Miltiades’ conviction by the city and a death that appears as the result of divine punishment coincide to mark the “tyrant’s” downfall.<sup>43</sup>

Themistocles, like the Pisistratids, establishes a personal connection with Xerxes (8.109.5) and has tyrannical features of his own.<sup>44</sup> But he also embodies the enterprising and opportunistic tendencies of the city as a whole and in most cases acts as its executive.<sup>45</sup> The city’s own monarchical image catches up with the representation of the individual leader seeking power for himself in the state. At the end of the *Histories*, individuals are but pale reflections of the policy of the city. It is “the Athenians” who

42. The Athenian prejudice against the Ionians is referred to the present of narration by the gloss of testimony at 1.143.3 (καὶ νῦν). See Fornara and Samons 1991, 106–9, on the Athenian contempt of the Greeks of Asia as a psychological justification for the aggressive policy of Athens against its allies after the Persian Wars.

43. In his expedition against Paros, which results in impiety and death, Miltiades imitates in reduced format the career of the arch despot Cambyses (see 6.132–36; cf. 3.37, 3.16, 3.27–29, 3.64.3, 3.66.2). See Immerwahr 1966, 191–92; Corcella 1984, 137; Flory 1987, 115.

44. Themistocles imposes his own strategy on the Greeks at Salamis (see 8.62.2–63, 75–76) and compulsion on other Greeks after the battle (see 8.111–12). See Munson 1988, 101. Themistocles’ self-interest and deception (see, e.g., 8.4–5, 8.109–10.1) are characteristic of the rising tyrant: see “The Monarchical Model in Sparta” later in the present chapter.

45. For the affinity between Themistocles and Athens, see Immerwahr 1966, 223–25; Wood 1972, 185–86; Raaflaub 1987, 227; Munson 1988, 100.

begin the offensive stage of the war against Persia by crossing over to the Chersonese (9.114.2). The commanders follow the instructions of the Athenian community at home (9.117). Xanthippus is not prominent in the overall narrative, so the crucifixion of Artayctes, carried out by his orders, tends to convey the barbaro-monarchic mentality of postwar Athens as a whole.<sup>46</sup>

But Xanthippus' son Pericles, chronologically the last Athenian leader in the *Histories*, is significantly introduced as a descendant of Cleisthenes, the one "who established the tribes and the democracy and who bore the name of his maternal grandfather from Sicyon" (6.131.1). This gloss of identification inevitably recalls the earlier comparison between the democratic reformer and the tyrant precisely at the moment when Pericles flashes through the narrative of the *Histories* in the guise of a lion, symbolically completing the identification between leader and city.<sup>47</sup> To some of Pericles' contemporaries, the *arche* of Pericles in Athens resembled a tyranny.<sup>48</sup> But Pericles himself, according to Thucydides, declared that the *arche* of the Athenians in Greece was "like a tyranny." A tyrant is a "lion, mighty, ravenous" among his fellow citizens, as the Pythia says of Cypselus, (5.92β3). Pericles is the leader-*turannos* of the city-*turannos*, the representative of the sovereign demos, a lion at home and to the rest of the Hellenic world.

The fluid naming of political realities in contemporary discourse represents the linguistic foundation of the analogical impact of Herodotus' text. By glossing over substantial distinctions, the monarchic analogy implicates the Athenian demos as it does no other Greek community in the *Histories* and in a way that directly resonates with the fifth-century notion of the rise of a *polis turannos* in Greece.<sup>49</sup> In this overarching perspective, the explicit comparison of the two Cleisthenes is a reading

46. The juxtaposition of the sacrifice of Eobazus by a Thracian tribe (9.119) and the Athenian execution of Artayctes (9.120) encourages comparison between the two actions. For the ambivalence of Herodotus' representation of Athenian action at the end of the *Histories*, see Dewald 1997.

47. 6.131.2. For lion symbolism, see my chap. 4, "Wondering Why" and "Wonder and Disbelief." For glosses of identification, see my chap. 1, "Referential Glosses."

48. For Pericles as tyrant, see Plut. *Per.* 7.1–2, 12, 16, Cratinus (frag. 240 Kock) quoted in Plut. *Per.* 3. Cf. Thuc. 2.65.9. For the Athenian empire as tyranny, see Thuc. 2.63.2 (words of Pericles); cf. 3.37.2.

49. For the idea of Athens as the *polis turannos*, see especially Thuc. 1.122.3 (τύραννον . . . πόλιν), 1.124.3 (πόλιν τύραννον), 6.85.1; Aristoph. *Knights* 1111–12; Knox 1971, 53–106; Raaflaub 1979; Raaflaub 1987, especially 223–25, 241–46. For the idea of the demos as tyrant at home, see Kallet 1998, 52–54.

direction whose importance is proportionate to the political change Cleisthenes initiated in Athens.

*The Monarchical Model in Sparta*

Elsewhere in Herodotus' Greek narratives, the monarchical model more straightforwardly serves to dramatize an internal dilemma—the tension that exists between individual and state, even within a constitutional order as free as possible from the danger of true tyranny. Sparta not only represents the paradigmatic setting for this sort of confrontation but also provides the context for the second gloss of historical analogy, which I am now going to discuss.

The seer Tisamenus of Elis performed the sacrifice for the Greek army before the battle of Plataea. The mention of his role provides the occasion for a narrative on how he and his brother had just recently managed to become Spartan citizens (analepsis: 9.33) and on the victories the Spartans subsequently achieved after he had taken permanent service with them (prolepsis: 9.35). I will focus on the first (analeptic) part, which triggers the comparison and is introduced, in terms of narratability, by the rather unusual marker of absolute uniqueness: “These were the only men in the world who became Spartan citizens.”<sup>50</sup>

Tisamenus belonged to the family of the Iamidae of Elis. On receiving a prophecy from Delphi that he was destined to win five victories of the greatest importance, he started training to become a champion in the pentathlon (the five *agones* of the pentathlon would give him five victories in one). This was not what the oracle meant, however, and Tisamenus did not attain the athletic success he expected. The Spartans understood the oracle and offered Tisamenus a post in their army. But when Tisamenus demanded as compensation that they make him citizen “with full privileges,” the Spartans were indignant and let him go. Subsequently, however, fearing the Persian invasion, they sought him out again and even yielded to his demand that his brother as well as himself be awarded citizenship (9.33.1–5).

The flashback I have just summarized belongs to the first of three narratives about Greek seers that interrupt the account of the battle of Plataea and mark a pause in the “real” action.<sup>51</sup> The proleptic section of

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50. 9.35.1. How and Wells (1928, 2:302) point out that this is an exaggeration in light of 4.145, 4.149, and 7.134. On Herodotus' use of *μόνος*, see n. 6 in the present chapter.

51. See Masaracchia 1975, 153.

the Tisamenus story serves to anticipate prophetically the outcome of the battle, because it mentions Plataea as the first of the five victories Tisamenus was destined to win for the Spartans (9.35.2). Seers are important indices on the battlefield of Plataea, since here more than ever we feel the presence of the divine.<sup>52</sup> The stories of Tisamenus and the other seers are not, however, centered on the role of their protagonists as intermediaries between the divine world and human actions; rather, they seem to pursue a different set of themes. The first and third narratives are expanded glosses of identification for Tisamenus and Hegesistratus, the seers on the Greek and Persian sides, respectively. The second and apparently most accessory of the seer narratives brings in the mythical code, with the heroic diviner Melampus, and gives the key for interpreting the other two.<sup>53</sup> It is introduced by a gloss of analogy that counterbalances the uniqueness of Tisamenus' achievement of Spartan citizenship by pointing out its structural similarity with an earlier event of a different order.

In making these demands, [Tisamenus] was imitating [ἐμιμέετο] Melampus, if one takes the liberty to compare/imagine a bid for citizenship and one for kingship [ὡς εἰκάσαι βασιληίην τε καὶ πολιτηίην αἰτεομένους]. (9.34.1)<sup>54</sup>

As in the glosses on the two Cleisthenes discussed earlier (5.67.1, 5.69.1), this statement expresses the analogy in story terms, although the

52. See Immerwahr 1966, 294.

53. For the famous Melampus (mentioned at 2.49.1 and 7.221) and his alter ego and brother, see especially *Od.* 11.281–97 (where Melampus is not mentioned by name), 15.225–46; Hes. *Ehoiai* frags. 37, 129, 130, 131 MW; Pherecydes *FGrHist* 3 F 33, 114, 115; Bacch. frag. 4.50–51 SM; Pind. *Paeon* 4.24–26; Diod. 4.68.4–5; Apollod. 1.9.11–12. See also Lloyd 1976, 224–25.

54. Αἰτεομένους is a correction by Stein. Masaracchia (1975, 154 n. 173; 1978, 169–70) stands by the manuscript reading αἰτεόμενος, referring it to Tisamenus and interpreting ὡς εἰκάσαι absolutely, in the sense of “suppose” (as at 1.34.1). He argues that with τε καί, one must refer both βασιληίην and πολιτηίην to the same subject(s), with the translation “In saying this, he [i.e., Tisamenus] was imitating Melampus—so one may suppose—by asking for both the kingship and the citizenship.” My translation follows Stein and most other critics, but Masaracchia's reading, which brings out the ambiguity of the gloss, (1) is consistent with the fact that nowhere else does the narrator apply the verb εἰκάζω in the sense of “liken,” to himself and (2) renders the connective force of the phrase τε καί, which joins together the two terms more strictly than is expressed in the translation “if we compare people asking for citizenship and [people asking for] kingship.” I agree with Masaracchia that the narrator wants the listener somehow to envision Tisamenus as asking for the kingship.



contextual link (both Tisamenus and Melampus are seers from Elis) this time remains implicit. The self-referential ὡς εἰκάσαι marks the comparison as an interpretation, like δοξεῖν ἐμοί in the Cleisthenes passage. The narrative records that when the Argives wanted Melampus to cure their women who had been seized by Dionysiac madness, he requested one-half of the kingdom as compensation. The Argives at first refused. Since the women's madness increased, they eventually decided to give him what he wanted. Realizing that the Argives were desperate, Melampus raised his price and demanded not only half the kingdom for himself but also another third for his brother. Reduced to a tight spot, the Argives agreed to both requests (9.34.1–2). The concluding statement repeats the comparison: “In the same way the Spartans too, since they desperately needed Tisamenus, yielded to him in everything” (9.35.1).

Mythical history is never a focus of Herodotus' exposition; the myth of Melampus here provides an archetype to the modern story of Tisamenus and lifts it from the realm of the literal.<sup>55</sup> An emergency places both individuals in a de facto position of power so that they obtain an exceptional political advantage that violates the city's integrity.<sup>56</sup> By using Melampus to interpret Tisamenus, the text emphasizes the invasive character of Tisamenus' request and paradoxically transforms his achievement of citizenship into a metaphor for the acquisition of kingly power. As in the case of Cleisthenes of Athens and Cleisthenes of Sicyon, we are here in the presence of vertical analogy, in which the juxtaposition depends on the symbolic code.

The narrative tries hard on its own to convey the idea that the position Tisamenus acquires in Sparta signifies something beyond what the story allows. Tisamenus enters the Plataea narrative as a seer, but the analeptic passage de-emphasizes that fact, even as it tells the story of how he became a seer. It does not remind the audience that the *genos* of Tisamenus, the Iamidae, is a famous family of seers, nor does it attempt to justify the strange fact that despite his background, Tisamenus misinterprets a prophecy, especially one concerning something as predictable as his future as seer.<sup>57</sup> Tisamenus proceeds to train in athletics—an index

55. On Herodotus' distinction between historical and prehistorical space, see especially 1.5.3 and 3.122.2. See von Leyden 1949–50; Shimron 1973; Hunter 1982, 105–6; Lateiner 1989, 118–23. For the symbolic function of heroes in Herodotus, see Vandiver 1991, especially 68–69, on Melampus.

56. Cf. Cobet 1971, 71.

57. The Iamidae are descended from Apollo; see Pind. *Ol.* 6.35–72; Paus. 6.2.5. A “divine seer” plays a role in Simonides (frag. 11W<sup>2</sup>, line 42). It is tempting to speculate that

of political ambition—and not even his last-minute defeat at Olympia induces him to reconsider the meaning of the oracle.<sup>58</sup> When the Spartans correctly interpret the oracle, the narrative implies that they understand the five victories prophesied by Delphi to be military victories to which Tisamenus would contribute *as diviner*. No one says so in so many words, however: “The Lacedaemonians, having realized that the prophecy referred not to athletic but to *martial contests* [ἀθλητικούς ἀγῶνας], tried to persuade Tisamenus to become, for a fee, *leader in their wars* [ἡγεμόνα τῶν πολέμων], together with those of the descendants from Heracles who were kings” (9.33.3). This job description forgets to limit Tisamenus’ new assignment to the field of religion, just as the preceding section of narrative has underplayed Tisamenus’ specialized vocation.

Though the duties of the diarchs included priestly functions (see Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 15.2, 13) and though the vagueness of the Spartans is plausible, their reported expression nevertheless resembles a proposal that Tisamenus fulfill the same role as the Spartan kings. Neither a proven diviner from the start nor an athletic victor, Tisamenus is an ordinary man who obtains something unique and hard to achieve. Added to Tisamenus’ kingly position as “war leader,” the attainment of citizenship for himself and his brother is all that is missing for the metaphor of a second diarchy.<sup>59</sup>

Inserting the Melampus story through explicit comparison establishes that the audience should imagine (εἰκάζειν) a vertical analogy between one who became king in a literal sense and one who became “king” in a figurative sense, because the narrator himself reads his material in this way. This gloss is therefore of some importance in endorsing the application of the symbolic code to the analogical interpretation of the *Histories*. As Tisamenus the citizen is like Melampus the king, so the reverse is true. Literal kingship is in Herodotus the paradigmatic manifestation of the abstract concept of personal power.

Within Herodotus’ complex exploration of the ways and means of

Simonides’ narrative of Plataea was somehow the source for Herodotus’ Tisamenus/Melampus analogy, which has a poetic cast.

58. For the tyrannical connotations of athletic victories, see 5.71 (Cylon); cf. 5.47, 6.36, 6.103, 6.122, 6.125–26. See Nagy 1990, 186–87. On athletic victories by seers, see Pritchett 1979, 55, citing Pausanias (6.4.5, 6.17.5–6) and Pindar (*Ol.* 6).

59. The brother’s name is Ἡγίας (9.33.5), which according to Macan (1908, 1.2.668) “is Ionic (and Attic) for Ἀγίας or Ἄγίας, a name perhaps identical with Ἄγης.” The parallel with Melampus marks the end of the analeptic part of the insertion about Tisamenus. In the proleptic continuation, which has a different function, Tisamenus’ role as seer becomes again central and is explicitly mentioned (9.35.1).

kingship (and metaphorical kingship), we recognize two partially distinct but overlapping patterns. The first, theorized through the words of Otanes in the Constitutional Debate and embodied in the figures of specific autocrats in the narrative, concerns the way in which the king exercises his power.<sup>60</sup> More pertinent to the Tisamenus/Melampus sequence, however, is the second pattern, which focuses on how men who count as outsiders to the system attain kingly status. This pattern is especially important in the *Histories* because it provides a bridge between the inaccessible hereditary monarch figures and “every man”: any individual may upset the existing political structure by rising in status on account of chance or skill, often without the backing of force and even with the consent of those on whom he imposes himself. The royal bodyguard Gyges stumbles into the kingship under undesirable circumstances and makes the best of things (1.8–13). Amasis, a man from the people, suddenly becomes king by the decision of the army and then proceeds to reconcile the rest of the Egyptians to his rule by means of *sophie* (2.162.1–2, 2.172.2). Darius, an Achemaenid close to the throne, is nevertheless treated as a more or less ordinary Persian noble who takes advantage of a situation of crisis: he must first reinstitute the monarchy and then obtain the post for himself with a ruse (3.82–83.1; 3.85–87).<sup>61</sup> The aristocrat Pisistratus drives around in a cart drawn by mules (an index of inferior status) and gains power by his tricks (1.59–63, especially 1.59.4). By illustrating the accessibility of monarchical rule to the clever or lucky, these stories emphasize its essential illegitimacy. Thus, the founder of the Persian monarchy is the mule Cyrus, a mixed breed, the grandson of a king and a social outcast.<sup>62</sup>

Deioces, an especially insidious upstart, begins his career in a society that has achieved *autonomie* and *eleutherie* (freedom), and he leads it to permanent *doulosune* (slavery) and *tyrannis* all on his own (1.95.2, 1.96.1). Deioces is clever (σοφός) and lusts for absolute power. Already highly regarded, he becomes even more so by practicing justice at a time of great lawlessness in Media. But when all depend on him for arbitration,

60. See discussion of the monarchical model earlier in this chapter.

61. Darius was the last of the seven to join the conspiracy (3.70) and was “a spear-bearer of Cambyses and still a man of no great account” (3.139.2).

62. For Cyrus as mule, see 1.55.2, 1.91.5–6. See also Nagy 1990, 335–37. Persecuted babies who grow up to become rulers, such as Cyrus and Cypselus (5.92γ2–4), illustrate the unthreatening beginnings of monarchical power. A marginal instance of the pattern of the rise to kingly status is the rascally thief who becomes the son-in-law of Rhampsinitus (see 2.121).

Deioces becomes unwilling to continue as judge; he claims that it is not expedient for him to neglect his own affairs and tend to those of his neighbors, settling their controversies day in and day out. Given the present state of lawlessness, the people decide to give themselves a king, and their choice falls on Deioces (1.97–98.1). His actions from now on create the precondition for the exercise of absolute power enhancing the separation of the monarch from the community and his existence beyond and above the law.<sup>63</sup>

The end of the story of Deioces almost rejoins the other pattern that focuses on full-blown monarchical rule. The first part, however, describes the mechanisms of his coming to the throne and is strikingly similar to the story of Melampus. Deioces refuses to be judge among people who need his arbitrations, until they make him king. Melampus refuses to rescue the beleaguered city of Argos by his divination, unless he and his brother receive nothing less than the kingship. The narrative about Melampus reproduces the pattern of the Median Deioces in an ancient Greek setting, namely, Argos in the heroic age. But Melampus is brought in as the analogue of Tisamenus, who in turn transfers the pattern to modern Sparta. Each of these three men—Deioces, Melampus, and Tisamenus—possesses a special skill that the community needs, and each obtains a contract of power that satisfies his ambitions.

The dual citizenship of Tisamenus and his brother is a term of the symbolic code of kingship as it emerges in the *Histories* from narratives about Sparta. Far removed from autocratic monarchy in the Eastern sense, Sparta is also historically immune from tyranny as is no other city in Greece.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, Sparta provides monarchical paradigms through those who occupy or are close to occupying the peculiar office of the dual kingship. Thus, one issue that symbolizes the ambivalence of the Spartan kings as individuals vis-à-vis the constitutionality of their office is whether Demaratus is the legitimate heir to the throne or a more or less illustrious (mule-related) interloper.<sup>65</sup> Many Spartans of royal blood in

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63. Deioces' literal isolation in the fortress of Ecbatana (see 1.98.2–100) symbolizes his autonomy and unaccountability, such as, in the words of Otanes, "would place even the best of all men who occupies this office outside of customary ways of thinking" (3.80.3). This condition is a source of abuses, if not by Deioces himself, by his successors.

64. See 5.92α1–2; Thuc. 1.18.1.

65. If he is not the son of his predecessor Ariston, he was fathered either by the hero Astrabacus ("the one with the mule saddle") or by one of the household servants, the "guardian of donkeys" (6.68.2, 6.69.4). See Boedeker 1987a. For mules and kings, cf. my n. 62 in the present chapter.

the *Histories* ardently desire this position or plot to obtain it,<sup>66</sup> contract irregular marriages,<sup>67</sup> or are guilty of treason for the sake of power or gain.<sup>68</sup> The Spartan diarchy is literally different from other royal systems, but its significance in the *logos* rests largely on the fact that at Sparta, the men who make trouble truly bear the title of king.<sup>69</sup>

Through the particulars of Spartan history and prehistory, Herodotus' narrative is able to shape the monarchical model in a special way that applies to the problem of leadership in the Greek states. In Herodotus, diverse pressures tear the Spartan diarchy. Given the nonindividualistic ideals that Sparta stands for (see, e.g., 9.71.3), the requirement to adhere to the ethos of the city as a whole is greater for these kings/nonkings than for the politically prominent elsewhere in Greece. At the same time, the inherited privilege of their office separates the diarchs from the rest of the city; they lie close to the dangerous sphere of autocratic transgression. The narrative connects the tension inherent to the status of the Spartan kings to the ambivalent legacy of their heroic ancestry, since the hero is both capable of the highest display of excellence and unfit to live with his peers.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the closest Greek analogue to the despot Cambyses is the Heraclid *furens* Cleomenes. At the other end of the spectrum, we find the citizen-king Leonidas, in whose case the code of kingship exceptionally denies the monarchical model, just as the heroic code is able to transfer Homeric *kleos* to a hoplitic ethical context.<sup>71</sup>

Heroic antecedents within the monarchical model—emerge again with the introduction of Melampus as the archetype for Tisamenus (who through his own family of the Iamidae has a heroic connection of his

66. Examples are Theras (see 4.147.3), Dorieus (see 5.42.2), and Leotychides (see 6.65).

67. Examples are Anaxandridas (see 5.40.2), Ariston (see 6.62), and Demaratus (see 6.6.2). *Eros* for *turannis* (see, e.g., 1.96.2, 3.53.4) and unbridled sexual desire go together. See Hartog 1988, 330. "Doing violence to women" is one of the typical monarchical actions in the words of Otanes (3.80.5), amply illustrated in the narrative (see 1.8–13, 1.61.1, 3.50.1, 5.92.1–3, 9.108–13).

68. E.g., Leotychides takes bribes (see 6.72); Demaratus turns East (see 6.70.1–2).

69. The issue of Spartan kingship in Herodotus is related to that of the paradoxical "foreignness" of this city. See "Implicit and Explicit Difference in the Ethnographies," and "The Texture of *Nomos*" later in this chapter.

70. This is arguably one of the issues of Sophocles' *Ajax*. See Knox 1961, 144–48; Rose 1995.

71. The codes operative in Herodotus' representation of the Spartan kingship are discussed in Munson 1993b. See also Boedeker 1987a. For the parallels between Cleomenes and the insane Cambyses, see Griffith 1988, 70–71; Munson 1993b, 45 with n. 32. For the *kleos* of Leonidas, see chap. 3, "Specific Glosses of Interpretation," in the present book.

own). In a minor counterpoint, Herodotus' diviners and their heroic ancestors chime in with the kings to symbolize the relation of individual and state. This representation exploits the shared knowledge of a culture in which prophets and seers are close to the sources of power, predict and assist the rise of despots (1.62.4), influence policies (7.6.3–4), compete with political leaders in deliberations (7.142.3–7.143.1), and invent war strategies (8.27; cf. Thuc. 3.20.1).<sup>72</sup> Like kings, seers, by definition, stand out from the citizen body. Normally outsiders, they become a part of the polis only to fulfill a leading public role. They are suited, therefore, to be taken as the doubles of kings, who also tend to claim special authority over prophecies.<sup>73</sup> At the side of Leonidas at Thermopylae, we find as his equivalent Megistias the seer, who imitates the selfless action of the king by choosing to die with the three hundred; beside Leonidas, he alone is represented as making the choice (7.221). Just as Leonidas is the offspring of Heracles, so we are told that Megistias is from the stock of Melampus (7.221), that same Melampus who forces himself on Argos as king in the digressive narrative in the account of Plataea. A conflicting heroic heritage lies behind the present-day seers just as it lies behind the Spartan kings. The archetype Melampus produces two antithetical modern metaphors. One is Megistias, the citizen-seer, his descendant; the other is Tisamenus, who by becoming a citizen "imitates" Melampus, the king-seer.

### Implicit Analogy

#### *The Seers of Plataea*

In the Plataea narrative, the explicit analogy between Tisamenus and Melampus combines with an implicit but inevitable thematic comparison between the Tisamenus/Melampus doublet and a third Elean seer, eloquently named Hegesistratus, also connected with Sparta. While Tisamenus enters the *logos* of Plataea as the *mantis* of the Spartans and of the whole Greek side, Hegesistratus, an old enemy of the Spartans, now performs the sacrifices for the Persians. Hegesistratus' appearance, like that of Tisamenus, gives rise to an expanded gloss of identification that explains how he came to fulfill his present role (9.37). Just as the unique-

72. Evidence for the importance of Greek seers in politics and war and for the sometimes problematic power relations between *strategos* and *mantis* is collected by Pritchett (1979, 46–90; see 65–70 for Sparta).

73. These include the Spartan kings: see 6.57.2, 5.90.2; cf. 5.93.2.

ness of Tisamenus' case justifies the inclusion of his story, so here superlatives advertise the narratability of the story of Hegesistratus. He belonged to another heroic family of seers, the Telliadae, and was a man "of the highest consequence" (9.37.1); at a time previous to the current events of Plataea, he performed "a deed that defies description" and "devised the boldest thing of all we know about" (9.37.2).

Like the story of Tisamenus, that of Hegesistratus has an analeptic/proleptic movement, since it begins at a time before the battle of Plataea and ends several years after it. Having suffered from this man many wrongs that remain unspecified, the Spartans had once captured and imprisoned him and were about to put him to death (9.37.1). But Hegesistratus cut off the instep of his foot to free himself from the stocks, escaped through a hole he had made in the wall of the prison, and by a painful march reached anti-Spartan Tegea. After his wound had healed, he made himself a wooden foot and openly became an enemy (πολέμιος) of the Spartans. Hegesistratus' hatred (ἔχθος) against the Spartans did not in the end turn to his advantage, since the Spartans eventually captured him as he was prophesying in Zacynthus and put him to death (9.37.2–4). The conclusion underlines the crucial elements of self-interest and hatred: "But the death of Hegesistratus occurred after the events of Plataea; at the time, he was sacrificing for Mardonius for no small compensation, and he did so with great eagerness on account both of his hatred [ἔχθος] for the Spartans and his gain" (9.38.1).

Tisamenus and Hegesistratus—the benefactor of Sparta on the Greek side at Plataea and the public enemy of Sparta serving the Persians—are antithetical figures. To the extent, however, that both dramatize friction between individual and community, they are also part of the same phenomenon. As a fugitive to the Persian side, Hegesistratus belongs to the group, well represented in the *Histories*, of those exiled or alienated Greeks who seek refuge in the East and in some cases "instigate incursions against their fellow citizens."<sup>74</sup> This type of actant includes, among others, the deposed Spartan king Demaratus (6.70, 7.3), the Pisistratids (6.94.1, 6.102, 6.107.1, 7.6.2–5), and Themistocles (8.109.5)—all individuals who try to impose their will on a Greek community and are therefore, in this respect at least, also Tisamenus' analogues. The Spartans capture Hegesistratus in Zacynthus, where they catch up with the fugitive Demaratus. Hegesistratus' self-mutilation parallels the action of

74. Boedeker 1987a, especially 191–92.

another royal enemy of Sparta, Cleomenes, who is also put in the stocks, obtains a knife, and proceeds to cut himself, though in a more self-destructive way.<sup>75</sup> In the intersection of the patterns and in the partial overlap between the otherwise opposite Tisamenus and Hegesistratus, the idea emerges that the enemy of a city will also potentially try to become its ruler; conversely, an individual who rises to power and benefits the city may become its ruler or its enemy.

The last royal Spartan of the *Histories* to be implicated in these different stages of the monarchical model is the king-regent Pausanias. In the extratextual aftermath of Plataea, Pausanias became, like Hegesistratus at Plataea, a wanted public enemy of the Spartans, eventually suffering death at their hands (Thuc. 1.131.1, 1.134). A fifth-century Greek audience would have regarded Pausanias as a tyrannical type without any help from Herodotus. His had been a cause célèbre, in which Athens and Sparta, for different reasons, had found themselves in mutual agreement in condemning the hero of Plataea.<sup>76</sup> The result was probably a basically familiar story (though embodied in different versions somewhat varied in intensity and detail), about a “good” Pausanias before and a “bad” Pausanias after Plataea.<sup>77</sup> Thucydides speaks of Pausanias’ eagerness to dominate Greece (Thuc. 1.128.3); he quotes a letter where Pausanias promises to Xerxes to make Greece subject to him and proposes to marry Xerxes’ daughter (Thuc. 1.128.7). The story evokes and perpetuates a special model of degeneration within the broader monarchical model. Just as Herodotus’ Cleisthenes “imitates” (ἐμιμέετο) the tyrant Cleisthenes, so in Thucydides the generalship of Pausanias after Plataea is “an imitation of tyranny” [τυραννίδος μίμησις] (Thuc. 1.94.3). Thucydides’ description of Pausanias’ brief despotic tenure at Byzantium includes predictable indices, what he calls “small matters that displayed what he wanted to do in the future on a larger scale”: inability to live in the

75. The parallels between Hegesistratus, on the one hand, and Cleomenes (see 6.75.2–3) and Demaratus (see 6.70.2), on the other, are noticed by Macan (1908, 1.2.673, 675).

76. Fornara (1966, 266) argues that for the Athenians, the alleged aberrancies of Pausanias served to rationalize their taking over the leadership of the Greek allies; the Spartans, for their part, had put Pausanias to death (perhaps because they had evidence of his plotting with the helots; see Thuc. 1.132.4) and needed to justify that action.

77. Evans (1988) reconstructs two versions of the story of Pausanias, one corresponding to Thucydides’ account, and the other, somewhat less unfavorable, reflected in Herodotus. There is no evidence, however, of a favorable version of the story of Pausanias’ behavior after Plataea.



established style, Median dress, a Persian table, foreign bodyguards, and an unapproachable temper (Thuc. 1.130.1–2; cf. Thuc. 1.95.1).

The narrator of the *Histories* communicates the relevance of the Pausanias story—and implicitly testifies to his audience’s familiarity with it—in two explanatory glosses in different contexts. Once, he offhandedly mentions “the hubris of Pausanias” in his interpretation of what happened after the Persian invasion (8.3.2). Another time, he brings up Pausanias’ lust for power and his Eastern marriage (though a different marriage than the one in Thucydides’ reported letter), in a gloss of identification for Megabates, “a Persian of the Achaemenid family, cousin [of Artaphrenes] and of Darius, the one to whose daughter at a later time, at least if the story is true, the Spartan Pausanias, son of Cleombrotus, arranged his betrothal, having conceived a passion [ἔρωτα] to become the tyrant of Greece” (5.32).<sup>78</sup> Since Megabates commands the expedition against Naxos that Aristagoras has persuaded the Persian king to undertake for reasons of his own, the mention of Pausanias’ ties to the Persians via this same man reinforces the message about disloyal Greeks.

In the narrative of Plataea, however, Herodotus evaluates Pausanias as the author of the “fairest victory we have ever known” (9.64.1) and surprises his audience by his apparent determination not to mention subsequent events. But the “Pausanias before” protests too much here and in terms better suited to remind everyone of the “Pausanias after” than to correct public fame.<sup>79</sup> Confronted with three monarchic temptations of the type that Thucydides says he yielded to shortly afterward—mutilation, luxury, sexual indulgence (9.78–79, 82, 76)—Pausanis self-righteously rejects them all and declares himself at one with his fellow citizens (9.79.2). Though his refusal to defile the body of Mardonius is laudable, his contemptuous distinction between what a barbarian and a Greek would do contradicts the ideological thrust of Herodotus’ text and sounds excessively self-assured.<sup>80</sup> Pausanias’ alleged contemplation of Persian riches and his experimental comparison between a Persian and a

78. See n. 67 in the present chapter: the two forms of the tyrant’s *eros* here become confused. The joke is noticed by Macan (1895, 1:176) and Shimron (1989, 66 n. 35).

79. Fornara (1971a, 62–66, especially 64) calls Herodotus’ portrayal of Pausanias “a masterpiece of irony and a harbinger of tragedy.” Cf. Evans 1988, 4–8.

80. See the narrator’s gloss declaring that Xerxes’ mutilation of the body of Leonidas was against Persian custom (7.238.2). See also Payen 1997, 174–75. In his narratorial voice, Herodotus avoids explicit comparisons between Greeks and barbarians of the type made by his Pausanias.

Spartan banquet occur in a context of fascinated curiosity, ill-concealed greed, and ambiguous laughter.<sup>81</sup>

All this is not merely a favorable portrayal but rather a pretend inversion of the monarchical model that has been applied to all other Spartan kings in the *Histories* except for Leonidas. Like his seer Tisamenus, Pausanias gains a splendid victory for Greece. Like the seer Hegesistratus, however, he is already poised to become the accomplice of Persia against Sparta and all the Greeks. Thus, in antithesis to the pair Leonidas and Megistias at Thermopylae, the diviners of Plataea on either side synthesize the ambivalence of Pausanias. As they do so, they symbolically carry forward and broaden Herodotus' messages on the disharmonious combination of leadership and citizenship and on the dangers of prominent individuals for the city-states of Greece.

#### *The Last of the Seers*

Two more diviners appear at the end of the *Histories* in similar fashion as Tisamenus and Hegesistratus and demand association to the same analogical network: Deiphonus, who performs the sacrifice for the Greeks at Mycale; and especially Euenius, his father, "to whom the following thing happened" (9.92.2). At the end of the story of Euenius, the resumptive summarizing statement is followed by a gloss that undermines even this secondary connection to the main narrative: "but now I have also heard this: that Deiphonus . . . was not the son of Euenius" (9.95).

Just as Tisamenus and Melampus demand a special reward (μισθός, 9.33.3, 4; 9.34.1) and Hegesistratus sacrifices for no small salary (μεμισθωμένος οὐκ ὀλίγου, 9.38.1), so Deiphonus plies his trade all over Greece (ἐξελάμβανε ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἔργα, 9.95). The narrative concerning Euenius separates the issue of compensation from the profession of seer, but it maintains the theme of the individual's blackmail of the city by translating it into an ethical and juridical question of *dike* (justice).

Euenius was one of the prominent citizens of Apollonia appointed for a year to guard at night a special flock that by daytime grazes along the banks of the local river. The flock is sacred to the Sun, and the people of Apollonia, who greatly revere it "on account of some prophecy," give it

81. Fornara (1971, 62–63) notices Pausanias' interest in the spoils (at 9.80.1 and 9.82.1), and see 9.82.2. The reference to the helots at 9.80.1 may be an allusion. Pausanias' laughter (9.82.3) is a negative index. See Lateiner 1977, especially 177.

shelter at night in a cave. One night, during his turn as guard, Euenius fell asleep and about sixty of the sheep fell prey to the wolves. The citizens of Apollonia brought Euenius to trial and condemned him to be deprived of his sight. After the sentence was carried out, however, both the animals and the land became barren, so the Apolloniatas consulted the oracles of Delphi and Dodona. Here they learned the reason for their calamity: they had unjustly (ἀδίκως) blinded the guardian Euenius. The gods themselves had sent the wolves; they would not, therefore, cease avenging Euenius until the people of Apollonia would make reparation by giving him anything he would choose and consider fair (οὐ πρότερον παύσασθαι τιμωρόντες ἐκείνῳ πρὶν ἢ δίκας δῶσι τῶν ἐποίησαν ταύτας τὰς ἂν αὐτὸς ἔληται καὶ δικαιοῖ, 9.93.4). The gods, for their part, would grant Euenius a gift that would make many men regard him as fortunate.

The people of Apollonia concealed this response and entrusted the matter to a group of fellow citizens, who approached Euenius. Sitting next to him on a bench, these men started speaking of various things until the opportunity came for casually asking him what reparation he would choose if the people of Apollonia should be willing to compensate him for what they had done (τίνα δίκην ἂν ἔλοιτο, εἰ ἐθέλοιεν Ἀπολλωνῆται δίκας ὑποστῆναι δώσειν τῶν ἐποίησαν, 9.94.1). Euenius, who knew nothing of the oracle, said that the gift of two fine estates and the finest house in town would constitute for him adequate compensation (δίκην οἱ ταύτην ἀποχρᾶν γενομένην, 9.94.2). As soon as he had finished saying that, those sitting at his side replied: “Euenius, the people of Apollonia pay you this compensation [δίκην] in accordance with the oracles.” When he learned about the response, Euenius made a great fuss because he felt he had been deceived. But the Apolloniatas bought the properties he had chosen from their owners and gave them to him, and from that day on he also had prophetic powers and became famous (9.93–94).

I have paraphrased this story rather fully to convey its remote and idealized setting. The flock sacred to the Sun, grazing on the shores of the nameless river during the day and sheltered at night in a cave, evokes a primordial and mythical atmosphere of a community close to the gods. As with the cattle of the Sun in the *Odyssey* (12.127–33),<sup>82</sup> the violation of this herd creates a crisis. The wolves attacking the cattle, the trial, and the elders on the bench next to Euenius seem to have come out of the

82. See Vernant 1989b.

Homeric ephrasis of the shield of Achilles, where two lions devour two oxen from the herd that pastures by the river, and where the elders sit in a circle on polished stones in the judgment scene (*Il.* 18.573–81, 503–4). The punishment sent by the gods to the Apolloniates for their unjust treatment of Euenius recalls the calamities by which Zeus avenges transgressions of Dike in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*: “great suffering, famine, and plague at once; the people perish away, women do not give birth, and households are diminished” (242–44).

In this archaic paradigm of the polis, where good government and communal deliberation prevail, a situation arises that, as in the stories of Tisamenus and Melampus, places an individual in a position of posing a threat. Here prophecy itself is a gift and a compensation from the gods, not a service in exchange for which compensation is due. But just as Tisamenus demands Spartan citizenship in exchange for his needed services as seer, Euenius, supported by prophecy of the oracle, could have demanded from the Apolloniates excessive compensation for his blindness. His reaction after learning about the oracle shows that he would have indeed done so. Kingship is not mentioned as a possibility for this price, but the earlier case of Melampus and the gift that Euenius actually requests (a choice portion of land) point in that direction.<sup>83</sup>

Unlike Tisamenus and Melampus, however, Euenius is never allowed to exceed his political status. A group of citizens delegated by the people keeps control of the negotiations and manages to correct the earlier miscarriage of justice according to divine injunction; at the same time, they preserve the city. The gods apparently do not object to the deceit, and Euenius settles down with their priceless gift of divination and with a reasonable human prize, neither of which violates the city’s institutions. He remains an ordinary citizen but is famous for his prophecy and richer than before; his new material possessions are bought at public expense, and the transaction wrongs no one.

The issue of reward in this story, corresponding to the *misthos* (salary) of the seer in the other narratives, centers around the juridical, political, and religious notion of rightful balance, a Dike of Hesiodian stamp.

83. Cf. the “many gifts of land” obtained by Callias of Elis, another seer of the family of the Iamidae, as a reward for helping the Crotoniates in their war against Sybaris (5.45.2). Since the only other outsider who is supposed to have helped the Crotoniates in this war (though they deny it) is Dorieus, a royal Spartan, this points again to the Greek cultural notion of a metaphorical equivalence between seer and king.

Unlike the former stories of seers, moreover, this one is pervaded with the words and actions of the gods—the prophecy regarding the cattle, the divinely induced curse on the land, the prophecy about Euenius’ compensation, and the gods’ gift of prophecy to Euenius. The gods supervise the human legislators and judges but leave them to their own devices in managing themselves politically. This archaic morality tale about remote Apollonia offers a vision of the righteous city and a hypothetical solution to the problem of the individual’s personal power and privileged status in the Greek polis.

I have ranged far and wide on the basis of Herodotus’ two explicit analogies. In the historical narrative, glosses of comparison constitute the exception, and the conveyance of meaning does not depend on their presence. Both the explicit analogy of the two Cleisthenes and the Tisamenus/Melampus parallel, out of a mere handful of this type of interventions, confront a central issue in the *Histories*, that of kingship, and point to its broad metaphorical application. These rare visible stitches in a far broader analogical weave reveal the thought processes of the narrator and confirm a host of implicit analogical associations, horizontal and vertical, that the audience would have made elsewhere without prompting.

### Comparison in Space

Although both history and ethnography advertise themselves as the report of extraordinary facts, the discrepancy between the two forms of discourse is perhaps nowhere more conspicuous than in the way in which they approach qualitative comparison. In the account of past events, particulars become mutually linked through implicit analogy; but comparison operates predominantly several levels below the surface, and the reconstruction of analogical networks is almost entirely dependent on the interpretive operations of the listener. The report of existents in faraway lands, by contrast, is from the start based on the qualitative comparison between what is to be found “over there” and what belongs to the familiar horizon of narrator and audience. In ethnography, therefore, and to a lesser extent also in geography, comparison is very much on the surface of the text even when it is implicit. Frequently it is explicitly the object of discussion.

## Implicit and Explicit Difference in the Ethnographies

Ethnographic description is designed to communicate and enhance the idea of difference.<sup>84</sup> History follows a certain chronological and causal development, but not every historical narrative statement places the uniqueness of the fact it records at the center of attention. In ethnographic description, by contrast, relating a fact is generally a declaration of difference with respect to some other fact that the audience assumes to be in the normal order of things.

They hunt locusts, and after they catch them they dry them in the sun and grind them, then they sprinkle the powder on milk and drink it. (4.172.1)

Because ethnography is primarily a description of difference, it frequently expresses itself in negative statements that contradict the cultural or geographic norms to which the audience is accustomed.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, advertisements of narratability in an ethnographic description tend to reinforce the narrative's built-in *raison d'être* of reporting differences from anything Greek.

These then are the customs [of the Thracians] that are most noteworthy. (5.6.2)

The customs qualified as ἐπιφανέστατοι in the conclusion just quoted include almost complete inversions with respect to the Greek norm. For example, “the Thracians do not guard their young girls [notice the negative form] and allow them to have intercourse with any men they wish, while they strictly confine married women; they acquire the women they marry from their parents at the cost of great riches” (5.6.1); “Tattoos are considered a sign of nobility, not to be tattooed a sign of low birth” (5.6.2).<sup>86</sup>

84. See, e.g., *Od.* 6.119–20, 9.105–15. Redfield (1985, 99–100) describes Herodotus as a tourist avid for difference.

85. For more on ethnographic negations, see chap. 3, “Cognitive Statements and Polemical Negations.” In the historical narrative, the statement that someone did not do something is an interpretive gloss that more generally contradicts the audience's expectations according to their contextual or extratextual knowledge.

86. Inversion as a way of explaining the world “over there” is discussed by Rosellini and Saïd (1978, 985–91) and Hartog (1988, 212–16).

Only exceptionally does ethnographic description need to state difference from Greece by explicit means.<sup>87</sup> More frequent are Herodotus' statements of absolute uniqueness: he refers to "the only men in the world," "the only region on earth," and a climate "not as among other men."<sup>88</sup> The incomparable natural phenomenon par excellence, both in a qualitative and in a quantitative sense, is the Nile. By virtue of some special power of its own, the Nile "is naturally opposite" (τὰ ἔμπαλιν πεφυκέναι) from other rivers, since it spontaneously floods in summer when all other rivers are dry, making the Egyptians into a people who "do not plow."<sup>89</sup> The Nile's unparalleled nature causes it to be something other than a river, more similar to a sea, with cities emerging on the surface, "very similar in a way" (μάλιστά κη ἔμφερέες) to the islands on the Aegean (2.97.1). Here the Egyptians sailing across the flooded plain and the Scythians driving their cart on the frozen sea (4.28.1) are complementary visions of the extraordinary.<sup>90</sup> Implicitly but unmistakably, Scythia is the polar opposite of Egypt; and each of the two is not only different from Greece but utterly unique.<sup>91</sup>

In correspondence with the uniqueness of the nature of Egypt and its river, Herodotus declares the absolute uniqueness of the Egyptians in the programmatic introduction to the ethnographic part of the *logos*. The statement begins with a celebratory gloss that proclaims that Egypt is more worthy of narration than any other region because it has "the most wonders and works superior to description" (2.35.1). The comparative glosses in the next sentence explicitly connect this pure advertisement of narratability to the fact of Egyptian qualitative differences in the two

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87. It does, e.g., at 1.131.1, with polemic force (see chap. 3, "Cognitive Statements and Polemic Negations").

88. See 3.107.1 (Arabia is the only land to produce incense, etc.); 4.184.1 (the Atarantes are the only men we know who have no individual names); 2.104.2 (the Colchians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians are the only men who practice circumcision); 2.68.3 (uniqueness of the crocodile); 3.113.1 (unique sheep); 3.104.2–3, 4.28.2 (uniqueness of climate; see Hartog 1988, 29–30).

89. 2.19.2–3 (cf. 2.24.1; 2.14.2; 2.12.2). Also, with respect to the abundance of its resources and volume, "no other river can be compared with it" (4.53.1; cf. 2.10.1–3). See also 4.50.1, comparing the size of the Ister with that of the Nile.

90. Cf. 2.92.2. See Corcella 1984, 71.

91. On the implicit Egypt-Scythia polarity in Herodotus, see Redfield 1985, 106–7. Its principal terms are hot/cold, no rain/rain in summer, changeable Nile/unchanging Ister, one river/multiple rivers, old *ethnos*/young *ethnos*, culture/nature, complex customs/simple customs, many wonders/few wonders, immobility/nomadism, centralized monarchy/multiple kings. The pairing of Egypt and the North occurs already in Pind. *Isthm.* 6.23.

specific areas of nature of the land and culture of the people. They establish, in fact, a double polarity.

The Egyptians, at the same time as they have a CLIMATE that is different [ἕτεροίω] and the RIVER, which has a NATURE unlike [φύσιν ἀλλοίην] that of the other rivers, [so] for the most part established LAWS AND CUSTOMS that are the complete opposite [πάντα ἔμπαλιν] to those of the rest of mankind. (2.35.2)

The preliminary list of about twenty-three customs that immediately follows (2.35.2–2.36.4) is designed to illustrate what the Egyptians customarily do πάντα ἔμπαλιν (completely opposite) not just from the Greeks (as is implied of the Thracians at 5.6, cited earlier) but from the rest of mankind, οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι (or οἱ ἄλλοι, ὄλλοι). This declaration of utter Egyptian difference gives the audience a jolt by establishing a new subdivision of the world, in which the Greeks become marginalized. The opposition between the Egyptians and everybody else—rather than, in the usual way, between the Greeks and the non-Greek world, Egyptians included—is a part of Herodotus’ polemic against both the Greeks’ sense of being a special nation (even special in the sense of their being the exclusive representatives of normalcy) and the dismissive attitude they affect toward Egypt in particular.<sup>92</sup>

No gloss in the *Histories* proclaims the uniqueness of the Greeks, and only two passages attribute to all barbarians a *nomos* that the Greeks do not have.<sup>93</sup> In a rare instance where Herodotus attributes the same *nomos* to all barbarians, the statement highlights the similarity between the Spartans and the barbarians.<sup>94</sup> The *Histories* both presuppose as a given and discourage the commonplace notion of a Greek/barbarian polarity. Other glosses expressing the cultural uniqueness of a people vis-à-vis οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι almost exclude a few remote *ethnea* from the mainstream of

92. Lloyd 1976, 310.

93. At 8.105.2, the barbarians of Asia are meant. The gloss at 1.10.3 (“Among the Lydians, and among almost all barbarians, even for a man to be seen naked brings great shame”) is in its context designed to emphasize similarity a fortiori rather than difference between barbarians and Greeks. On the quantitative evaluative comparison at 1.60.3 (Greeks more intelligent than barbarians), see chap. 3, “Explicit Evaluation.”

94. “The custom of the Lacedaemonians at the death of their kings is the same [ὡντός] as that among the barbarians of Asia. For, as a matter of fact, most of the barbarians follow the same custom at the death of their kings” (6.58.2). Cf. n. 161 and corresponding text in the present chapter.



humanity, be it Greek or non-Greek: “their language is like no other because they squeak like bats” (4.183.4); certain peoples of the Caucasus and India “couple in the open like cattle.”<sup>95</sup>

Scholars have identified several systems that underlie Herodotus’ overarching conception of world differentiation. These schemes reflect our modern understanding of partially inherited forms of classification, which enabled the Greeks to define their own identity by supplementing and interpreting what they knew about exotic cultures in an unconsciously organized way. Thus, Rosellini and Saïd have traced the structural correspondences among the sexual, dietary, and religious customs that Herodotus attributes to the most remote and primitive peoples he describes. This demonstrates the consistency with which these three areas of culture are made to diverge from the Greek norm of monogamous marriage, on the one hand, and the consumption of cooked and cultivated cereals and boiled or roasted meat in the ritual context of sacrifice, on the other. The three marginal and mutually distant peoples said to “couple like cattle,” an index of extreme primitivity, also have alimentary practices that are equally abnormal in each case. Their sexual promiscuity goes together with a diet that diverges either on the side of omophagy (consumption of raw meat or fish, cannibalism) or on the side of vegetarianism (uncultivated, uncooked herbs and cereals).<sup>96</sup>

Redfield formulates a somewhat different set of principles by subdividing Herodotus’ peoples into “hard” and “soft” cultures. The first are represented by Scythians, Massagetae, Thracians, Ethiopians, and, relatively speaking, Greeks; the second by Egyptians, Babylonians, Lydians, and, relatively speaking, Persians.

Soft peoples are characterized by luxury, the division of labor, and complexity of *nomoi*, especially in the sphere of religion; hard peoples are simple, harsh and fierce. Among soft peoples market exchange proliferates; hard peoples rely on gift and theft, the heroic mode of exchange. Soft peoples centralize resources through

95. 1.203.2 (*κατά περ τοῖσι προβάτοις*), 3.101.1; cf. 4.180.5. See Hartog 1988, 226. In two cases, glosses of absolute uniqueness draw attention to the individuality of the Greeks’ close neighbors, Caunians and Lycians (1.172.1, 1.173.4). Uniqueness is also attributed to the Ethiopians, in the same terms as to the Egyptians (3.20.2) and, within Persian society, to the Magi (1.140.2).

96. See Rosellini and Saïd 1978, especially 955–60. On the Greek dietary norm, see Detienne and Vernant 1989, especially the essays by Detienne, Vernant, and Durand.

taxation, build monuments, are literate and organized; their politics tend toward tyranny. Hard peoples have relatively weak political organizations and tend toward anarchy. Soft peoples tend to acculturate the dead, hard peoples to naturalize them; among hard peoples women are treated as an abundant natural resource, more or less freely available, whereas among soft peoples women tend to become a commodity, disposed of by sale, through prostitution, or otherwise. Hard cultures fall short of civility; they are unwelcoming and difficult to visit. Soft cultures are confusing and seductive, difficult to leave once visited.<sup>97</sup>

This brilliant synthesis sheds light on the links between ethnography and history by refining Hellmann's pattern of the "primitive opponent." In Herodotus, in fact, no "soft" people conquers a "hard" people; "hard" people remain free or even conquer their "softer" aggressors.<sup>98</sup> Other implicit systems have been detected as determining Herodotus' description of the world. According to the conceptual map devised by K. Müller, for example, high cultures are placed in the center of the *oikoumene* (Egyptians, Babylonians, Lydians, Persians, Greeks), and primitivity increases as one proceeds outward, with builders, cattle raisers, and hunters/gatherers distributed in concentric circles toward the edges.<sup>99</sup>

These conceptual reconstructions provide us with a vocabulary and fundamental frameworks for discussing Herodotus' ethnographic material. We should recognize, however, that they sometimes constitute devices by which we attempt to make sense of the apparent disorder of Herodotus' description, more than actual distillations of the way in which Herodotus represents the world. Structuralist studies, such as those of Rosellini and Saïd, are especially prone to shift from an analysis of the discourse of Herodotus to a discussion of the mythical forms of thought that inform his material.<sup>100</sup> The different schemes that have been proposed, moreover, cohere with one another only up to a point. They sometimes break down altogether and fail to account for numerous narrative details and metanarrative interventions, because Herodotus both is subject to cultural ways of thinking and rebels against them, is both a

97. Redfield 1985, 109–10.

98. See Redfield 1985, 112–13; Hellman 1934, 80–89; Cobet 1971, 104–20.

99. Müller 1972, 121–22. See also Romm 1992, 46–47.

100. See, e.g., Mora's criticism (1985, 60–72) of Rosellini and Saïd 1978, 962–66.

lover of symmetry (as Redfield and others have maintained) and contemptuous of it.

### Differentiating from Within

When glosses express dissimilarities between two foreign peoples, rather than uniqueness in an absolute sense, they emphasize what a complicated and irregular place the world is. When they mark differences between *ethne* that live in the same general area or tribes belonging to the same ethnic group, they seem especially designed to discourage schematization. Based on the ethnographer's detailed knowledge of people and places, the narrative reveals to the audience that difference manifests itself in ways they might not expect. The common stereotype of rudeness, primitivity, and poverty the Greeks frequently attached to the words *Scythian* or *Thracian* (names for "hard" cultures according to the modern critical notion) is, for instance, shown to be inadequate in the case of the Agathyrsi, who are neighbors of the Scythians but "extremely luxurious and wearers of gold" (4.104). The Agathyrsi also "practice the community of women, so that they may be brothers of one another and, being all related, not have mutual envy or hatred." "In their other customs, however," notes Herodotus, "they come close to the Thracians [Θρήξι προσεχώρηκασι]" (4.104).

The portrayal of the Agathyrsi forces us to a further distinction. In the poetic and ethnographic traditions about remote peoples, Lovejoy and Boas have long ago identified "hard primitives" and "soft primitives," a categorization that Romm has recently expanded.<sup>101</sup> The first group includes the tough and relatively poor Scythians, Thracians, most Libyans, and the extra-Herodotean Arimaspi. The second—Herodotus' Argipaeans, or Bald Men; the Ethiopians; the Hyperboreans of tradition—are the simple but joyful cultures blessed with Golden Age abundance and a natural state of peace and justice.<sup>102</sup> Presenting an idealized alternative to the *phthonos* (envy) among citizens in a Greek polis, the communal life of the Agathyrsi fits into this traditional type.<sup>103</sup> But the expression that describes their prosperity—*ἀβρότατοι . . . καὶ χρυσοφόροι* [extremely

101. Lovejoy and Boas 1935, 287–90; Romm 1992, 47–81.

102. See Lovejoy and Boas 1935, 1–15; Rosellini and Saïd 1978, 962–66.

103. On the community of women and children in Greek utopia, see Aristoph. *Eccl.* 613–35; Plato *Rep.* 463c–465b, criticized by Arist. *Pol.* 2.1.4–18 (1261b16–1262b37). For Greek traditions about exotic family customs, see Pembroke 1967.

luxurious and wearers of gold]—does not suit idealized Golden Age savages. The adjective ἄβρός connotes cultural refinement, even a degree of effeminacy; it is only used to qualify advanced cultures (“soft” in Redfield’s sense of the word) and in particular the notoriously delicate Lydians.<sup>104</sup> The resulting combination of three different stereotypes (hard primitives, soft primitives, and soft civilized people) creates a sense of unexpected and asymmetrical difference.

In Libya, the nomads east of Lake Tritonis and the nonnomads west of it “do **not** have the same customs” (4.1871). Beyond the borders of Scythia, the rule of extremes at the edges accounts for the presence of the most just and peaceful of men (4.23) and, to the southwest of these, of the Androphagoi, a “peculiar people” that ignores the very notion of justice and “the only ones . . . who feed on human flesh” (4.18.3, 106). At the opposite extremity of the earth, the Libyan “Country of Wild Beasts” contains “the wild men and the wild women” mentioned at the end of the list of monstrous animals (4.191.2–4). Yet this is also the home of the Maxyes, who wear their hair long on the right and shaven on the left and paint their bodies red: they, at least, practice agriculture, “own houses by custom,” and “say that they are descendants from the men who came from Troy” (4.191.1). The civilized features of this *ethnos* and their link to the heroic splendor and the past of the Greeks throws somewhat out of kilter the symmetrical correspondence with the Androphagoi on the basis of bestiality.<sup>105</sup>

Herodotus’ explicit comparisons reinforce the message of irregular differentiation both with and without the presentation of differentiating material. Though neighbors of the Scythians, the Melanchlainai are ἄλλο ἔθνος καὶ οὐ Σκυθικόν [a different people, **not** Scythian].<sup>106</sup> The narrative does not substantiate the gloss in this case, and elsewhere another gloss assimilates the customs of the Melanchlainai to those of the Scythians, aside from the former’s black cloaks (4.107). Also, the uniqueness of

104. The Pythia calls Croesus ποδαβρόε, “of the delicate feet,” when she advises him to flee the Persians (1.55.2), who are still a “hard people” and “have nothing ἄβρόν or good” (1.71.4). For *habrosune* outside Herodotus, see Nagy 1990, 282–85.

105. *Pace* Rosellini and Saïd 1978, 960. Herodotus records, without explaining them, connections between the primitives of central Libya and Greek traditions (4.178, 179, 189, 190). At 4.170 and 4.180, he speaks of customs borrowed from the Greeks, in the first passage specifically from Cyrene.

106. 4.20.2 (*contra* Hecataeus, *FGrHist* 1 F 185, who apparently defined them as ἔθνος Σκυθικόν). The general tendency to group all northern barbarians in the category “Scythians” is noted by Strabo (11.6.2; cf. 7.3.9, quoting Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 42).

the Tisagetae, “a numerous and peculiar” people who live by hunting, remains elusive (4.22.1). Fully documented is the distinction between Budini and Geloni, who live in the same area but “do not at all have the same material culture or the same language [οὐ τῆ αὐτῆ γλώσση . . . οὐδὲ διαίτα ἢ αὐτή]” and are “not at all similar [ὄμοιοι]” in appearance and coloring (4.109.1). The red-haired and blue-eyed Budini are autochthonous nomads, while the Geloni (“which the Greeks wrongly call Budini”) are settled agriculturists with language and customs that correspond to their Greek origins.<sup>107</sup> But an unpredictable peculiarity of the Budini arises here: they are “the only ones in that region” [μοῦνοι τῶν ταύτη] who eat lice.<sup>108</sup>

Another explicit reference to the misconceptions of the general public concerns the distinction between Scythians and Massagetae, “which some say is a Scythian ethnos” (1.201). The Massagetae “wear the same dress and have the same material culture as the Scythians” (1.215.1), but in the area of social organization, the custom of having wives in common is only their own, “for what the Greeks say that the Scythians do, it is not the Scythians who do it but the Massagetae” (1.216.1). Isolated differences of various kinds also exist among tribes that belong to the same large *ethnos*.<sup>109</sup> Glosses of similarity of the type “[The Gilgamae] have about the same customs as the others” (4.169.2) are not merely fillers that “make it possible to extend knowledge by moving from one group to its closest neighbors.”<sup>110</sup> Rather, the ethnographer intervenes to say that neighbors share the same customs because he does not allow his audience

107. 4.109.1. Language is a frequent criterion of internal differentiation in this and other parts of the world (see 4.106: γλῶσσαν . . . ἰδίην; 4.23.2; 4.108.2; 4.117; 3.98.3; 1.57.3; 2.42.4; 2.105; 6.119.4; 7.70.1; 7.85.1).

108. 4.109.1. The statement has the same effect if we accept the interpretation of Stein, who, on the basis of Photius’ definition of φθειῖν, understands φθειροτραγέουσι as “they eat pinecones.” But see, e.g., Macan 1895, 1:78, and cf. Strabo 11.2.1, 14, and 19. The case (mentioned again shortly) of the Libyan women “biting lice off themselves” (Hdt. 4.168.1) not only is decisive for the meaning of the word in this passage but also represents a pendant to this passage according to Herodotus’ procedure of balancing differences and similarities: some people eat lice; some people only bite them off.

109. They exist, e.g., among the Thracians: see 5.3.2–5.4.1. In Herodotus, the word *ethnos* is used both in this sense (see, e.g., 4.197.2) and to denote smaller subdivisions within the same ethnic group. See Jones 1996; Hall 1997, 34–40. The differentiation of *nomoi* within a single unitarian people (e.g., not all the Egyptians venerate the same gods in the same way; see 2.42.1) or within a system (e.g., there are different Egyptian practices concerning extraction of entrails depending on the festival; see 2.40.1) gauge the internal complexity of the system.

110. Hartog 1988, 226.

simply to assume that this is the case. Concerning the Adyrmachidai, who are the first group of Libyans one meets proceeding westward from Egypt, he relates that they (1) “generally follow Egyptian customs” but (2) dress “like the other Libyans” and (3) have a few customs all their own: they are “the only ones of the Libyans” whose women get rid of lice by biting them off themselves and throwing them away and “the only ones” who present to their kings the young girls to be married (4.168.1–2). This passage illustrates Herodotus’ painstaking recording of differences and congruences among tribes that live in the same general area and his individualized portrayals of less well known ethnic groups.<sup>111</sup>

### Explicit Sameness and Analogy

#### *The Texture of the Earth*

If ethnography and geography are first and foremost the representation of what is different for the listener, and if Herodotus seems particularly concerned with internal differentiation as well, what role does similarity play in his account of foreign lands and peoples? “The experience of difference,” says Corcella, “if it is to be a real experience with its level of intelligibility, cannot do without a certain recognition of similarities to the world of habitual experience. It is precisely such recognition which makes comparisons and translations possible.”<sup>112</sup> In the case of Herodotus, however, we should go one step further and even talk of an active pursuit of the similar, which counterbalances his observation of difference in all areas of his ethnographic and geographic research.<sup>113</sup> Explicit comparisons that establish that something is like something else are frequent and of many kinds, and they employ an extensive metanarrative vocabulary of similarity. The most interpretive or speculative ethnographic comparisons are occasionally accompanied by self-referential

111. Cf., e.g., 4.180.1 (“While the Machlyes grow their hair at the back of their heads, the Aseans grow it in front”), 4.178 (“Next to the Lotophagi . . . are the Machlyes, who also consume lotus, but less at any rate than those mentioned above”), 1.173.4, 4.17, 5.4.1. See also the catalogue of Xerxes’ forces (7.61–95) in reference to the equipment of the various national contingents (7.62.1, 7.63, etc.), where the balance is between what is ἐπιχώριον (strictly local) and what is τὸ αὐτό (the same) or belongs properly to a different people.

112. Corcella 1984, 74. Herodotus’ practice of noticing correspondences is also emphasized by Müller (1972, 116).

113. Gould (1989, 11–13) notices the physical dimension of this pursuit: the *histor* travels to Thebes to verify whether the traditions there would correspond (συμβήσονται) with those in Memphis (see 2.3.1; cf. 2.44.1).

signs, especially the verb *συνβάλλω*.<sup>114</sup> Two things that belong to different real or narrative worlds can be “put together” with respect to size or the degree to which they possess a certain feature, if their similarities in other ways furnish grounds for the comparison. Or two things can be compared qualitatively, with the reservation that excessive quantitative discrepancy in size may make the comparison invalid.<sup>115</sup> If one is unable to “put together” (*sumballein*) something unfamiliar with something already known, the foreign object may appear strange indeed and *aporia* ensues.<sup>116</sup> The ethnographer Herodotus is, however, a master both at recognizing difference and finding likeness.

Excessive difference in nature, especially if not properly corroborated by autopsy or reliable verbal testimony, is rejected out of hand.<sup>117</sup> For things that can be verified, geography in particular preserves the balance between the amazing individuality of a particular phenomenon and the need to integrate it into a unitarian world ruled by uniform natural laws. While Herodotus overstates his presentation of the Nile as the incomparable river/nonriver with a different *physis* (nature), he nevertheless attributes its uniqueness to natural factors susceptible to observation, such that they either actually affect this or that other river as well or would do so if they occurred elsewhere.<sup>118</sup> Herodotus’ assertions that the Nile “cannot be

114. *Εἰκάζω* as a self-referential metanarrative term in the sense of “liken” only occurs in the history at 9.34.1, where, if the reading of the passage is correct, it signals a vertical analogy that has almost the boldness of a metaphor. See n. 54 and corresponding text in the present chapter. In the narrative, *εἰκάζω* designates Gelon’s metaphor of the spring that has been taken away from the year (7.162.2), the assimilation of snow with feathers made by the Scythians (4.31.2), and the Ionian assimilation of Egyptian crocodiles with lizards (2.69.3). The imprecision of the operation indicated by *εἰκάζω* in the sense of “liken” is also present in the speculative *εἰκάζω* in the sense of “guess,” “imagine,” or “suppose,” which is a gloss of opinion used to mark a gloss of interpretation.

115. The narrator apologizes twice for putting together (*συνβάλλειν*) qualitatively things with widely discrepant size (2.10.1, 4.99.5).

116. For putting things together (*συνβάλλειν*) as a source of understanding (with *συνβάλλεσθαι*, “conjecture,” in glosses of opinion), see Hohti 1977.

117. E.g., the difference of the Arimaspi is rejected at 3.116.2: “Neither this do I believe, that one-eyed men exist in nature [*φύονται*] with the same nature [*φύσιν*] as other men.” Cf. 4.25.1, 4.105.2, and the cautionary gloss of source at 4.191.4. Herodotus’ rejection of fabulous peoples represent an innovation with respect to his predecessors (see Scylax of Caryanda in Tzetzes *Chiliades* 7.629–36, qtd. in Romm 1992, 84–85).

118. For Herodotus’ scientific outlook on the Nile, see especially 2.20–23 (criticism of previous theories on the flooding of the Nile), 2.24–26 (Herodotus’ own explanation), 2.27 (explanation of the peculiarity of the absence of breezes). See Lloyd 1976, 91–107. Herodotus’ insistence on conformity to *physis* is analyzed by Corcella (1984, 74–84) and Thomas (2000, 135–38). See also Donadoni 1947. For identity of natural processes in different

compared” (verb *συμβάλλειν*) in fact appear in contexts where he mentions other rivers that in one way or another resemble this one, at least “if one can put together [*συμβαλεῖν*] great things and little.”<sup>119</sup> Comparing the Nile to the well-known Ister even leads Herodotus to theorize on the unknown sources of the former, because an observed similarity between the two rivers becomes evidence for conjecturing (verb *συμβάλλεσθαι*) one that is not visible.<sup>120</sup> Both unique and similar to other rivers, Herodotus’ Nile fulfills two contradictory functions. On the one hand, unfathomable and mysterious, its sources lost beyond reach, the Nile is with Egypt as a whole the very symbol of the problems facing human understanding that the know-it-all Greeks, with their usual penchant for simplifying things, do not properly recognize.<sup>121</sup> On the other hand, the strangeness of the Nile is itself limited by its participation in the general nature of the rivers of the world, which it cumulatively sums up and represents.

Herodotus both seeks symmetry and rejects the assumption of it, because his attempt to make sense of things scientifically goes hand in hand with a fear of the ideological consequences of oversimplification. His inference that the Nile and the Ister “are equal” [*ἕξισοῦσθαι*] (2.34.2) in conformity to a conceptual model appears to contradict his polemic elsewhere against the regularity of the shape of the earth as was represented in the early maps—a perfect circle, surrounded by Ocean and internally subdivided into the three great landmasses of Europe, Asia, and Libya (4.36.2, 4.42).<sup>122</sup> The edges of Herodotus’ earth are

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parts of the world, see the gloss of similarity at 2.25.1. Herodotus’ view that something that occurs in nature is susceptible to reduplication under the same circumstances emerges in the report of the “wonder” of the skulls observed at Pelusion (3.12) and verified elsewhere: “I saw another similar case [*καὶ ἄλλα ὅμοια*] at Papremis” (3.12.4).

119. 2.10.1–3. Cf. 2.29.3, 4.53.5

120. Herodotus writes, ὡς ἐγὼ συμβάλλομαι τοῖσι ἐμφανέσι τὰ μὴ γινωσκόμενα τεκμαιρόμενος [as I conjecture, inferring the things that are not known from those that are apparent] (2.33.2; see also 2.34). Lloyd (1966, 337–44) cites Anaxagoras’ dictum ὄψις τῶν ἀδηλῶν τὰ φαινόμενα [things that are apparent are the vision of things that are unclear] (Sext. Emp. VII 140 = DK 59 B 21a) as the first extant formulation of this use of analogy, widely applied by the Hippocratic writers.

121. See, e.g., the Greeks’ fanciful theories on the flood, by which they want to be “signaled for their cleverness” (2.20.1); their limited conception of the extent of Egypt (2.15–16); their ethnologically ignorant version of the story of Psammetichus’ experiment (2.2.5) and tale about Heracles (2.45); and their “myth” concerning the Nile’s origin from Ocean (2.21, 23).

122. Cf. 2.23, 4.8.2 (see Lloyd 1966, 342; Gould 1989, 89–90, Thomas 2000, 75–101). See also the contradiction between the “symmetrical” assumption at 4.36.1 and the criticism of symmetry at 4.36.2 (see Romm 1989).



irregular and provisional; the perimeter of the inhabited world is often merely defined by the impossibility for men to reach out and discern what lies beyond a physical obstacle.<sup>123</sup> The large-scale subdivisions of the *oikoumene* are to him mere theoretical constructs with little empirical validity. Herodotus attributes tremendous importance to natural boundaries as symbols of the limits human action must respect. In this context, the separation between Asia and Europe is fundamental; ignoring it for the sake of aggression epitomizes *adikia*.<sup>124</sup> A different set of epistemological and ethical principles, however, is operative in his geographical discussions. This disorganized stage-by-stage traveler refuses to interpret the earth in terms of global canonical subdivisions.<sup>125</sup> These lead to unacceptable territorial claims and to the compartmentalization of experience.

The Persians consider as their property [οἰκηεῦνται] Asia and the foreign peoples who live in it, while they regard as something separate [ἠγγιγνται κερχωρίσθαι] Europe and the Greek world (1.4.4; cf. 9.116.3)

Herodotus rejects this sort of imperialistic allotment just as he devalues big geographical boundaries.<sup>126</sup> Arabia does not end at the Arabian gulf except “by convention” [νόμῳ] (4.39.1). The notion of the three continents, he insists, falsely assumes the similarity of these lands in size and shape, while “not small are the differences [τὰ διαφέροντα] between them” (4.42.1). The contours of Asia, except on the eastern side, “have been found to be similar” [ἀνεύρηται ὅμοια] to Libya (4.44.3), but Europe is “equal” to both of them in length; in width, Europe “does not appear to me even comparable [συμβάλλειν ἀξίη]” (4.42.1).

Herodotus’ scorn (γελῶ, 4.36.2) for the Asia/Libya subdivision adumbrates an objection to continents in general, be they three or two. To him, the whole earth is one (μίη ἐούση γῆ), and the three continents are only

123. There are numerous glosses of “not knowing” in reference to what lies beyond certain points: 2.31, 3.98.2, 4.16.1, 4.17.2, 4.18.3, 4.25.1, 4.27, 4.40.2, 4.45.1, 4.53.5, 4.56. See Romm 1992, 10–37, especially 32–37.

124. See my introduction.

125. Contrast the apparently regular percourse of Hecataeus’ *Periodos Ges* (see Pearson 1939, 30–96). On the theoretical schematism of Anaximander’s map, see Van Paassen 1957, 57–61.

126. See Thomas 2000, 98–100. Cf. chap. 3, n. 176, on how Herodotus’ conception of geographical boundaries must adapt to ideological considerations.

names.<sup>127</sup> They represent such a distorted view of the way in which lands and water are distributed that, among other things, they are even unable to take into account the existence of Egypt or at least its delta (2.16). A country, he interprets, is not a predefined geographical entity surrounded by physical boundaries but rather coincides with the area of habitation of a certain people (2.17.1). Herodotus does not replace the old schemes with a new one of his own making; instead, he uses the traditional names as a matter of convenience (4.45.5). But what travel and *opsis* empirically teach him of the physical world, and what he wants his audience to visualize, is rather the parceling up of the earth by multiple boundary lines and the assiduous and more or less random repetition of physical patterns and shapes, in various sizes, throughout the unitarian surface of the *oikoumene*.<sup>128</sup> “Comparing large things with little” once again, Herodotus explains that “Scythia borders on the sea, to the east and to the south, just like [κατά περ] Attica,” and that “the Taurians inhabit it in about the same way as if [παραπλήσια . . . ὡς εἰ] in Attica a people different from the Athenians should inhabit Cape Sounion” or “as if in Iapygia a people other than the Iapygians were to begin at the Brentesian harbor and inhabit the cape up to Taras.” These are just two examples, and there are “many other similar [παρόμοια] promontories that Tauris resembles [οἶκε].”<sup>129</sup>

In physical processes, as in shapes, differences and similarities are everywhere mutually balanced. In the land of Assyria, it does not rain and the crops are irrigated by the river through hand-operated machines, “not as [οὐ κατά περ] in Egypt, where the river rises.” But “canals cut across all the territory of Babylon, just like [κατά περ] Egypt (1.193.1–2).” In Scythia, the country most antithetical to Egypt, “rivers are not much fewer in number than canals in Egypt” (4.47.1). The nature of both lands is such that “men do not plow.”<sup>130</sup> When differences between two regions are most striking, analogy operates across categories (vertical analogy) and by compensation: “Somehow, the extremities of the inhabited earth obtained as their lot the most beautiful things just as [κατά περ] Greece

127. See 4.45.2–5; Lloyd 1976, 78, 83–85; Bornitz 1968, 190–92; Benardete 1969, 111; von Fritz 1936, 320–30; Thomas 2000, 80–86.

128. Cf. Immerwahr 1966, 316.

129. 4.99.4–5. See also 4.156.3, 4.182, 4.183.1.

130. 2.14.2, 4.2.2. See n. 91 in the present chapter; Hartog 1988, 17–18. See also the parallels between Babylon and Egypt (4.198.1–3), Libya and Babylon (4.198.1–3). On Libya and Scythia, see Benardete 1969, 121–26; Rosellini and Saïd 1978, 973–74.

obtained the most beautifully mixed climate” (3.106.1). In a subsequent description, the *eschatiai* (edges) are shown to contain both the most beautiful and the ugliest of things, as when the most fragrant of Arabic spices, ledanon, is said to be found in the stinkiest of places (3.112). Yet the beautiful and its opposite are distributed everywhere, and the verbal correspondence between τὰ κάλλιστα [the most beautiful things] and τὰς ὄρας πολλὸν τι κάλλιστα κεκρημένας [the most beautifully mixed climate] alerts us to a qualitative similarity hidden behind the opposition.

#### *Does Climate Determine Culture?*

The word *somehow* (κως) at 3.106.1 (just quoted) expresses the idea that the empirically observed equivalence eludes the clear cause-and-effect combination of scientific reasoning. In a similarly inexplicable way, the patterned texture of the physical earth extends to the men who inhabit it. When the programmatic introduction to the Egyptian ethnography, quoted earlier, states that the Egyptians, “together with” [ἅμα] their different climate and river, also have laws and customs that are the complete opposite of those of the rest of mankind (2.35.2), Herodotus is reformulating the fifth-century medical theory about the influence of climate with drastic changes. The Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places*, though not exempt from inconsistencies and self-corrections, attempts to establish a logical connection between the natural features of a land, the physique of its inhabitants, and even their moral character. The description of the marshy area around the Phasis exemplifies the mixture of the scientific and the ethical codes: here the climate is hot and rainy and the waters turbid; the inhabitants have big, thick bodies, no visible joints or veins, jaundiced complexions, and a natural sluggishness with regard to physical toil (*Airs* 15). All finer regional distinctions, moreover, are subordinate to the difference that according to the Hippocratic author separates Europeans from Asiatics. In Asia, the stability of the climate and the fertility of the land stunt the courage, industry, spirit, and strength of the people (*Airs* 13, 16).

The Hippocratic writer’s interest in the scientific causes of ethnic differences is proportional to his penchant for evaluating foreignness as a set of pathologies, abnormalities, or diseases. Herodotus’ ethnographic discourse stays clear of both things. He notices that even the inhabitants of the same general area are often different, but he does not say why. Only occasionally and provisionally does the text suggest that climate may

partly account for the way people are.<sup>131</sup> The introduction to the Egyptian ethnography, at any rate, does not scientifically explain the correspondence between land and people but treats it as a sort of mystery: “Egyptian customs differ from those of the rest of mankind *not because* Egypt’s geographical situation differs from the rest of the world, but *just as* it is different.”<sup>132</sup> A vertical analogy is here established between land and people, by which one level of reality represents the other.<sup>133</sup> The physical texture of a unitarian *oikoumene* finds its symbolic correspondence in the patterns of differences and similarities of *nomos*.

#### *The Texture of Nomos*

At the intersection between a people’s land and its *nomoi*, between the physical and the cultural, are natural resources and the manifestations of material culture that these resources determine: foods, fabrics and clothing, buildings and utensils. In this area especially, Herodotus employs the sort of comparative language that emerges in the geographic passage about the Thracian Chersonese cited earlier. Hartog emphasizes its rhetorical value for making the exotic understandable through an appeal to

131. See Lateiner 1986, 16, and now especially Thomas 2000, 103–14. In the *Histories*, the idea that an infertile land makes people hardy and a fertile land produces “soft” men appears in the historical narrative, in the mouth of characters: see 7.102.1 (Demaratus) and 9.122.1–2 (Cyrus), the second particularly close to *Airs, Waters, Places* 12, but not backed by the narrator’s authority and occurring in a notoriously enigmatic episode (see Dewald 1997; Pelling 1997). The narrator establishes in his own voice a connection between the nature of the environment and the people’s physical characteristics, at 2.22.3 (men south of Egypt are black because of heat) and 2.77.3 (a stable climate promotes good health; seasonal changes bring diseases). For effects of climate on a region’s fauna, see 4.29, 5.10. Elsewhere in the *Histories*, the influence of environmental determinism is muted. Lateiner (1989, 159) sees an implicit connection between Egypt’s stable climate and the Egyptians’ unwarlikeness, acceptance of despotism, and unchanging institutions (see, e.g., the interpretive gloss at 2.147.2), though he admits that the narrator never formulates that thought. Herodotus says that the Ionians have built their cities in the most beautiful climate of the world (1.142.1), and in some cases, he represents the Ionians as weak (see especially 1.143.2, 6.11–12). Beautiful climate is, however, elsewhere attributed to Greece as a whole (3.106.1), and the weakness of the Ionians appears to be a matter of history and institutions (1.169.1, 4.137–39, 4.142). Aside from the general “semiclimatic” and moralistic idea that a tough life makes a people tough, Herodotus’ message on why an *ethnos* is the way it is proposes a variety of partial or possible reasons, none of them with absolute and general validity.

132. Immerwahr 1956, 279.

133. The Egyptians are like their land somewhat in the same sense as Darius (albeit misguidedly) perceives that he and the river Tearos are alike and belong together, “the best and the most beautiful of all men” and “the best and most beautiful of sources” (4.91.2).

the familiar.<sup>134</sup> But comparisons of this kind are also a manifestation of Herodotus' ideology of a unitarian world. The world can be explained in this way because it is “same,” with a limited number of possible shapes.

When the river rises and the plain is flooded, a great number of lilies, which the Egyptians call lotus, grow from the water. People pick them and dry them in the sun and then ground what they extract from the middle, which is similar [ἐμφερές] to poppy seed, and make from it breads baked on the fire. There is also a root of this lotus, which is edible and rather sweet, of the size of an apple [μεγάθος κατὰ μῆλον]. There are also other lilies, similar [ἐμφερέα] to roses, that grow in the river, the fruit of which is found in a separate calyx that sprouts on the side from the root, very similar in appearance [ἰδέην ὁμοιότατον] to a wasp's honeycomb: inside this are several grains as large as [ὅσον τε] an olive, which can be eaten fresh or dry. (2.92.2–4)

Each object that is “different” becomes disassembled into parts—roots, flower, fruit—and explained as a combination of similarities.<sup>135</sup> The comparative discourse visually recalls familiar appearances, even in those cases when size is what is actually being compared.<sup>136</sup> The second terms of comparison include natural and cultural products from the internally diversified Greek world: Cyrenaic lotus (2.96.1), Boeotian sandals (1.195.1), Lesbian craters (4.61.1). The Egyptian Hephaestus in Memphis is “very similar [ἐμφερέστατον] to the Phoenician Pataiki.” If someone has never seen a Pataiki, another analogue is available from a different region: it is the “imitation” [μίμησις] of a pygmy (3.37.2–3). Exotic objects that resemble things found in Greece or in other foreign lands are not merely

134. Hartog 1988, 225–30. See also Corcella 1984, 69.

135. So also are the hippopotamus (2.71), the ibis, and the water snake (2.76.1, 3). The procedure is similar to that for describing hybrids, but the effect is familiarizing rather than the opposite. Cf. 2.68.2–3, 4.23.3, 4.177. See Hartog 1988, 249–50. Another type of gloss follows the pattern “similar in everything, except such and such” (see 4.183.3, 4.61.1, 4.23.3).

136. In Libya, there are oryxes “as big as oxen” [μέγαθος . . . κατὰ βοῦν] (4.192.1) and crocodiles three cubits long and “very similar to lizards” [τῆσι σαύρησι ἐμφερέστατοι] (4.192.2); the giant ants in India are smaller than dogs and larger than foxes, and they dig in the sand “in the same way” [κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον] as Greek ants, to which they are “very similar in appearance” (3.102.2). See also 2.67.2, 2.73.2, 3.100, 3.106.2, 4.192.3.

easier to describe; they reveal the patterned character of cultural artifacts all over the world.

Human industry, like nature, is always different but imitates itself incessantly. Reminders of this fact shorten the distance between the rest of the world and Greece in ways that, given the historical framework of Herodotus' descriptions, may suggest more intangible points of vertical analogy. The simple notice that the outermost wall of Median Ecbatana is "just about the size of that of Athens" [κατὰ τὸν Ἀθηνέων κύκλον μάλιστα κη τὸ μέγαθος] puts two imperial cities side by side.<sup>137</sup> Sparta momentarily intrudes in the Scythian narrative when the narrator stops to notice that the cauldron built by king Aryantas at Exampaïos in Scythia is "six times as large as" the crater Pausanias dedicated on the mouth of the Black Sea.<sup>138</sup> Just as quantitative comparisons concerning size also suggest analogy in shape, so comparisons between two objects cause an overlap of their respective contexts.<sup>139</sup>

Foreign objects may also be explained in terms of their similarity to something that appears to lie outside their own category. If we look at the explanatory analogies in texts that are not concerned with the description of the world (e.g., most of the Hippocratic treatises), we notice the special poetic quality of Herodotean comparisons.<sup>140</sup> These set side by side war, sailing, hunting, agriculture, and building as branches of a unitarian, device-producing field of human activity. A boat can be compared to an ox to be curbed (2.29.2) or to a shield (1.194.2), because it constitutes in itself the manifestation and symbol of many different sorts of effort. The most famous of these Herodotean transferences, in an ethnographic gloss describing the relay system of Persian postal couriers,<sup>141</sup> has an impact not unlike that of a Homeric simile: "the first rider delivers his charge to the second, and the second to the third, and thence it passes from hand to

137. 1.98.5. See Georges 1994, 140.

138. 4.81.3. This comparison occurs in a narrative full of implicit analogies with Spartan realities discussed later in the present chapter; ("The Sameness of the Scythians").

139. For other comparison of man-made items, see 2.7.1 (the Egyptian road from the sea to Heliopolis is almost equal in length to the road that leads from the altar of the twelve gods in Athens to the temple of Olympian Zeus in Olympia); 2.170 (the pond in the precinct of Athena at Saïs is about the same size as the Round Pond at Delos); 5.59 (Cadmean letters are similar to Ionian letters); 4.74 (Scythian hemp is very similar to linen).

140. Hippocratic analogies tend to assimilate physiological processes of the human body to technological processes or the life of plants. Lloyd (1966, 345–60) gives many examples. See also Lateiner 1986, 13.

141. On ethnographic glosses, see chap. 1, "Referential Glosses."

hand, just as the torch-race that the Greeks perform in honor of Hephaestus" (8.98.2). The function of technical explanation and illustration cannot be separated from the ideological message it communicates metaphorically: the moral equivalence between two different kinds of performances, with different practical goals, occurring in different cultural contexts.

From the experience of "same shape, same size" or "same procedure," Herodotus' pursuit of the similar extends to the observation of "same function": "X is to 'them' what Y is to 'us'."<sup>142</sup> Just as a linguistic translation must overcome a conceptual discrepancy, so the ethnographer translates culture by adjusting the difference to point out equivalence: the Issedones clean out and gild the skull of a dead man and then use it "as a sacred image" [ἄτε ἀγάλματι], making solemn sacrifices every year: "each son does this for his father, just as the Greeks celebrate the Genesia [κατὰ περ Ἑλληνες τὰ γενέσια]" (4.26.2). The natural and the literal have a greater role among the Issedones than among the Greeks, but the purpose of foreign and domestic custom is the same.<sup>143</sup> Glosses of this type make explicit a procedure Herodotus follows as a matter of course. Every time he describes a practice that occurs with no altar, no fire, no libation, no flute, no fillets, no barley meal (1.132.1), or a ritual in which the victim is tripped from behind and strangled (4.60), and calls each of these a θυσία (sacrifice), he posits an equivalence that turns otherness into otherwiseness.<sup>144</sup> The practice of *interpretatio Graeca* does not in Herodotus have an ethnocentric impulse; it is rather the foundation of his relativism.

I am now ready to discuss the role of comparative glosses noting that two or more peoples are in certain respects similar or follow similar practices.

142. See Hartog 1988, 227.

143. For the Greeks, this degree of contact with the dead body may have been regarded as polluting. See Garland 1985, 41–47. On the Genesia and other Greek commemorative practices for the dead, see Jacoby 1944; Garland 1985, 104–8. For other Herodotean equivalences, see 1.202.2 (Caucasian primitives inhabiting the islands on the Araxes River have discovered [verb ἐξευρίσχω] a particular fruit, which they burn and inhale to become inebriated, "as the Greeks with wine," the local equivalent of a symposium), 3.98.4 (the Indians of the marshes wear a mat made of reed "like a breastplate"). Cf. 4.75.1 (for the equivalence between a Scythian hemp sauna and a Greek steam bath), 1.193.5 (for the equivalence between Assyrian cultivation of palm trees and Greek cultivation of fig trees).

144. Cf. Mora 1985, 57.

As a rule, similarities between different ethnic groups are taken as a sign of mutual contact,<sup>145</sup> common origin,<sup>146</sup> or borrowing.<sup>147</sup> Herodotus points out the debt of the Greeks toward various barbarian nations much more frequently than the other way around.<sup>148</sup> When emphasizing the debt of Greek culture to Egypt in particular, he creates a corollary to the greater antiquity, wisdom, and moral authority of the Egyptians.<sup>149</sup> The facts that ritual practices of certain Greek sects “are in agreement” [ὁμολογέουσι] with Egyptian religious regulations<sup>150</sup> and that the Egyptians celebrate some of the festivals in honor of Dionysus “about in the same way as the Greeks” [κατὰ ταῦτα σχεδὸν πάντα Ἑλλήσι] (2.48.2; cf. 2.49.2) are presented as cases of Greek borrowing from Egypt.<sup>151</sup>

A gloss of this type records that the Egyptians depict Isis with horns

145. In the case of *ethnea* living close to each other or tribes belonging to the same large *ethnos* (e.g., Scythians, Thracians, or Libyans), such interventions serve to confirm the assumption of internal differentiation (see discussion of differentiation earlier in this chapter). Proximity is the easily inferred cause of similarity between Lydians and Greeks (1.35.2, 1.74.6, 1.94.1, 7.74.1), Indians near Caspatyrus and Bactrians (3.102.1), Libyan nomads and Egyptians (4.186.1).

146. See 2.104.1–5 (Colchians and Egyptians), 4.108 (Geloni and Greeks).

147. This is true even when the historical circumstances of the borrowing are unknown, as in the case of the language of Caunians and Carians (1.172.1) and that of the dress of Sigynnae and Medes (5.9). On diffusionism, see Müller 1972, 19–20; Lloyd 1975, 150.

148. The Greeks contribute the technique of welding iron to world culture (1.25), pederasty to the Persians (1.135), most of their customs to the Asbystae (4.170), and a ritual for Perseus to the Egyptians of Chemmis (2.91.4).

149. According to Herodotus, the Egyptians invented the year and its subdivisions (2.4.1); geometry, which was then introduced into Greece (2.109); altars, statues, temples, animal sculptures, and use of the names of the twelve gods, the last of which the Greeks took from them (2.4.2; cf. 2.43.2, 2.49, 2.50.1); divination (2.49.2, 2.52.2) and oracular shrines (2.54–57); festivals and processions (2.58; cf. 171.2–3); and hemerology (2.82) and the theory of transmigration of souls (2.123.2–3), these last two followed by some Greeks. The Athenians, thanks to Solon, have adopted in perpetuity what Herodotus evaluates as an “impeccable” Egyptian law (2.177.2; cf. 2.160). Herodotus says that the round shield and the helmet have come to the Greeks from Egypt (4.180.4).

150. 2.81.2. On the relation that Herodotus establishes (here and at 2.123.2–3) between Egyptian cult and Pythagoreanism and Orphism, see Froidefond 1971, 187–89.

151. According to Herodotus, Greek borrowings from other peoples include, “interestingly enough” (ἄρρα), from the Libyans, the dresses of the statue of Athena, the aegis, the ritual cry of women at sacrifices, and the practice of yoking four horses (4.189.1), as well as the god Poseidon (2.50.3); games from the Lydians (1.94.1–2); hoplitic equipment invented by the Carians (1.171.4); the Dioscuri, Hera, Hestia, Themis, the Charites, the nereids, and ithyphallic Hermes from the Pelasgians (2.50.2–2.51.1); the solar clock, the meridian, and the subdivision of the day into twelve parts from Babylon (2.109.3); writing from the Phoenicians (5.58); the Ionian dress, which is actually Carian (5.88.1).



“just as the Greeks do” [κατά περ Ἑλληνες] (2.41.2). The similarity to the Greeks here works as a sort of protective shield under which the text raises for the first time the difficult issue of Egyptian theriomorphy. The identification of gods with animals and the worship of living animals appear to interfere with Herodotus’ agenda of demonstrating to a Greek audience the superiority of Egyptian purity, religiosity, and dedication to the divine.<sup>152</sup> His account is fuzzy in this area, for it simultaneously communicates several overlapping and contradictory messages: (1) Egyptian animal worship is “different” and disturbing; (2) it is (a) purely symbolic and therefore (b) similar to some Greek representations of the divine; (3) it is “Good,” a special sign of the Egyptians’ closeness to the gods and of a profoundly instructive view about the mutual relationship among different forms of life in the cosmos.<sup>153</sup> This conflicted attitude first comes to the fore in the excess of discourse that accompanies Herodotus’ account of Egyptian representation of the divinity the Greeks call Pan (2.46.2). He begins by underlining similarity (2b).

In Egypt, painters and sculptors represent Pan with a goat face and he-goat legs, just as the Greeks do [κατά περ Ἑλληνες].

Next, he reassures by negation (2a).

... not because they believe him to be of such form—no, they believe him to be the same as the other gods.  
[οὐτι τοιοῦτον νομίζοντες εἶναί μιν ἀλλ’ὅμοιον τοῖσι ἄλλοισι θεοῖσι].

Finally, he admits to some uneasiness with this type of thing (1).

For what reason they depict him in this form, it is not too pleasant for me to say [οὐ μοι ἥδιόν ἐστι λέγειν].

152. Egyptian zoology was repulsive or ludicrous to outsiders. See Lloyd 1976, 291–96, especially 293–94 for Greek and Roman evaluations. In a fragment of Anaxandrides (39 Edmunds) an Athenian character comically declares the incompatibility between Greeks and Egyptians largely on the basis of the latter’s zoolatric practices.

153. Cf. Froidefond 1971, 202–3. The narrator’s ambivalence does not at any rate mean that the analysis “the humanity of the Greek gods makes the Greeks superior to the Egyptians” (Benardete 1969, 46) represents the message of the text.

The negative program in the sentence just quoted is consistent with the general introduction, where the narrator declares himself not eager (οὐκ . . . προθύμως) to give detailed report of “divine things” he learned, on the grounds that what different cultures know about the gods is “equal” [ἴσον]; he will therefore avoid the topic unless absolutely compelled by his argument (ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἐξαναγκασζόμενος).<sup>154</sup> Both times, Herodotus expresses himself subjectively in terms of personal distaste rather than blame and invokes similarity or equivalence. One passage where he breaks his rule of silence, evidently compelled by the *logos*, produces an apologetic effect: it etiologically explains the Theban prohibition to sacrifice sheep and rams to Zeus and the statues representing Zeus with the face of a ram, with a local tradition that is comfortingly similar to the familiar Greek myth of Zeus and Semele. Heracles wanted to behold Zeus directly, but Zeus did not want to be seen by him. Since Heracles insisted, Zeus skinned and decapitated a ram and then showed himself to Heracles wearing the ram’s hide and holding its head in front of himself (2.42.3–4). The myth proves appealing because it reduces theriomorphy to a disguise; it communicates the message that the Egyptians do not really identify Zeus with a ram, just as the interpretive gloss at 2.46.2 explicitly says that they do not really believe Pan to be τοιοῦτον—a he-goat.<sup>155</sup> The reminders that the Greeks also represent Isis with cow’s horns and Pan with the face and legs of a goat similarly have the function of diffusing strangeness.

Yet the “difference” represented by the Egyptians’ peculiar relationship to the animal world is also treated as clearly *axion logou*. In the account of Pan’s cult in the district of Mendes, the explicit denial that Mendesian Pan is a goat competes with the implication that he really is one. The logical discontinuity of the interpretive discourse barely camouflages the idea: “This is why the aforementioned Egyptians do not sacrifice he-goats and she-goats: the Mendesians reckon Pan to be one of the eight gods” (2.46.1). Later on, the narrative makes a revealing transition from goats in general to one special τράγος, venerated above all the others (2.46.3–4). A gloss intervenes, to show that the identification between god and animal is inscribed in the language: “In Egyptian, both

154. 2.3.2. The need to protect the relativistic position is clearly one of the issues here, though not the only one. See Linforth 1924; Gould 1994, 92–93, 103. Cf. the refusal to explain why animals are sacred in Egypt at 2.65.2 and 2.47.2.

155. For ram cults in ancient Egypt, see Lloyd 1976, 190–94. Herodotus’ reductionism in explaining Egyptian theriomorphy is discussed by Gould (1994, 202–3).

the ram and Pan are called Mendes” (2.46.4). Finally, Herodotus provides a terse narrative of what he introduces as a shocking event and apparently interprets as a public ritual.

In this district, in my time, there took place a prodigious thing  
 [τέρας]:  
 a he-goat coupled with a woman.  
 This came about as a public exhibition [ἐπίδειξιν].<sup>156</sup>

Among the entries in the preliminary list of Egyptian customs that are “opposite to those of the rest of the world,” one records, “the daily life of other people is defined as separate [χωρὶς . . . ἀποκέκριται] from that of beasts, but the Egyptians live theirs together with their animals” (2.36.2). Later on, an evaluative statement introduces a survey of sacred animals (2.65–76) and directs the listener to interpret it as an illustration of the extraordinary Egyptian piety. The narrative describes the role of animals in religion, the symbiosis of the Egyptians with their animals, and the *phusis* (physical characteristics) and modes of behavior of the animals themselves. Like human beings, animals perform goal-directed action; at the same time, they seem to enjoy a special connection with the supernatural world. Thus, male cats contrive (σοφίζονται) to couple with the females depriving them of their young (2.66.2), while on other occasions cat behavior is divinely inspired (θεῖα πρήγματα).<sup>157</sup> As the land of *thomata*, Egypt once again puts into focus fundamental problems of analogy and difference. Elsewhere in the *Histories*, the observation of primitive cultures raises the issue of the cosmic relationship between the realm of animals, human custom, and the divine.<sup>158</sup> But here is a developed society where the most cultured and pious of all people worship animals and where animals enact those same elementary impulses that

156. 2.46.4. The form of the discourse here (summary introduction, narrative, concluding gloss) resembles 7.57.1, but the interpretive gloss in the conclusion is opaque; see chap. 1, “What Is Metanarrative?” in the present book. On the tradition of bestiality in the Mendesian nome, see Lloyd 1976, 216.

157. 2.66.3. See Smith 1992, 7–15, 96–107. Cf. the funeral ritual of the phoenix (2.73) and the ibises defending the pass at Buto against the winged serpents of Arabia (2.75). See also the alleged wolf ritual at 2.122.3 and the cow statue with the attached story of Mycerinus’ daughter at 2.129.3–2.130.1.

158. The notion of a divinely and naturally determined analogy between the animal and the human world is implied in the section on the extremities of the earth and especially at 3.108; see especially Pagel 1927, 30–33, on this passage as a description of nature that parallels the historical process.

among human beings translate into *nomos*. Herodotus' view of a vertical correspondence between different levels of reality, which elsewhere expresses itself in animal symbolism and analogy, is susceptible to *historie* especially in Egypt.<sup>159</sup>

In book 2, the contradiction between the sameness and otherness of the world emerges, then, as a theoretical principle, which encompasses the cosmological, the geographical, and the ethnological spheres. The initial introduction to Egyptian culture attributes to it customs that are all opposite to those of the rest of the world (2.35). In the course of the narrative, this statement is partially confirmed and partially corrected, as Egypt becomes archetypal in both historical and symbolic senses.<sup>160</sup> Other similarities reveal an ethical affinity between Egypt and Greece that cannot be accounted for in terms of contact, influence, or borrowing (see, e.g., 2.92.1). In the section just preceding the narrative on Egyptian animal worship, this affinity between Egypt and Greece in opposition to the rest of the world is surprisingly formulated in terms of a clear-cut separation, first institutionalized by the Egyptians, between animals and humans.

Almost all other peoples, except Egyptians and Greeks, have intercourse in temples and go to the temple after intercourse without having washed, considering that humans are like other animals [κατά περ τὰ ἄλλα κτήνεα]. (2.64.1)

Sparta, which throughout the *Histories* represents what is most desirable from the point of view of social and political ideology, is also the city of Greece where Herodotus finds the greatest number of correspondences with non-Greek societies, including the Egyptian society.<sup>161</sup> The origins and causes of such correspondences remain indefinable. Similarly, in his discussion of the special honors the Egyptians reserve for their hereditary warrior caste, the Machimoi, the narrator stops again to notice a similarity with Greek, and especially Spartan, values and declines, to interpret it as yet another sign of Egyptian influence.

159. Froidefond (1971, 193–94) underlines Herodotus' philosophical interpretation of Egyptian religion as expressing the notion of a solidarity among living beings not without similarities with Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines.

160. See Benardete 1969, 47.

161. See 2.80 (respect for the elders; see Froidefond 1971, 176); 6.60 (hereditary assignment of professional occupations). Sparta is compared to foreign nations also at 6.58.2 and 6.59.

I cannot specifically determine whether the Greeks have learned this also from the Egyptians, seeing that also Thracians, Scythians, Persians, Lydians, and almost all the barbarians regard as less worthy of honor than the other citizens those who learn a trade and their descendants, considering noble instead those who abstain from manual work and especially those who devote themselves to war. This is something, to be sure, that all the Greeks have learned and especially the Spartans, though the Corinthians are those who despise artisans the least. (2.167.1–2)

The two cultural features involved in this comparison—contempt of manual labor and admiration for the pursuit of war—find specific formulation in the list of Thracian customs (5.6.2). Of the other foreign peoples named in 2.167.1, the Scythians are described as warlike throughout, and the Persians appear even more aristocratically contemptuous of petty trades than do the Greeks themselves (1.153). The inclusion of the Lydians in the list is surprising, however—even more than the fact that the gloss is attached to the description of the unaggressive Egyptians. It shows the extent to which Herodotus wants to stretch the similarity.<sup>162</sup> Wherever the *nomos* comes from, and regardless of its cross-cultural and intracultural variations (e.g., the fact that in Greece it is followed more by the Spartans than by the Corinthians), it represents an area of ideological agreement between and within two internally differentiated groups—“almost all the barbarians” and “all the Greeks.”

Many other glosses in the *Histories* underline resemblances between a foreign culture and the Greeks or between one foreign culture and another. Formulae of the type “about the same, except for . . . ,” also found in the description of exotic animals and plants,<sup>163</sup> place the narratable difference in the context of the overall similarity of certain customs (see, e.g., 1.74.6). Such formulae also point out the overall similarity of two people in a specific area of culture, with the exclusion of a smaller group within a larger *ethnos*. The similarity must remain pure discourse and devoid of narrative content, while the difference is narrated, often with an unforgettable visual detail (see 4.190).

In most cases of this sort, once again, similarity remains unexplained. Nasamones and Massagetae live at the opposite ends of the world, but

162. On Lydian unwarlikeness, see “The Sameness of the Lydians” later in the present chapter.

163. See end of n. 135 in the present chapter.

(predictably) they are characterized by about the same degree of primitivity; as a consequence, they have similar marriage customs, just as the Babylonians share certain cultural practices with the equally developed Egyptians.<sup>164</sup> But Herodotus also establishes connections between societies with discrepant levels of culture.<sup>165</sup> The frequent cross-cultural references convey two distinct, but not incompatible, attitudes. Firstly, Herodotus' *historie* teaches that long-range coincidences, recurrences, and overlaps are something we can count on in the sphere of culture, just as it verifies the more or less random repetition of small patterns on the physical surface of the earth. This assumption of similarity can even provide some corroboration for the existence of an unseen cultural phenomenon, if one knows about the existence of one like it somewhere else.<sup>166</sup>

Secondly, however, recurrence and similarity, though likely, are underrated phenomena, which the narrator points out as worthy of great interest. The tradition of ethnographic discourse to which Herodotus is the heir is overdetermined in the other way. Difference is the standard of narratability and what the audience is readiest to expect and perhaps best trained to recognize—difference, most especially, from themselves. Particularly in the sphere of custom, therefore, Herodotus is generally more intent on showing the mutual equivalency of foreign practices and their functional character and normalcy than on letting his audience gape at their strangeness. When, instead of difference or equivalency, actual similarity occurs, it constitutes a “wonder,” that is, a profoundly satisfying discovery that invites reflection.<sup>167</sup>

The Egyptians follow their ancestral customs rather than acquiring new ones. Among other notable customs, they have also a particular song, “Linus,” which is also sung in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and other countries but changes name from culture to culture, though it happens to be the same [ὅντιός συμφέρεται εἶναι] as the one the

164. On the Massagetae and Nasamones, see 4.172.2; cf. 1.216.1. See Rosellini and Saïd 1978, 975. On the Babylonians and Egyptians, see 1.182.1–2, 1.198.

165. He establishes connections between Babylonians and the Lycians of Patara (1.182.3), Babylonians and the Eneti of Illyria (1.196.1), Babylonians and Cyprians (1.199.5), Ethiopian Macrobioi and Egyptians (3.24.2), Satrai and Greeks (7.111, where one item is part of an explicit comparison and another suggests implicit analogy).

166. See 4.33.5, 4.195 (cf. 2.150.2–4). On the principle that “things that are apparent are the vision of things that are unclear,” see n. 120 and corresponding text in the present chapter.

167. See Lloyd 1975, 147; Corcella 1984, 90–91; Giraudeau 1984, 121.

Greeks sing; so, among the many things in Egypt that I am in wonder about [ἀποθωμάζειν με], there is also the question of where they found this “Linus.” They seem always to have sung this song. (2.79.1–2)

The Egyptian ethnography begins by presenting Egypt as the land possessing the greatest number of *thomata*, as well as *nomoi* and *ethea* that are all opposite to the rest of humankind (1.35). In the passage just quoted, a minute similarity is ranked among the Egyptian wonders: it connects not only Egyptians and Greeks, or Egyptians and Phoenicians, whose historical contacts can be reconstructed, but Egyptians and many other peoples from whom the Egyptians are isolated and to whom they are, as a rule, opposite. The feature involved in the similarity is moreover a specific—and one could almost say, unessential—ritual, something that belongs entirely to culture. Its peculiarity enhances one’s surprise at finding that it is shared.

Pre-Socratic ideas concerning the basic homogeneity of humankind lead up to the principle, later in the fifth century, that the differences among people are a matter of convention, while uniformity of *phusis* (nature) is what truly counts.<sup>168</sup> But Herodotus’ discovery about the ubiquity of “Linus” shows that for him the *cultural* uniformity one can perceive in the midst of the obvious differentiation of *nomos* is especially interesting, because it provides evidence for a connection between *nomos* and *phusis* and therefore for the equal importance of both in human events. Herodotus does not express himself in terms of an antithesis between the two and is far from proclaiming the importance of the one to the detriment of the other. The narrator or his characters qualify as “human nature” (ἄνθρωπινος and ἄνθρωπῆιος) human problems, sufferings, and limitations; what is humanly possible in contrast to what is not; and all the objective constraints that constitute not so much humanity itself as the condition that is imposed on all people of all *ethnea*.<sup>169</sup> The

168. See, e.g., Antiphon, DK 87 B44, frag. 2. See Thomas 2000, 132. For discussion on ancient ideas of the unity of humankind, see especially Guthrie 1969, 160–63; Baldry 1965, especially 23–29.

169. Cf. τὸ ἀνθρώπινον (human nature) as pattern of behavior in Thucydides (e.g., 1.22.4, 3.82.3). In Herodotus, the phrase ἡ ἀνθρωπινή φύσις once refers to what a person is capable of doing (3.65.3); the adjectives ἀνθρώπινος and ἀνθρωπῆιος tend otherwise to be referred to human affairs (πρῆγματα) and what happens to people (πάθεα). See Powell 1938, s.vv. The notion of limitation is also implicit in Herodotus’ use of the term φύσις in

complex of collective human responses to these constraints—we would like to say, the natural and at the same time divinely ordained sphere of such responses—is the “*Nomos* king of all” of 3.38.4, the embodiment of human impulse toward self-regulation and culture that generates all the different *nomoi*.<sup>170</sup> A major task in Herodotus’ study of the internal differentiation of *Nomos* consists in verifying and pointing out to his audience the cross-cultural correspondences, equivalences, and similarities of the *nomoi*.

Religious customs represent an especially important field of investigation in this respect, because they are less immediately functional and apparently less contingent on a people’s external circumstances than are other customs. They are, moreover, always based on theoretical and unverifiable constructs that vary from *ethnos* to *ethnos*. When the narrator states, “what all men know about divine things is *equal* [ἴσον],” this generalizing comparative gloss couples the idea of contingent differences with that of essential uniformity. Herodotus continuously assumes or points out the cross-cultural correspondence of major figures of gods by translating divine names; for him, this constitutes an important proof that human societies tend to conceive of the divine in somewhat similar ways. The consensus of different *ethnea* over a minor ritual expression, such as the song “Linus,” carries the proof of the unity of cultures one step further. It is amazing precisely because it does not appear to be either mutually learned or a fundamental and predictable expression of human “nature” and the human experience of the world.

### Implicit Similarity and Analogy

#### *The Sameness of the Lydians*

In the ethnographic sections, glosses of similarity counterbalance the representation of difference. Further, like the far less numerous pointers of

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reference to one’s character affecting behavior, especially courage (5.118.2, 7.103.4, 8.83.1) or anger (7.16α1); in an ethnological sense, φύσις denotes the temperament of a people (more or less aggressive; see 1.89.2, 2.45.2), which is distinct from, but not in antithesis with, their νόμοι (in the plural; see 2.45.2). Otherwise in Herodotus, φύσις is something concrete and uncontroversial, such as the family from which one is born (7.134.2) or the physical characteristics of people (3.116.2, 8.38), animals, or lands. Only at 4.39.1 does the implicit idea of φύσις, in the sense of “natural lay of the land,” come into antithesis with νόμος, in reference to the traditional (and inadequate) way of speaking about continents. See Heinimann 1945, 13–41; Giraudeau 1984, 131–32.

170. See chap. 3, “Funeral Customs and Other *Nomoi*.”



analogy in the history, these cooperate with the effects of implicit analogy that the text achieves through narrative means. When it comes to foreign peoples and places, Herodotus talks to an audience of disbelievers. Even harder for the Greeks to accept than what may sound like the tall tales of travelers (1.193.4)—and more crucial for Herodotus to display—is the similarity of the other. After the assassination of an usurper to the throne, seven noble Persians come together to reconsider the form of government that would be best for their state. Can Persians discuss political theory and come to a reasoned choice as Greeks would do? Herodotus corroborates, “Speeches were made, unbelievable [ἄπιστοι] to some of the Greeks, but they were nevertheless made” (3.80.1; cf. 6.43.3). The way in which the narrator marks the episode reveals his program to thematize similarity and overcome the prejudice of his listeners.

Frequently in the text, an unexpectedly familiar feature is strategically planted in the midst of alien foreign actions or customs. A case in point is the statement “the Egyptians call *barbaroi* all those who do not speak the same language as themselves” (2.158.5). At a different level, the narrative elicits the audience’s self-identification, for example, by recording a special custom of the Trausians: “The relatives sit around the newborn lamenting the misfortunes of which he, since he has come into this world, will have to fill the measure and enumerating all the sufferings that are the lot of men [ἀνθρωπῆια . . . πάθεα]. As for the dead, they bury him in the earth among celebrations of joy and merriment, considering all the evils from which he has been freed so that now he is entirely happy [ἐν πάσῃ εὐδαιμονίῃ]” (5.4.2). The Trausian custom as such reverses birth and funeral and is opposite to the Greek practice. But at the same time, it represents the ritual enactment of a perception of human experience widely theorized by the Greeks as a true and superior insight.<sup>171</sup> The cultural knowledge encoded in this custom raises an entire foreign people to the rank of those who are, by the audience’s own standards, especially wise.<sup>172</sup>

Toward the end of the work and within the narrative of Persian

171. The maxim that death is better than life is expressed in the *Histories* by Solon (1.31.3) and Artabanus (7.46.4). Asheri (1990b, 149) cites the parallels of Theognis 425–28 and especially Hesiod frag. 377 MW: “et Hesiodus natales hominum plangens gaudet in funere.”

172. Asheri (1990b, 149) and others assume that the Trausian custom is based on a belief in immortality, such as Herodotus attributes to the Getae (4.93), but in Herodotus’ description of the custom, the *eudaimonie* attributed to the dead person seems to consist only in the deliverance from the evils of life.

debacles, the enraged Persian commander Artayntes almost kills Xerxes' brother Masistes, who has accused him of having exercised his leadership in a manner "worse than a woman" [κακίω γυναικός] (9.107.1). An ethnographic gloss intervenes to explain that "among the Persians, to be called 'worse than a woman' is the gravest of insults" (9.107.2). What is the point of translating a cultural code that is exactly the same as that known by the audience?<sup>173</sup> The narrator never uses it in his own voice but attributes it throughout the *Histories* to various characters, especially Persian, at the same time as he is accumulating evidence of vigorous female actions and of male inadequacies vis-à-vis women.<sup>174</sup> At this particular stage of the narrative, the gloss underlines the convention to remind the listener that the current humiliating state of affairs for the Persians in the face of the victorious "masculine" Greeks is not the result of that society's fundamental values. Rather, it derives from a historical process that has interfered with those values and prevented them from becoming actualized. Herodotus' representation of the Persians proceeds, in fact, on two parallel tracks. On the one hand, they are throughout—from the times of Cyrus and the narrative time of the Persian ethnography to the battle of Plataea and the narration present of that same ethnography—masculine, tough, courageous, and dedicated. On the other hand, their "enslavement" to an autocratic ruler, the expansionism of their kings, the consequent acquisition of material goods, and the corruption of their leaders by luxury have cooperated to produce an inferior performance. This has happened even though the Persians value and cultivate what the Greeks call *andreie*, "masculine valor," just as (implicit analogy) the Greeks do.

The issue of *andreie* as a traditional standard of differentiation between Greeks and Eastern barbarians is prominent in Herodotus' representation of the unwarlike Lydians, the first *barbaroi* who enter the *Histories* as an ethnographical subject, and the barbarians who, the text insists in explicit terms, most resemble the Greeks. In the regocentric narrative about Croesus (1.6–91), one of the few passages that features

173. Greek characters and narrators in literary texts proclaiming that men should be "men and not women" and so on span a broad range, from the Homeric heroes to Socrates and beyond. See, e.g., *Il.* 2.235, 2.289, 8.163, 22.124–25; *Soph. Trach.* 1071–72; *Thuc.* 4.27.3; *Plato Apol.* 35b2–3; *Xen. Lak. Pol.* 11.3.

174. 1.155.4, 1.207.5 (with 1.212–14), 2.102.5, 7.11.1, 7.210.2, 9.20, and especially the whole Artemisia sequence (7.99.1, 8.68α1, 8.88.3). On women in Herodotus as foils for men, see Dewald 1981.

the collectivity of the Lydians, a historico-ethnographic gloss with quantitative comparison, helps exonerate the Lydians from the defeat in the battle of Sardis: “At that time there was no people in Asia more virile [ἀνδρηώτερον] or stronger [ἀλκιμώτερον] than the Lydians. They fought on horses, carried long spears, and were good riders” (1.79.3). Later on in the history, we learn that after their conquest by Cyrus and subsequent rebellion, Croesus suggested to Cyrus that he impose on the Lydians a cultural change, so that they would not rebel again. The reform included a ban on all weapons and the prescription that the Lydians wear tunics and buskins, play string instruments, and bring up their children to be shopkeepers (καπηλεύειν). In this way, Croesus said, they would soon “become women instead of men” (1.155.4).

This is a crude etiology for the effeminacy of the present-day Lydians according to the Greek stereotype; it dramatizes the consequences of their political enslavement to the Persians.<sup>175</sup> But positioned between the two passages we have just seen, an ethnographic section provides another model of development and an intelligible context for what the history depicts as an abrupt transformation of the Lydians into “women instead of men.” This insertion, which I shall call the Lydian appendix (1.92–94), also has another simultaneous—and one might say contrasting—agenda: that of establishing both explicitly and implicitly the cultural similarity of Lydians and Greeks and the status of Lydia as almost a nonforeign country. This explains why the passage, compared to the other ethnographies in the work, contains very little geographic and ethnographic information—no wonders, no lay of the land, no data on climate and production. According to the programmatic introduction, Lydia is the opposite of Egypt, with few *thomata* and little to tell (1.93.1; cf. 2.35.1). The city of Sardis, Croesus’ prosperous capital (1.29.1) later joined to Susa by the Royal Road (5.52), here receives no description. The golden dust washed down by the Pactolus (see 5.101.2; cf. 5.49.5, 6.125.4) is barely mentioned. The river Halys, Croesus’ fundamental “ethical” boundary in the historical narrative (1.6.2, 72, 75), is entirely absent.<sup>176</sup> How does the information Herodotus chooses to include help to explain present-day Lydians while supporting the notion of their affinity with the Greeks?

175. See 1.94.7 (ἐδεδούλωντο). Cf. ἐξανδραποδίσασθαι (1.155.1) and ἀνδραποδισθέντας πρηθῆναι (1.156.1).

176. See Jacoby 1913, 332, 339–40; Lombardo 1988, 172–81.

The Lydian appendix, subdivided into three clearly marked sections, occurs at the point in the *logos* when the story of Croesus has definitely ended; a dramatic aftermath (1.86–91) has invited reflection on its complex set of meanings. The first section (1.92.1), on “Croesus’ other offerings in Greece,” is a delayed addition to the narrative of the king’s dedications to Delphi, which was prominent in the history of his policies (1.46–55). The “other offerings” remind us of Croesus’ ambiguous alterity: on the one hand, his respect for Greek gods and sympathy with Greek culture; on the other hand, the gold of the dedications, which points to the Asian splendor of his rule. A historical gloss at the end of the section enhances the monarchical code: the offerings were partly financed from the estate of a political enemy who supported Croesus’ half brother, Pantaleon, in his claims to the kingship and was subsequently tortured with a carding comb and executed (1.92.2–4). This entirely new story contains the only act of royal mutilation attributed to Croesus: it rectifies the domesticated portrayal of the Lydian king in the preceding narrative and regularizes his membership in the analogical category of absolute rulers that dominates the rest of the *Histories*.

After the offerings of Croesus, Herodotus only chooses to describe the tomb of Alyattes. He advertises it as the one great ἔργον that can almost stand comparison with those of Egypt and Babylon (1.93.2). By way of this oversized mark of royal power, the discourse finally arrives at the hitherto much neglected community of the Lydians. They have commissioned the monument, and on the summit of the structure, consisting of a base of huge stones surmounted by a mound of earth, five pillars say which parts have been paid for by merchants, artisans, and prostitutes, respectively (1.93.2–3). The three professions are emblems of Lydian “femininity” (not effeminacy, as in the passage on Cyrus’ reform). Banausic activities are related to women’s work and prostitution is another form of commerce.<sup>177</sup> The ability of women to be agents in the place of men—unlike Greek women, the daughters of the Lydians raise their own dowry (by practicing prostitution) and give themselves in marriage (1.93.4)—points in the same direction. So does the emphasis on building (ἔργα), a feature we find notably in Babylon, where the commerce of women in some form or another is also traditional (1.196.1–4, 5, 1.199). Most important, however, is the ethnographer’s choice of the

177. See Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 1.3. For prostitution as one of the indices of a soft culture, see Redfield 1985, 109–10, quoted earlier in this chapter.

monument to represent and symbolize the society as a whole. Standing next to another Mermnad landmark, the Gygaean Lake (1.93.5), the *sema* (tomb/sign) of Alyattes is a *sema* of the Lydian people and their subjection to the king.

“Femininity” in the sociocultural sense, prostitution, and subjection to monarchical rule are all features that differentiate the Lydians from the Greeks, but the narrator insists on cultural similarity (1.94.1). The section that follows, the last of the ethnography, consists mainly of a long historical gloss that finds the roots of affinity in the past. The Lydians were “the first men we know” to coin gold and silver and the first to become shopkeepers (κἀπηλοι, 1.94.1), and it is said that they have invented various games the Greeks also now play (1.94.2). Their innovations (ἐξευσq- occurs five times) connote intellectual resourcefulness, or *sophie*, which the Greeks claim as their national heritage.<sup>178</sup> Here they also represent a display of hardiness. During a famine in pre-Heraclidean times, the Lydians “looked for remedies,” and “one man devised one thing and another that.” This occasioned the discovery of popular games as a sort of distraction, so that by playing the whole day and not taking any food for one day out of two, they lasted for eighteen years (1.94.3–4).

The mention of the famine leads in turn to the subordinate narrative of the Lydian migration to Tyrrhenia (94.5–7), reminiscent of familiar stories of later Greek colonizing expeditions, such as those the text reports elsewhere concerning Therans, Phocaeans, and Teans.<sup>179</sup> The Lydian king divides the population into two groups and draws lots (as the Therans do), to decide who should stay and who should go; he then places his own son at the head of the latter group (1.94.5). Unlike Alyattes and Croesus, this king stands outside the monarchical model: he rather resembles the archaic Greek *basileus* in his role as founder.<sup>180</sup>

Thus, seen as a whole, the Lydian appendix pursues the idea of similarity and difference with the Greeks by tracing in reverse order, through description and embedded historical narrative, a telescoped evolution of

178. Cf. 1.60.3. See Diller 1961, 67–68.

179. After seven years of drought, the Therans draw by lot a party from themselves, at the rate of one son out of two, and set off to Libya under the leadership of Battus (see 4.151–53). The Phocaeans and the Teans abandon their homes and sail for the West rather than face Persian subjection (see 1.164–68). A few generations later, the Athenians apparently consider doing the same (see 8.62.2). See also the Ionians at 1.170 and 9.106.

180. The traditional figure of the founder, as the embodiment of the trials and tribulations of the city and the antithesis of the tyrant (though also with the potential of becoming a tyrant), has been examined by McGlew (1993, 22–26, 157–82).

the Lydian people—from the remote struggles for survival of a small and courageous nation, to their resourceful inventions and economic development through banausic and “feminine” trades (κάπηλοι at 1.94.1 corresponds to καπηλεύειν at 1.155.4), to the growth of their monarchy’s wealth and power. In this representation, the Lydians are fundamentally similar to the Greeks, not Hellenized barbarians. Croesus is Hellenized, but his rule also marks the maximum distance between the collectivity of the Lydians and the Greeks. The difference between the two *ethnea* is in fact a by-product of the Mermnad monarchy’s development. By the time of Alyattes, and even more so with Croesus, Lydian society has become increasingly passive and subjected: it expresses itself through the king, his monuments, his wealth, his personal prestige and connections, and his more or less well-advised policies.

In the first section of the Lydian appendix, Croesus is dominant, and the people are ethnographically absent, just as they were politically irrelevant in the preceding historical narrative. In the chapter on Alyattes’ tomb, they place their activity in the service of their king. Among the early Lydians of the third section—who are the closest analogues of the Greeks and historically explain the affinities that still exist between the two peoples—those who left and changed their name to “Tyrrhenians” perhaps avoided this development. Like the Phocaeans and Teans, at any rate, and unlike the rest of the Ionians, they were spared what eventually befell those who had stayed behind.<sup>181</sup> As the narrator abruptly concludes, “the Lydians, then, were enslaved by the Persians” (1.94.7). The alleged transformation into “women” under Cyrus will represent the next stage.

The insistence on similarity and sameness in Herodotus’ representation of foreign peoples fits in with the analogical thrust of his historical account. A major concern of the *apodexis* as a whole is to describe the world so that the histories of foreign peoples may be comprehensible in light of their specific cultures. At the same time, however, each model of explanation, each way of being and becoming, is to some extent also applicable to everyone else, including the Greeks. The signals of similarity between different *ethnea* both conform to the more general principle of the patterned unity of the world and suggest specific ways in which historical processes can reproduce themselves cross-culturally. I am speaking here not of firm historical laws or inevitable cycles but of recognizable

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181. Cf. Lombardo 1988, 202 on Herodotus’ Lydians as a negative paradigm for the Ionians.

models of likely human behavior and of likely consequences. Herodotus' Persians, Scythians, Lydians, and so on, are each different from the Greeks and every other people. The history of each is to a great extent not repeatable in other cultural settings. Yet specific features shared by different cultures and the sameness of the *anthropinon* connect all of these in an untidy system of mutual allegories.<sup>182</sup>

*The Sameness of the Scythians*

The portrayal of the Scythians in the *Histories* constructs a people so profoundly different from the Greeks that they constitute the virtual embodiment of the other.<sup>183</sup> Yet among the *ethnea* described by Herodotus, the Scythians are a particularly unstable paradigm of alterity: they are alien but also familiar. Their affinity with the Greeks is partially based on their shared experience of finding themselves on the receiving end of Persian aggression and being able to confound the efforts of that vastly superior power.<sup>184</sup> But Herodotus' implicit suggestion that the Greeks can recognize themselves in the Scythians—crude nomads, living in an area of the world where there is little to admire (see 4.46.2)—has a wider scope. It aims at displaying the sameness of what is most distant and foreign. It is part of his overall pursuit of worldwide cross-cultural links.

The antecedents of Herodotus' Scythians belong to an old and conflicted tradition of ethnographic representations of northern pastoralists that goes back to Homer. The idealized "hard primitive" first appears in a passage of the *Iliad* where Zeus averts his gaze from the painful battle of Trojans and Achaeans and looks into the distance, over "the land of the Thracian riders of horses and of the Mysians, who fight at close quarters, and the noble Mare Milkers, drinkers of milk, and the Abii, most righteous of men."<sup>185</sup> Theoretically warlike, but also just and naturally disinclined to bloodshed (a feature represented by their milk drinking), remote societies suggest relief from the troubles of the more civilized Homeric world of fighting and ships. In his discussion of representations of the Scythians down to his day, Strabo introduces the Homeric passage

182. On the allegorical modes of modern ethnography, see Clifford 1986.

183. See Hartog 1988, *passim*, especially 11.

184. Hartog (1988, 35–38) gives a complete catalogue of the points of analogy between Herodotus' narrative of Darius' Scythian expedition and that of Xerxes' Greek expedition. But see Immerwahr 1954, 262–63.

185. 13.1–6. See Lovejoy and Boas 1935, 288, citing Riese; Romm 1992, 53. Levy 1981; Marincola 1997b, 4. For "hard" and "soft" primitives according to the definition of Lovejoy and Boas, see "Differentiating from Within" earlier in the present chapter.

right after reporting a statement by Ephorus that testifies to contradictory ethnologic views in the fourth century B.C.

Ephorus says . . . that the ways of life of the Sauromatae and the other Scythians are not all alike, for some are harsh [χαλεπούς] and even eat humans, while others abstain from eating any other living beings. The other writers, he says, talk about their savagery [περὶ τῆς ὀμότητος] because they know that the terrible and wonderful are striking; but one should tell the opposite facts and make them into paradigms [παραδείγματα ποιεῖσθαι], and Ephorus himself will therefore describe only those who follow most just modes of behavior [δικαιοτάτοις ἦθεσι]; for there are some of the Scythian nomads who feed on mare's milk and surpass all men in justice [τῆ δικαιοσύνη πάντων διαφέρειν] and are mentioned by the poets . . . (Strabo 7.3.9 C302 = Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 42)

This passage illuminates the ideological uses of the antiprimitivist and primitivist positions. While the cruel Scythians are savages in antithesis to whom we civilized people define ourselves, the just Scythians are the superior others, *paradeigmata* who teach us about our own shortcomings.<sup>186</sup> We are here in the presence of a moralistic form of ethnographic discourse. It also briefly appears, for example, in Herodotus' account of the mutually antithetical Androphagoi and Argippaeans, but Herodotus does not normally idealize his primitives, whether hard or soft.<sup>187</sup> Ephorus would no doubt rank Herodotus' Scythians among the savage

186. On the tradition of "inverse ethnocentrism" and "ethnologic satire" in the Greek representation of various peoples on the edges, see Romm 1992, 46–48, 49–60 (Ethiopians), 61–67 (Hyperboreans), 67–77 (Arimaspians and Scythians). See also Levy 1981, 57–59.

187. Thus, for the traditionally idealized Hyperboreans (see Romm 1992, 61–67), Herodotus is not certain of their existence and is only interested in a custom he can compare to another (4.33.5). His Androphagoi are, however, negatively idealized "hard" primitives (4.106). The Argippaeans, or Bald Men, are positively idealized "soft" primitives: they feed exclusively on the milk from their abundant flocks and on the fruit of certain local trees that also provide them with shelter. Their congenital baldness shared by men and women alike points to a utopian equality between the sexes; it also recalls the holiness of the shaven priests in Egypt and is symbolic of nonviolence: "No one among men does them wrong, for they are said to be sacred, and they do not possess war weapons. In the first place, they are the ones who settle disputes among their neighbors, and secondly, if someone who is a fugitive seeks refuge with them, no one does him wrong" (4.23.5). For the connection of hair with belligerence, see Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 11.3, 13.8; Plut. *Lyc.* 22; Tac. *Germ.* 38.4. See also Loraux 1977, 119. Cf. Hdt. 1.82.7 and 7.208.3. For equality between the sexes as an index of justice, see Herodotus' Issedones (4.26.2).



and cruel kind. Though they are not cannibals by custom any more than are the Persians or Medes (1.73.5; cf. 1.119.3), they drink human blood, make human sacrifices, and scalp their enemies. The point of Herodotus' account, however, is objectively to represent the foreignness of the Scythians and at the same time to overcome it by promoting the audience's discovery of their affinity with them.

Herodotus' work is made easier by the contemporary Greek ambivalence toward the Scythians as it emerges from fifth-century texts. Here the stereotype appears to be more complex than Ephorus' simple opposition of good and bad Scythians. For the most part, the Scythians of fifth-century political discourse are intractable xenophobes living at the extremities of the earth, but this very isolationism also makes them autarchic and impregnable.<sup>188</sup> In the *Eumenides*, a passage reflects on what is desirable for the safety of a state by pairing up Scythia and Sparta in a sort of political kinship. When Athena proclaims that a new court of law will be established in Athens on the Areopagos, the hill where the Amazons attempted to establish a rival city (685–93), she promises that this court will preserve rightful fear within and provide “a bulwark for the land and a means of salvation for the city such as no one among men possesses, not even among the Scythians or in the places of Pelops” (Aesch. *Eum.* 700–703).

Identification and separation are here operative at the same time. To the extent that Scythia is viewed as a society founded on a rigorous order, it is comparable to Sparta, on the one hand, and to Athens, on the other.<sup>189</sup> Like Sparta and Athens, and in antithesis to the wild Amazons of this passage, the Scythians occupy a political space “neither without rule nor ruled by a master.”<sup>190</sup> At the same time, the coupling of the land of Pelops with Scythia in the *Eumenides* points to their difference from Athens. Discipline and dedication to war make both communities, one

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188. See Hartog 1988, 12–13, on representations of Scythian savagery outside of Herodotus. Examples are Aesch. *Prometheus Bound* 709–14; Aristoph. *Acharnians* 702–3; the Scythian archer in *Thesmophoriazousae* 1070–1175, discussed by Long (1984, 138). On the setting of *Prometheus Bound*, see especially Hall 1989, 113–15. The Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places* (17–22) is idiosyncratic in representing the Scythians not as a “hard” culture but as a people made “soft” and sluggish by climate and effeminate by their riding practices. See Thomas 2000, 68–71.

189. For Scythian paradigmatic justice, cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 727–33.

190. Aesch. *Eum.* 696. Cf. frag. 198 Nauck, ἀλλ'ἰπάκις βροτῆρες εὐνομοὶ Σκύθαι (Strabo 7.301), where εὐνομοὶ could mean “possessing a just and well-ordered society.” See Levy 1981, 61.

Greek and one barbarian, invincible; but they will be no match for Athens, a city defended from within by a juridical body of righteous and god-fearing citizens armed with ballots (707–9). A society that is placed under the aegis of deliberation is here contrasted with the sort of order, common to both Scythians and Spartans, that privileges war.<sup>191</sup>

Herodotus' representation of the Scythians is similarly based on an interplay between otherness and partial identification with Spartans or Athenians. This thematic seesaw is programmatically reflected in the first two semiautonomous narratives at the beginning of book 4, one ("Scythians blind their slaves," 4.2) serving as a long ethnographic gloss within the other ("return of the Scythians from Asia," 4.1.3, 4.3–4). The latter is announced first by a summary introduction: when the Scythians came back to their land after ruling Media for twenty-eight years, they had to confront "a trouble not inferior to the Median trouble," namely, opposition from their slaves, whom the Scythian women had married in their absence (4.1.3). The second narrative is attached at this point to the mention of slaves. With a shift to the ethnographic present, it reports how the Scythians, who are milk drinkers and nomadic, blind "whomever they capture" and put them in charge of milking their mares.

Though the connection the discourse establishes between the Scythian method of milking, the practice of blinding the slaves, and nomadism is opaque, the mutilation has presumably functional aims.<sup>192</sup> Scythian culture is at once comfortable and deprived, living in abundance (4.47.1, 4.53.2–3, 4.58, 4.59.1) but with few resources. In the absence of a more painstaking sort of labor, the Scythians indiscriminately use whatever they have on hand.<sup>193</sup> While pointing out their drinking of milk (a feature of a "good savage"), the text here also first brings to the fore the brutal pragmatism that is the principal mark of the alterity of the Scythians with respect to the Greeks.

191. Cf. Thuc. 2.97.5–6, which praises the Scythians for their strength in battle but disparages their εὐβουλία and ξύνεσις. For the lethal warlikeness of the Scythians, see also Aesch. *Choeph.* 161–63.

192. See Macan 1895, 1, 2; How and Wells 1928, 1:303; Legrand 1946, 4:48; Benardete 1969, 100–101; Hartog 1988, 18. Mutilation is normally envisioned as an affirmation of despotic power or as a punishment. See chap. 3, n. 54, in the present book.

193. Bones are used as firewood, the ox's stomach as a cauldron (4.61). Human skin is fashioned into clothes, and hand-skins with the nails attached serve as lids for quivers; enemy scalps become napkins, and skulls become drinking cups (4.64–65); as hunters, the Scythians do not always make fine distinctions between animal and human quarry (see 4.134.1; cf. 1.73). See Hartog 1988, 40–44.

The continuation of the story of the Scythians' return juxtaposes next to the functional action we have seen (the blinding of the slaves) a symbolic action that offers a rather different perspective on Scythian culture. The sons whom the Scythian women had borne to the slaves tried to block the returning Scythians and confronted them in battle. The Scythians overcame the young men's resistance only after hearing the following advice from one of their own.

What are we doing fellow Scythians! Fighting with our slaves, we are ourselves killed and become fewer; and killing them, we will in the future rule over fewer men [αὐτοί τε κτεινόμενοι ἐλάσσονες γινόμεθα καὶ ἐκείνους κτείνοντες ἐλασσόνων τὸ λοιπὸν ἄρξομεν]. I propose that we set aside spears and bows and that each take instead the whip for his horse and approach them. For so long as they see us with weapons, they will believe themselves to be equal to us and born from equals [ὅμοιοί τε καὶ ἐξ ὁμοίων]; but if they see us with whips instead of weapons, they will understand that they are our slaves and, recognizing this, will not stand their ground against us. (4.3.3–4)

This episode entails a sudden shift of Hartog's metaphorical mirror in Herodotus' representation of the Scythians.<sup>194</sup> The barbarians of the previous narrative are given to strange practices and almost unintelligible brutality in the pursuit of their elementary daily living; here they suddenly reflect in a direct way the Greek audience's ideology of freedom and mastery over the symbolic forms of their status as free men.

Freedom as a Scythian value will be a fundamental element in the historical narrative of Darius' expedition. The Scythian king Idanthysus claims to Darius that he recognizes as masters (νομίζω δεσπότης, 4.127.4) only his ancestor Zeus and Hestia, the queen of the Scythians; this parallels Demaratus' statement to Xerxes that the Spartans have no other master than their law/custom (7.104.4). The Scythians hold the Ionians in contempt on the grounds that by the standards of free men, they

194. See the study and critique of Hartog's approach and metaphor (Hartog 1988) in Dewald 1990, 218, 220–21: according to Hartog, "by looking at how a Greek constructed the Other, we also see much more clearly how a Greek understood that which distinguishes the Same: hence the 'mirror of Herodotus.'" But Dewald cautions: "the Same unexpectedly becomes the Other"; "to extend the governing metaphor that Hartog uses, Herodotus warns us . . . that his mirrors are not bolted on their walls."

are the worst and most unmanly of beings, but “if one speaks of them as slaves, they are the most master-loving and nonrunaway of human stock” (4.142). This evaluation anticipates the Greek Artemisia’s discussion later on about good and bad slaves (8.68γ). Like no other people in the *Histories* besides the Greeks, the Scythians are represented as a people who define themselves in opposition to literal and political slaves.

But the story of the Scythians’ return at 4.3–4 conveys a more specific parallel. We find again the political situation whereby slaves take charge of the state and marry the citizen women in the absence of the men, in Herodotus’ story about the depopulation of Argos after the battle of Sepeia (6.83; cf. 6.77). It belongs to a pattern of historical traditions concerning Greek states like Sparta that have a system of slavery of the helot type.<sup>195</sup> In the passage quoted earlier (see especially the underlined phrases), the rhetoric of the anonymous Scythian reveals the pointedly political character of the anecdote for a Greek audience.<sup>196</sup> In contrast to their slaves, the free Scythians perceive themselves as “equals and born from equals” [ὅμοιοί τε καὶ ἐξ ὁμοίων] (4.3.4). In the *Histories*, ὅμοιος alludes to the political system of the Spartan Homoioi on at least three occasions.<sup>197</sup> In two out of the three cases, somewhat as in the Scythian episode, the word helps to express the idea that valor in battle is connected with citizen status.<sup>198</sup> All three cases allude to the Spartan ideology

195. The pattern is identified and analyzed by Vidal-Naquet (1981, with numerous examples), though he does not mention Herodotus’ Scythian story as an analogue.

196. It is considered a piece of political theorizing by Macan (1895, 1:3). See Finley 1980, 118–19. Corcella (1993, 230) cites later parallels.

197. In the strictly technical Spartan sense, the word first occurs in Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 10.7; 13.1, 7; etc.), but as Finley (1968, 146) observes, this fact is not very significant for the meaning of the word earlier on.

198. At 7.234.2, Demaratus says to Xerxes that Sparta is a city of about eight thousand men and that these are all ὅμοιοι to those who fought at Thermopylae; the rest of the Lacedaemonians are brave men, though not ὅμοιοι. At 3.55.1, an interpretive gloss attached to the narrative of the Spartan expedition against Samos states that “if those of the Lacedaemonians who were there that day had been equal [ὅμοιοι ἐγίνοντο] to Archias and Lycopes, Samos would have been captured.” Both passages exploit the ordinary sense of the word to refer to the Spartan code. See Shimron 1989, 61; 1979, 132. At 7.136.2, Xerxes replies to Sperthias and Boulis, who offer to expiate the Spartan murder of the Persian heralds, that he will not be equal (ὅμοιος) to the Lacedaemonians, who have overturned basic human laws. This passage (as also 3.55.1) is an ironical reference to the discrepancy between ideology and reality. Herodotus’ Xerxes (who of course does not come from a society of *homoioi*; see, e.g., 1.134.1), finds the Spartan notion especially amusing; see 7.103.1, where he brings forth a contradiction in the system by a joke on the Spartan kings being worth double. On the problem of inequality of performance and in the political sphere among the *Homoioi*, see Finley 1968, 147–49.

of equality among themselves and their moral and political superiority vis-à-vis everyone else. As an exclusive community of equals, the Scythians are implicitly “like” Spartan citizens. The display of whips suggests a method of psychological conditioning of slaves to which Sparta provides the closest parallel;<sup>199</sup> the narrator’s assessment that handling their slaves was no less of an ordeal for the Scythians than was fighting the Medes (4.1.3) hides a comparison with Spartan difficulties with the helots after the Persian Wars. A Spartan model is also confirmed by the anonymous Scythian’s mention of the problem of becoming fewer,<sup>200</sup> by the avoidance of any reference that may suggest private ownership of the blind slaves,<sup>201</sup> and by the narrator’s corroboration later on of the report of a Scythian invasion into present-day Scythia in preference to traditions of autochthony.<sup>202</sup>

In a later section of the narrative, we also find the statement that beyond the river Gerrhos, and “as far to the east as the ditch dug by the children of the blind men,” are the so-called royal territories and “the best and most numerous Scythians, who consider the other Scythians as their slaves” (4.20.1). The narrative does not provide much help for reconciling the existence of the blind slaves—described in the ethnographic present at 4.2 and remembered here—with these newly mentioned putative slaves of the royal Scythians.<sup>203</sup> The blind men are prisoners of war (and therefore possibly non-Scythians), while the others, who probably include the agricultural Scythians (4.54), are in a state of political subjection. Despite the lack of explicit coherence, it is at least clear that we are supposed to envision a privileged ruling group of ἄριστοι in the eastern part of the country, and two different types and degrees of servitude, roughly on the tripartite model of Spartiates, *perioikoi*, and helots.<sup>204</sup>

While the Spartans are citizen-hoplites, the Scythians are cityless, horse-

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199. On the systematic degradation of Spartan helots, see Myron of Priene, *FGrHist* 106 F 2 = Athenaeus 14.657d; Plut. *Lyc.* 28. See also Garland 1988, 153–55.

200. 4.3.3. On Spartan *oliganthropia* in the fifth century, see Figuera 1986, 165–81.

201. Contrast, for example, Persian οἰκέται (see 1.137.1), and cf. 4.72.1 on the absence of slaves “bought with money.”

202. 4.11, cf. 4.5–10. On the tradition of the Dorian invasion, see Hall 1997, 56–64.

203. On the historical, geographical, and logical difficulties of Herodotus’ description, see especially Macan 1895, 1:2–3 and 14; Macan 1895, 2:1–30; Kothe 1969, 71–80.

204. Darius’ opponents appear only to include nomadic and free Scythians. See Hartog 1988, 194–98. For a distinction between royal/free and other Scythians, see also 4.120, 4.59.1, 4.110.2.

riding nomads; they avoid pitched battles even against invaders of their own territory.<sup>205</sup> But somewhat like the Spartans, the Scythians do not allow the enemy to interfere with their customary way of life, never flee, and will fight when necessary.<sup>206</sup> The ethnographer, to be sure, must translate the notion of courage into Scythian cultural terms: they reward as an ἀνήρ ἄριστος (brave man) the warrior who has collected the greatest number of scalps (4.64.1); they demonstrate what “they call ἀνδραγαθίη [valor]” by showing off to their guests cups made of the skulls of enemies killed in battle.<sup>207</sup> But by emphasizing the social control that among the Scythians surrounds the warrior’s achievement, Herodotus again enhances the parallel with Sparta. Xenophon reports that at Sparta “anyone would be ashamed to take a coward into his mess or be matched against him in a wrestling match” (*Lak. Pol.* 9.4). Among Herodotus’ Scythians, those who have not killed any enemies may not partake of the local version of the symposium sponsored annually by the governor of each province: they sit apart from the others, dishonored and ashamed, while those who have killed a great number of enemies are invited to drink double (4.66). Regulation of drinking on the Spartan model here replaces anarchical excess and the habit of drinking straight wine normally attributed to the Scythians and even mentioned by Herodotus’ Spartan sources.<sup>208</sup>

Scythians and Spartans are also similar in certain aspects of their respective codes of communication. Herodotus’ Scythian narrative devotes special attention to the language of the Scythians, which is first of all peculiar to them and consistent with other aspects of their reduc-

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205. See Hartog 1988, 50–53. On Greek—especially Spartan hoplitic—*arete* (valor), see 7.104; Tyrtaeus frags. 12.13–20 and 11.31–34 W. In Plato’s *Laches*, Socrates bridges the gap between Greek commitment “to stay at one’s post and face the enemy and not run away” (190D–E) and the Scythian method of fighting by flight and pursuit, by recalling the Spartan performance at Plataea (191A–C).

206. See 4.127.1–3. Flory (1987, 103) remarks that Idanthyrus’ statement that what he does in this war is only “what I have been accustomed to do” parallels Demaratus’ explanation to Xerxes that arranging their hair when they are about to risk their lives is the Spartans’ custom (7.209.3). I discuss the Scythian and Spartan defensive conception of war in chap. 3, “The Evils of War.”

207. 4.65.2. Contrast Plut. *Lyc.* 22, which says that the Spartans thought “it was shameful to cut to pieces those who had conceded defeat.”

208. 6.84.1–3. Scythian drinking was notorious: see Anacreon frag. 11b Page (= *PMG* 356) in Athen. 10.427b and Theog. 825–30. For Spartan moderation in drinking, see Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 5; Plato *Laws* 637a; Critias frag. 6 West (= Athen. 432d–433b); DK 88 B33 (= Athen. XI 463E). The sources are collected and discussed by Fisher (1988). Cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 12.

tionistic culture. Their simplified code is illustrated by the mouse, frog, bird, and five arrows they send to Darius in response to his request of earth and water. This message turns out to mean that since the Persians are not birds, mice, or frogs, they are trapped in Scythia and will be pierced by these arrows (4.131–32). The flattening out of the syntax is here truly amazing, showing that Scythian communication is as unique as their entire way of life and system of warfare.<sup>209</sup> To the extent, however, that their “language” is spare and concrete, it resembles Spartan discourse. The Scythian displays of whips, scalps, and skulls find their parallel in countless visual images the Spartans use to convey the idea of their power.<sup>210</sup> It is perhaps not entirely by chance that the description of King Ariantas’ crater, which measures the Scythian population in an approximate “Scythian” way (i.e., by size rather than by number), attracts a comparison with the crater of the royal Spartan Pausanias (4.81.3). The Spartans in Herodotus dislike long speeches, literalize metaphors, and mistrust abstractions.<sup>211</sup> The Scythians designate snow with the word for “feathers” because of the two objects’ resemblance (4.31.2), and they use an ancient *akinakes* as the sacred image of Ares (4.62.2). In both cultures, the use of signs as a device for economical communication goes hand in hand with an anti-intellectualistic attitude, contempt for a certain type of *sophie*, and a materially simple way of life.

The analogy between Spartans and Scythians in the sphere of discourse comes to the surface of the text through the reported judgment of the Scythian sage Anacharsis: he decrees that the Spartans are the only ones of the Greeks not “busy pursuing all sort of cleverness” [ἀσχόλους . . . ἐς πᾶσαν σοφίην] and able “to send and receive speech with good sense” [σωφρόνως δοῦναί τε καὶ δέξασθαι λόγον] (4.77). Anacharsis’ words make a distinction between *sophie* (intelligence/cleverness/wisdom) and *sophrosune* (good sense/wisdom). The first, which here connotes theorization and fancy rhetoric, is rejected by both Spartans and Scythians but is,

209. See West 1988. Contrast metaphorical prophecies of the type “When a mule sits on the throne of Media . . .” (Hdt. 1.55), where decoding the message requires that one replace the sign “mule” with the correct referent, but the referent occupies the same syntactical position as the sign.

210. Examples are red cloaks and long hair. See Powell 1988a on Sparta’s use of the visual in communication.

211. See 3.46 (Spartan response to Samian refugees), 7.226.1–2 (Dieneces), 7.135.3 (Sperthias and Boulis). See the Spartan economic use of words at 9.11.2 (cf. Thuc. 4.40.2). For Laconian brevity, see also 9.90–91, and cf. Sthenelaidas at Thuc. 1.86.1.

implicitly, a specialty of Ionians and Athenians. *Sophrosune*, by contrast, is valued by both Scythians and Spartans and displayed by them through economical speech.<sup>212</sup>

The narrator identifies this Anacharsis narrative as an invention of the Peloponnesians (4.77). If we believe that Herodotus' glosses of source are historical, this points again to the existence before his time of a Greek tradition representing the Scythians as in some way analogous to the Greeks and in particular to the Spartans.<sup>213</sup> In relation to speech and other spheres of culture, Herodotus exploits existing traditions for the purpose of establishing his own implicit analogy between the two cultures. Starting from the early episode of the whips, he does so in a context not of positive or negative idealization but of an ostensibly objective and scientific ethnography. The analogy serves therefore neither to praise nor to disparage; rather, it forms a part of the broader message that trends of similarities invariably link ethnic groups with widely discrepant levels of culture and differing customs.

The Scythians are not at any rate connected only to Sparta. The multiple traditions concerning the origins of the Scythians relate them to various other *ethne* of the world.<sup>214</sup> Hartog has thrown light on the implicit analogy Herodotus' narrative establishes between Scythians and Athenians, especially owing to the nonhoplitic role both nations played in their defensive war against the Persians and to the nonhoplitic way with which the Athenians of Herodotus' time chose to respond to the Peloponnesian invasions.<sup>215</sup> Athenian strategy in the earlier and more recent past has come to define the Athenians culturally, just as the Scythians' strategy in war, Idanthysus says (4.127.1), coincides with their custom in peace. A major interpretive gloss that connects Scythian strategy and nomadism even enhances the implicit analogy between Scythian

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212. See Georges 1994, 146. Cf. the Spartan Archidamus at Thuc. 1.79.2, 1.84.3, 1.84.2.

213. On Anacharsis' and the Scythians' mistrust of speech, see also Pherecydes, *FGrHist* 3 F 174; Hesiod frag. 150 MW; Levy 1981, 60. For the Anacharsis legend and *apophthegmata*, see Kindstrand 1981.

214. See 4.5–12. On the self-contradictory quality of these multiple accounts, see Hartog 1988, 19–30. Greek Hellenocentric traditions that make barbarian peoples derive from characters of Greek mythology (see Bickerman 1952; Georges 1994, 1–9) are again utilized by Herodotus for the purpose of relating barbarians and Greeks. See Corcella 1993, 232; Vandiver 1991, 169–80.

215. Hartog 1988, 39–40, 49–51. Cf. especially 4.122 with 8.41, 4.127.2 and 4.120.1 with Thuc. 1.143.5.



and Athenians by attributing to the Scythians *sophie*, the very quality they elsewhere despise.<sup>216</sup>

The Euxine Sea, where Darius' expedition was directed, of all the regions contains the most ignorant peoples [ἔθνεα ἀμαθέστατα]. For within the Pontic region, we cannot mention any people as excelling in cleverness/wisdom [σοφίης] or any learned man [λόγιον ἄνδρα], except for the Scythian people and Anacharsis. In the one matter that is of the greatest importance for man, the Scythian race made the cleverest/wisest discovery of all that we know [σοφώτατα πάντων ἐξεύρηται τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν]. For the rest, I do not admire it, but they have devised this one most important thing, that no one who goes against them can escape and it is not possible to catch them if they do not want to be found. For how could men who have no constructed houses or walls but carry their homes with them and are all archers, who live not from agriculture but from livestock, and who have their homes on carts not be invincible and impossible to deal with in battle? (4.46.1–3).

The sage Anacharsis is not here “Laconic” and *sophron*, as in the Peloponnesian story considered earlier. He is rather a *λόγιος ἀνὴρ*. Through him, the Scythians partake of the sort of *sophie* consisting of knowledge and of the ethical wisdom that derives from it, which are elsewhere displayed by the Athenian Solon and possessed in the highest degree by the Egyptians.<sup>217</sup> The Scythian people as a whole, however, possess at least *sophie* of a cunning sort, which is also considered “Athenian.”<sup>218</sup> The Scythians are nomadic and primitive, and these two ethnographic characteristics that most identify them as other with respect to the Greeks in general also create the preconditions for their sameness. So far as they are nomadic, with the peculiar strategy that their way of life entails, they resemble the Athenians, autochthonous city dwellers. They resemble the Spartans in their social war ethics and spare way of life, because they are primitive. At the same time, they are clearly neither Spartans nor Athenians nor Greeks, just as they are not Egyptian or even,

216. For the stereotype of the lack of intelligence of northern people, see Arist. *Pol.* 7.6.1 (1327b23–25); Hall 1989, 122.

217. See 1.29–33 (Solon), 2.77.1 (the Egyptians as *λογιώτατοι*).

218. I am following here the distinction made by Dewald (1985, 52–55) between two kinds of knowledge that Herodotus represents.

as Herodotus is at pains to specify, Budini or Geloni. They are entirely themselves, that is, Scythians.

#### Identification with The Other: Anacharsis and Scyles

An ethnographic-historical sequence tells about how first Anacharsis and later Scyles were killed by the Scythians for adopting foreign customs. This set of stories illustrates the role of implicit analogy in forcing the audience to reflect themselves in an alien people.<sup>219</sup> Herodotus attributes one trait to all *ethnea* of the world: subservience to the constraints of their own culture. Formulated in abstract terms in the far-ranging interpretive gloss at 3.38, Herodotus' theory of universal cultural chauvinism is borne out again and again by specific cases. Thus, a gloss of interpretation discloses the meaning of the stories of Anacharsis and Scyles by introducing them as evidence (διέδεξαν) that

also [the Scythians] utterly avoid following foreign customs, both those of other peoples and most especially those of the Greeks.  
[Ξενικοῖσι δὲ νομαίοισι καὶ οὗτοι αἰνῶς χρᾶσθαι φεύγουσι, μήτε τεῶν ἄλλων, Ἑλληνικοῖσι δὲ καὶ ἥκιστα.] (4.76.1)

Adverbial καὶ (amounting to a gloss of similarity) perhaps refers first and foremost to the Egyptians. They are an implicit term of comparison throughout the Scythian narrative, including in the immediately preceding passage on Scythian σοφίη.<sup>220</sup> Unlike the chauvinism of the Egyptians, however, the Scythians' dislike of foreign *nomoi* manifests itself in the summary violence that characterizes their culture as a whole. The two narratives that show this ferocious protectionism differ, however, in one important respect: the story of Anacharsis promotes identification with the victim; that of Scyles, with the Scythians.

The Scythian sage Anacharsis embodies Spartan *sophrosune* in the subsidiary Peloponnesian narrative already considered (4.77). In the story about his death, he is connected with Athenian *sophie* (4.76). Here, like the Athenian Solon, he travels all over the world for the purpose of sightseeing

219. The set of narratives is discussed by Hartog (1988, 62–84).

220. See Benardete 1969, 99. For Egyptian chauvinism, see the totalizing statements at 2.79.1 and 2.91.1, as well as specific evidence, e.g., at 2.41.3. On Scythia and Egypt, see n. 91 and corresponding text earlier in the present chapter.

and acquires (or displays?) much wisdom.<sup>221</sup> On his way back to the “haunts,” or “customs,” of the Scythians (ἐς ἡθεα τὰ Σκυθέων),<sup>222</sup> he lands at Cyzicus, where he makes a vow that if he returns home safe, he will celebrate the Mother of the Gods as the Cyzicenes were doing. He does so in the relative privacy of the Hylaea, but the Scythians spy on him, and their king kills him with his bow (4.76.2–5).

The story ends with a unique explanatory gloss self-referentially marked by *historie*: “As I heard from Tymnes, a deputy of king Ariapeithes, Anacharsis was the uncle of Idanthysus, king of the Scythians, and the son of Gnurus, son of Lycus, son of Spargapeithes.” From this genealogy, which the source Tymnes has provided as if oblivious to its implications, the narrator draws his own inference: “If, then [ὄν], Anacharsis belonged to this family, let him know [ἴστω] that he was killed by his brother. For Idanthysus was the son of Saulius, and it was Saulius who killed Anacharsis” (4.76.6). The pathetic appeal to the dead Anacharsis in the third-person imperative constitutes the closest thing we find in Herodotus to the Homeric apostrophe to a character in the second-person singular.<sup>223</sup> Without making recourse to explicit evaluation, the narrator underlines for his audience the horrible fate of a wise and pious man, caused by the ferocious intransigence of a savage people. We recall the typical Scythian of the ethnography, showing off to his guests the skulls of family members with whom he has feuded (4.65.2).

In the structurally similar story of Scyles that follows (παραπλήσια, 4.78.1), a shift in perspective renders Scythian protectionism less alien from a Greek point of view. Unlike Anacharsis, Greek-raised Scyles does not like the Scythian way of life (διαίτη μὲν οὐδαμῶς ἠρέσκετο Σκυθικῇ). His Hellenization, which he pursues during surreptitious visits to the Greek city of Olbia, involves different areas of custom, both secular and sacred (4.78.4). In the sphere of the sacred, it culminates in Scyles’ desire to become initiated to the rites of Dionysus. But rather than promoting sympathy for Scyles’ piety, here the text sends negative signals.

221. In γῆν πολλὴν θεωρήσας καὶ ἀποδεξάμενος κατ’ αὐτὴν σοφίην πολλήν (4.76.2), the second participle could derive either from ἀποδείκνυμαι, “display,” or from the far less frequent ἀποδέχομαι, “receive.” The ambiguity is enhanced by the implicit analogy with Solon, whose *sophie* derives from his “sight-seeing” or (θεωρή, 1.29.1, 1.30.2), but who is also represented as displaying his *sophie* to Croesus. The same is true for the narrator, whose work is a display (ἀπόδειξις) of *historie* conducted all over the world.

222. See Hartog 1988, 65; cf. 4.80.1.

223. See, e.g., *Il.* 1.146. See also de Jong 1987, 13, 60.

At the metanarrative level, a gloss of anticipation of doom directs the audience to interpret Scyles' initiation to Dionysiac religion as the precipitating event, or πρόφασις, in a career already bent on self-destruction, "since he was bound to incur a bad end."<sup>224</sup> The narrative, for its part, reports a sign of divine disapproval: while Scyles is preparing to undergo the ritual, "the god" strikes Scyles' house in Olbia with a thunderbolt and sets it on fire, a warning that Scyles ignores (4.79.1–2).

In the tradition of resistance myths, which will eventually produce the alien and threatening Stranger of Euripides' *Bacchae*, Dionysus comes to a Greek city from abroad, displays his power to those who resist him, and exacts worship from the entire population.<sup>225</sup> In the story of Scyles, a foreigner embraces Greek Dionysus, and the divine opposes resistance. Here the author of the portent is not the god whom the Scythians refuse to recognize but a less culturally determined entity.<sup>226</sup> Almost as a divine representative of the "Custom king of all" of 3.38.4, this power objects to an individual's asocial adoption of a religion not his own by *nomos* and repulsive to his people as a whole.

The Scythians reject Dionysus for reasons that are strikingly similar to those of the god's opponents in the Greek resistance myths. A cognitive statement added as an explanatory gloss to the narrative reports, "the Scythians say it is not reasonable/natural [οὐκ ὀρθόν] to go find [ἐξευρίσκειν] a god like this one, who drives people mad."<sup>227</sup> Described in these terms, the Dionysiac cult appears as un-Greek—or, as Herodotus himself elsewhere acknowledges, not "consistent" (ὁμότροπον) with the rest of Greek culture<sup>228</sup>—as it is un-Scythian. The same thing could indeed be said about the cult of the Mother of the Gods, which Anacharsis adopts in the preceding story.<sup>229</sup> In the Scyles narrative, however, a new empha-

224. 4.79.1: ἔδεέ οἱ κακῶς γενέσθαι. For this type of interpretive intervention, see chap. 1, n. 64, in the present book.

225. See Guthrie 1950, 167–70. In Herodotus' version of one of the resistance myths (9.34), Dionysiac madness causes a social and political crisis in Argos.

226. It is Zeus according to most commentators. See Linfoth 1928, 219; Hartog 1988, 73.

227. 4.79.3. On cognitive statements, see in the present book, chap. 1, n. 40; chap. 3, "Cognitive Statements and Polemical Negations." On the negative sense of ἐξευρίσκειν, see n. 35 and corresponding text in the present chapter.

228. 2.49.2. For Dionysus in the *Bacchae* as a symbol of "the blurring of distinctions between Greek and barbarian," see Segal 1982, 124.

229. For the parallel roles of these two Greek divinities in the Anacharsis and Scyles narratives, and for their equal ambivalence in the Greek perception, see Hartog 1988, 70, 72, 74–83; Hall 1989, 153–54.

sis appears on the irrational aspects of the divinity in question,<sup>230</sup> Scyles lacks a good motive for his initiation and disregards a divine sign, and the Scythian criticism of Dionysus sounds reasonable even from a Greek point of view. All these factors force the listeners to blame Scyles as they would not have blamed Anacharsis.

Like Anacharsis, Scyles is finally decapitated by his own brother (4.80.4–5). Here, however, the narrative delays the last act of the drama by a series of functions focalized through the Scythians as an *ethnos* and body politic. It represents the humiliating mockery to which they are subjected by a foreigner (4.79.4), the grief they experience in the face of their own king's display of madness (συμφορὴν μεγάλην ἐποιήσαντο, 4.79.5), their deposition of Scyles and appointment of a new king, and the negotiations with a foreign power for the extradition of the criminal (4.80.1–4). By the time the characteristic ferocity of the Scythians even against family members is fully brought back to the fore with Scyles' decapitation, the Scythians have emerged almost as a civilized and earnest community, concerned with preserving (περιστέλλειν in the conclusion at 4.80.5) their order and integrity. The situation recalls the alarm the Spartans experienced at the adoption of foreign ways and erratic behavior by one of their own who was almost a king. Herodotus has sufficiently "turned the mirror" so that the Greeks of the audience might recognize themselves in the Scythians.

The Pausanias model is not a far-fetched subtext to this story.<sup>231</sup> The secular and more strictly "civic" side of Scyles' adoption of foreign *nomoi* is represented by Scyles' change of dress, building of a house in Olbia, and marriage to a Greek woman (4.78.4–5). These cultural shifts go hand in hand with a separation of Scyles from his people, which is also, since Scyles is the king of the Scythians, a stepping down from his royal position. Thus, every time Scyles leads the army to Olbia, he leaves it outside the city, and after going inside the wall and closing the doors, he walks about the marketplace dressed like an ordinary Greek, "not accompanied by bodyguards or anyone else" (4.78.4).

But though Scyles intermittently declines to be a king at home and becomes a private citizen abroad, his behavior fits in the symbolic pattern of monarchy we have described in our discussion of analogy in the history. The verb referring to his irrational desire to become initiated into

230. This is noticed by Hartog (1988, 75 n. 47).

231. See "The Seers of Plataea" earlier in this chapter.

Dionysiac religion, ἐπεθύμησε, is a term of the monarchical code.<sup>232</sup> In response to Scyles' behavior in the sphere of religion, the divine thunderbolt incinerates precisely the house in Olbia "that I have mentioned shortly before this," as the narrator recalls to reemphasize the main symbol of Scyles' civic violation. Since it was "a big and rich house, around which stood sphinxes and griffins made of white stone" (4.79.2), this supposed index of Greekness would signal to Herodotus' audience a northern variation on the theme of Oriental extravagance.<sup>233</sup> As Artabanus will say to Xerxes, it is against the biggest houses that the god strikes with his thunderbolt (7.10ε). The transition from nomadic king to Greek *polites* is therefore made to resemble a climb to despotic rule in the monarchical pattern of the history, with the same sort of metaphorical paradox that equates Tisamenus' acquisition of Spartan citizenship with an acquisition of the kingship.<sup>234</sup> This time, like Pausanias, who would roam in Byzantium in Persian dress and make plans to marry a Persian woman, and like Deioeces, enclosed in his new royal palace, Scyles comes to embody the alienation of the individual from the community, an alienation interpreted as some form of self-exalting lapse into barbarism.

Through symbols and vertical analogy, the monarchical pattern can even be stretched to apply to a case like this one, where the literal kingship actually represents the traditional good order of society, while the potentially disruptive element is an individual who excludes himself from this institutional status. Scyles, moreover, becomes a foreigner to the Scythians by becoming Greek, yet the way in which he does so resembles a barbarization in the Greek sense. Placed in the middle of a *logos* where the representation of a profoundly alien people is carefully designed to show the Greeks intermittent glimpses of their various selves, the Anacharsis/Scyles sequence ends up demonstrating that what from the Greek point of view represents the ignorant rejection of their own civilized customs on the part of the barbarians is really analogous to the Greek contempt for barbarian practices that are repulsive to them.

As a narrative of past events concerning a foreign people's customs

232. 4.79.1. Of twenty-five cases ἐπιθυμέω (to desire) in Herodotus, two refer to sexual lust and the instinct of animals, respectively. One occurs in Artabanus' gnomic saying that it is wrong to desire many things (7.18.2). Of the remaining twenty-two occurrences, fifteen describe monarchic or aggressive desires. At 7.6.1, ἐπιθυμητής qualifies Mardonius' imperialistic ambitions.

233. See Macan 1895, 1:53; Hartog 1988, 73. On the austerity of Greek private houses in the fifth century, see Morris 1998, 67–75.

234. See "The Monarchical Model in Sparta" earlier in this chapter.

and institutions, moreover, the Anacharsis/Scyles unit also reveals the congruence of Herodotus' analogical interpretation of the world in the sphere of history, on the one hand, and of ethnography, on the other. Synchronically, the story of Scyles conveys the attachment of any society to its own cultural values, whatever these may be, as well as the similarity of some of those values among Scythians and Greeks. Diachronically, through the monarchical model, it shows the danger of social and cultural change in a familiar form: in one way or another, such a change has overtaken the Lydians and the Persians and threatens the Greeks as well. Similarities and overlaps counterbalance the synchronic diversity of humankind, so that we are able to discern similarities and overlaps among historical processes that unfold at different times and in different settings of the world. We can make the experience of others our own because, in some respects at least, the others are same.

#### The Other Is Same: Making Peace with the Amazons

That the other is same constitutes part of the underlying message of another ethnographic-historical narrative in the Scythian *logos*, the story of the birth of the Sauromatian nation from Scythians and Amazons.<sup>235</sup> Since the Greek concepts of alterity and self in the fifth century are closely related to a political ideology of power, we should not be surprised to find that Herodotus' narrative combines the reassessment of such views with a recipe for correct foreign-policy relations.

The exemplary behavior of the protagonists, who are strictly collective and non-Greek, suggests the prescriptive character of the Amazon story in Herodotus, in contrast with the predominantly epideictic function of the Anacharsis/Scyles sequence. The Amazons are hardly a politically neutral subject. Unlike all the other peoples mentioned in the *Histories*, they are an extinct race, and the text reports no *logos*, reliable or unreliable, that assigns to them a place in Herodotus' map of the present-day *oikoumene*.<sup>236</sup> They are characters of Greek traditions about the remote

235. 4.110–17. The most important discussions of the episode are by Dewald (1981) and Hartog (1988, 217–24). See also Flory 1987, 108–13. According to Cole (1967, 143–45), the story derives from a fifth-century source that bears connection with the source of the social history in Polyb. 6. Such an origin is well suited to the different but nevertheless theoretical use Herodotus makes of the anecdote.

236. See especially Strabo 11.5.4. Cf. Diod. 17.77.1–3. On the extinction of the Amazons, see Lysias 2.6.

past. As far as we are able to determine, they play only one role, that of being repeatedly defeated, subdued, or captured by various heroes, like other bestial or lawless opponents of the mythical ancestors of the present-day Greeks.<sup>237</sup>

In the political discourse of the fifth century, the story of the Amazons becomes a prominent mythical model for the affirmation of Greek superiority vis-à-vis the barbarians. Eventually Athens appropriates it as a charter for the justification of its imperialistic policy after the Persian Wars.<sup>238</sup> The visual art of the period depicts the Amazons side by side with Centaurs, Giants, Trojans, and, at least on one occasion, the Persians and Greek enemies of recent history, to represent the forces of disorder confounded by the representatives of civilization—Lapiths, Greek heroes, Olympic divinities, or modern Greek hoplites, as the case may be.<sup>239</sup> The ideological message encoded in the combination of these unrelated struggles on a single monument is based on the well-established polarities and analogies between Greek and Barbarian, male and female, human and animal.<sup>240</sup> After the Persian Wars, the myth most prominently includes the Amazon invasion of Attica for the purpose of conquest, an invention that seems to have supplanted the preexisting tradition of heroic expeditions to their part of the world, to serve as the antecedent and analogue of

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237. For the Amazons versus Bellerophon, see *Il.* 6.152–206; Pind. *Ol.* 13.63–92. For the Amazons versus Heracles, see Pind. *Nem.* 3.36–39; Pindar fr. 172 SM; Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F 106; Eur. *HF* 408–18; Eur. *Ion* 1144–45; Apollod. 2.5.9. For the Amazons versus Theseus and Heracles, see Eur. *Heracl.* 215–17. For the Amazons versus Theseus, see Pherecr., *FGrHist* 3 F 15, F 151 and F 152; Pindar fr. 176 SM; Eur. *Hipp.* 10, 305–9; Plut. *Thes.* 26–28. See Gantz 1993.

238. See Tyrrell 1984; Loraux 1986, 147–48; Tyrrell and Brown 1991, 159–215, especially 198–200; DuBois 1982; Castriota 1992, 43–58; Hölscher 1998, 167.

239. Attic Amazonomachies appeared paired with a Centauromachy in the paintings of the Theseion at Athens; in the Stoa Poikile, juxtaposed to depictions of captured Troy, the battle of Marathon, and the battle of Oinoe against the Spartans (see Paus. 1.15, 1.17; Aristoph. *Lys.* 672–80); on the western metopes of the Parthenon (a Centauromachy, a Gigantomachy, and an Iliupersis are on the other three sides); and on the outer surface of the shield of Pheidias' Athena Parthenos, with a Gigantomachy on the inner surface (see Plut. *Per.* 31.4). See especially Castriota 1992 (33–63, 76–89, 134–83) and the iconographic study by von Bothmer (1957). Amazonomachies also appeared on the Athenian treasury at Delphi (juxtaposed to other exploits of Heracles and Theseus; see DuBois 1982, 57–71), on the temple of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria, on the temple of Hephaestus in Athens. The temple of Apollo at Bassae in Arcadia, built probably in the last quarter of the fifth century by the architect of the Parthenon, Ictinus, testifies to the popularity of the myth outside of Athens. See DuBois 1982, 64–66.

240. See Thales (or Socrates) in D.L. 1.33, quoted by DuBois (1982, 4–6).



the recent barbarian aggression.<sup>241</sup> The passage from the *Eumenides* that compares Scythians and different groups of Greeks also mentions the Amazons; it shows how they could be invoked when speaking of the dangers that threaten the polis from abroad and of the hubris of her opponents.<sup>242</sup> The Amazons are first of all presented as antithetical to the pious and law-abiding Athenians, whose new court will sit precisely on the Areopagos, which the Amazons once occupied. They are also contrasted to the mutually analogous Spartans and Scythians, both of whom rely on war, rather than on political institutions, for their defense, but who nevertheless, unlike the Amazons, possess civic order.

Herodotus' Sauromatian *logos* does not contradict the notorious "historical" events featured in the myth, but it radically revises its ethical slant. Greek authors of Herodotus' time unanimously represent the Amazons as the fulfillment of female nature out of control: because they were aberrant and wild, driven by lust of domination, and posed a threat to the civilized world, one needed to fight and conquer them.<sup>243</sup> Herodotus, by contrast, portrays the Amazons as a people who possessed certain peculiarities but otherwise were not all that alien from other *ethnea* or abnormal with respect to the moral sense of the rest of humankind, Greeks

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241. See Castriota 1992, 46–47. In Aesch. *Suppl.* 234–37, 277–90, the Amazons represent a generalized type of aggressive barbarian women hostile to marriage. Aristoph. *Lys.* 672–80, where the chorus compares the rebellious Greek women to both the Persian ally Artemisia and the Amazons as depicted by Micon, confirms the public's interpretation of the Amazon invasion on their city's monuments as the analogue of the Persian invasion, as well as conveying the idea that the Amazons embody the threat of the female. For the gender-related aspect of the myth, see especially Tyrrell 1984, 22, 113–28. In fourth-century oratory, the Athenian defeat of the Amazons in Attica is a conventional topos of the list of glorious Athenian achievements that culminates in their historical defeat of the Persians. See especially Lysias *Epitaph.* 2.4.–26; Isoc. *Paneg.* 4.68–70; Demos. *Epitaph.* 60.4–8. The topos goes certainly back at least to the time when Herodotus was composing his work, as is demonstrated by its occurrence in his version of the Athenian speech at Plataea (9.27.4). On the tradition of the epitaphios in Athens, see Loraux 1986; Tyrrell and Brown 1991, 189–215.

242. Aesch. *Eum.* 681–706. See especially 685–93 (cited earlier in this chapter), where the Amazons are the archetypal enemy of the polis. In Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, the Amazons are also models for the man-killer Clytemnestra (*Agam.* 1231–32; *Eum.* 625–28). See Zeitlin 1984, 160–70, especially 163.

243. Hellanicus mentions that the Amazons removed their right breasts, and he calls them "a golden-shielded, silver-axed, female, male-loving, male-infant-killing host" (*FGrHist* 323a F16 and F17); cf. Hippocr. *On Joints* 53 [see Thomas 2000, 61–62]. Other details about Amazonian society do not appear in fifth-century sources and may be later elaborations.

included. This representation is consistent with Herodotus' approach to foreign peoples throughout the ethnographies, but as far as our evidence for the Amazons goes, it is unique in literature.<sup>244</sup>

In the *logos* reported by Herodotus, a group of Amazons have survived the defeat at the Thermodon River (one of the traditional events in the myth) and are carried off by the Greeks as prisoners. They prove true to their Scythian name "Mankillers" (4.110.1) by dispatching their captors on the ships. Since they find themselves without pilots and are inexperienced in navigation, they drift about until they land on the shores of the Maeotis Lake.<sup>245</sup> Here they make their way toward the inhabited area, take possession of some horses, and start raiding the territory (4.110.1–2).

This accidental but aggressive arrival of an Amazon contingent in Scythia seems designed to replay in reduced and modified form the story of the Amazons' invasion of Attica, which is not mentioned. Replacing the Greeks, the local inhabitants naturally undertake to defend their land. The theme of fighting goes hand in hand with the question of difference. In wonder at the language, dress, and ethnic identity of the Amazons, the Scythians cannot "put the matter together" [συμβαλέσθαι τὸ πρῆγμα] (4.111.1). They cannot, that is, do what the narrator of the *Histories* frequently does in the course of his ethnographic and geographic research: find grounds for comparing a new phenomenon with something already experienced, to conjecture about its nature. The Scythians perceive the Amazons as entirely different from themselves, except for thinking that the Amazons are young men. Eventually, when they realize from the bodies of the Amazons dead in the battle that they are really women, the Scythians discover a difference that suggests complementarity rather than conflict. They stop the fighting immediately and send a group of young Scythian men, wishing to have children from the Amazons.

The differences between the two ethnic groups that now confront one another are considerably reduced. Both are detachments from their respective societies, equal in number (4.111.2) and occupying the same marginal space in the wild.<sup>246</sup> They resemble one another in appearance,

244. In art, it is perhaps paralleled by the beautiful Amazons from the sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesos. These, according to Hölscher (1998, 173), "represent an act of self-assertion against overpowering Athens."

245. These Amazons' inexperience of ships and navigation points to their idealized primitive status. See Romm 1992, 74–75. Herodotus' other Amazon figure, Artemisia, is the opposite (see 7.99.3). See chap. 4, "Vertical Analogy."

246. On the ephebic character of Scythian youths and Amazons, see Hartog 1988, 217, 219–20 (cf. 54–55); Tyrrell 1984, 64–87.

since the Amazons look like young men and these particular Scythians *are* young men (ἄνδρας τὴν πρώτην ἡλικίην ἔχοντας, 4.110.1; τοὺς νεωτάτους, 4.111.2). The boys have, moreover, received instruction “to do what [the Amazons] do”: withdraw when they pursue and draw near when they stop, thereby avoiding all hostile confrontation (4.111.2). Just like the Amazons, the young Scythians have no material possessions except their horses and weapons: both lead “the same life” [ζόην ἕζωον τὴν αὐτήν] of hunting and plundering (4.112). The assimilation of the two groups parallels their physical rapprochement.<sup>247</sup> Their camps come closer and closer each day, and at one point a meeting ensues between one of the Scythians and one of the Amazons. Other individual encounters follow (4.112, 4.113.1–3). Eventually all the young Scythians pair up with the Amazons, and the two groups, “having joined their camps, permanently live together, each man having as wife the woman to whom he had originally joined himself” (4.113.3–4.114.1).

Fusion and the acceptance of complementarity entails further assimilation and compromise on both sides. The men do not become women and the women men, as some scholars have maintained.<sup>248</sup> Reversal is to some extent inherent to the conception of a masculine woman, but within the boundaries of this idea, Herodotus radically modifies the system of polarities in the myth. The Amazons and the young Scythians achieve a society without the inequalities of conventional marriage, since both groups play the male role in identical fashion, while the necessary (though on principle undesirable) female functions are distributed between them across gender lines.

The Amazons first of all consent to femininity in the sphere of sexual relations. The words by which the narrator designates intercourse unmistakably connote the submission of the passive partner, in conformity to the asymmetrical Greek conception of the sexual union.<sup>249</sup> The Amazon of the original one-on-one encounter proved willing to become a little less Amazonic and culturally male when she “allowed the young Scythian to have his way with her [περὶ εἶδε χροῖσασθαι]” (4.113.1). In the final stage of the fusion of the two *ethne* into one, “the remaining young men

247. The action at 4.111–15 is marked by alternate verbs of separation and approaching.

248. See DuBois 1982, 36; Tyrrell 1984, 42; Brown and Tyrrell 1985; Hartog 1988, 216–24. All the scholars here cited emphasize the pattern of reversal, though Hartog realizes the difficulty of applying it to this episode.

249. See Halperin 1990, 29–36.

tamed [ἐπιλώσαντο] the remaining Amazons” (4.113.3). In this particular area of behavior, there is really no alternative to the female’s assumption of a role that Herodotus, like his Greek contemporaries, interprets as subordinate.<sup>250</sup> Strabo’s Amazons will react to this necessity by resorting only to momentary and furtive unions for the sake of reproduction; those of Diodorus compensate by keeping their mates in an inferior—even crippled—state in all other respects.<sup>251</sup> Herodotus’ Amazons find a less radical solution.

In the tradition of heroic myths, marriage to an Amazon means primarily conquering her in war, subjecting her in a social as well as in a sexual sense, and taking away her Amazon identity by integrating her into a patriarchal order. Thus, when Heracles kills the Amazon queen for the sake of her belt, this symbolically prefigures Theseus’ abduction to Greece of the Amazon Antioche or Hippolyte, whom, according to the earlier versions of the myth, he has raped.<sup>252</sup> In Herodotus’ story, the Amazons’ concession to the physiology of sexual intercourse leads to a stable union. Their subjection, however, is both voluntary and limited to the sexual sphere. It is compensated by the assumption of a share of the social female role on the part of the men, who agree to leave their parental homes, bring the equivalent of a dowry, and be monogamous (4.114.1–4.115.1).

Both groups equally assume the masculine social role, just as had been the case before the fusion: “the women of the Sauromatae follow the old way of life [διαίτη]; they regularly go to the hunt, both in the company of the men and separately from them, and also go to war and wear the same dress as the men” (4.116.2). In the Scyles narrative, the national dress is the symptom of a more profound and insidious cultural change. At the beginning of this story, it represents an external and deceptive sign of alterity (4.111.1). The eventual assimilation of ideologically unproblematic features, such as dress and language (4.113.2, 117), is here made

250. See Rosellini and Saïd 1978, 999–1000. Brown and Tyrrell (1985), who want to interpret the story as representing the triumph of the female over the male, consider the use of the word ἐπιλώσαντο as a contradiction.

251. Strabo 11.5.1; Diod. 2.45.1–3, 3.53.1–2.

252. Eur. *Hipp.* 305–9. Cf. the rape depicted on the pediment of the temple of Apollo Daphnephoros in Eretria (ca. 510 B.C.), of which the scene on the amphora of Myson is probably an imitation. See Tyrrell and Brown 1991, 166–67. Theseus’ capture of the Amazon is mentioned by Plutarch (*Thes.* 26, on the authority of Pherecydes and others; cf. Pherecydes, *FGrHist* 3 F 151 and F 152) and by Pindar (fr. 175). The Amazon’s *zoster* carried off by Heracles in his ninth labor (Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.9) is a war belt but has ambiguous sexual connotations.

possible by the fact that in a more fundamental sense, the *ethnos* that appeared to be alien was actually both similar and complementary. Thus, the fusion of the two peoples, based on their resemblance, preserves their mutual equality of status and their integrity.

Among the Scythians, no warrior will partake of the distribution of spoils if he does not bring a head to the king (4.64.1), and he is excluded from the annual symposium if he has killed no enemies (4.66). An analogous *nomos* forbids a girl of the Sauromatae to marry before killing an enemy (4.117). This implicit parallelism means that for the Sauromatian adult women, not only is marriage conceived as a privilege, but their social prestige and full integration into the society is linked to their contribution as warriors, not wives.<sup>253</sup> The report adds that some of them die unmarried in old age because they have not been able to fulfill the *nomos*; this testifies to the determination with which the women of the Sauromatae guard their Amazon identity as much as possible in a society founded on marriage. In Greek society, marriage, for a woman, not only is the counterpart of war but also excludes war. The Amazons in Greek tradition make war and reject marriage. The Amazons of Herodotus' Sauromatian *logos* have accepted marriage as a carefully circumscribed change in their customs. Finally, among the Sauromatian female descendants of the Amazons, marriage remains secondary with respect to the Amazon activity of war.

If the cultural differences between Amazons and Scythian unmarried men prove ultimately to be imaginary or unimportant, the gulf separating the Amazons from Scythian women (and therefore also from the Scythian men who are married to them) is real and insurmountable. Because they are better ethnologic observers than are the Scythian youths, the Amazons realize this clearly. When their new husbands propose that they all stop leading "this sort of life" in the wild and go and live with the multitude of Scythians, where the young men have families and property, the Amazons describe their difference in a series of negations: "We could never live with your women, because we do not have the same customs [τά αὐτὰ νόμια]. We fight with our bow and spears and did not learn women's work. Your women do none of the things we have mentioned but rather do women's work sitting inside their carts and do not go out to

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253. The Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* (17), describes a similar initiation for Sauromatian women as Herodotus does, but with the crucial difference that marriage puts an end to their war activity.

the hunt or anywhere else. We could not get along [συνφέρεσθαι] with them” (4.114.3).

Aside from the fact that they live in wagons instead of houses, the Scythian society of families is here described in Greek terms—women indoors and men outdoors (cf. Xen. *Oec.* 7.23). The Amazons differ from the Scythians in this one important respect. The articulate and civilized character of the Amazons’ deliberations with the Scythian young men, the lucidity of the Amazons’ reasoning, and their appeal to conventional and shared notions of justice (see *δικαιότατοι* at 4.114.4) are designed to revise the traditional notion that the Amazons are wild women and the generalized negative other, the opposite of normality in every way. Nevertheless, the one peculiarity that identifies them as an *ethnos* cannot be imported into a patriarchal culture. Peaceful cohabitation between Amazons and the Scythian young men is possible, but not within the society of Scythian families. “Let us live on our own,” say the Amazons, and their husbands are persuaded.<sup>254</sup>

Herodotus’ Sauromatian *logos* conveys two lessons. First, on objective consideration, such as both the ethnographer himself and the characters of this story are able to exercise, the other may turn out to be same. By exposing as illogical the Amazon myth that masculine women are antithetical (rather than analogous) to men, the story undermines the notion of alterity for which the myth stands. Second, it prescribes that a real incompatibility is to be dealt with peacefully through separation. The exemplary behavior of the characters in fact denies the ideology, part and parcel of the traditional Amazon myth, that war is necessary because the other is the enemy; if we do not conquer it, it will conquer us. This inescapable alternative, conquer or be conquered, is mentioned by Xerxes to justify his expedition against Greece and is formulated again by Cyrus at the end of the work.<sup>255</sup> But to Herodotus, war is an evil second only to “intertribal” struggle (στάσις . . . ἔμφυλος).<sup>256</sup>

In the Sauromatian *logos*, the collectivities involved, though all war-like to an extreme degree, seem remarkably determined to avoid both war

254. 4.114.4–115.1. Notice the noncoercive nature of the deliberations: εἰ βούλεσθε (4.114.4); ἐπίθοντο (4.114.4, 115.3); ἐπειτε ἀξιοῦτε, φέρετε (4.115.3).

255. 7.11.3, 9.122.3. See Raaflaub 1987, 228, for varied formulations of the same idea in Herodotus, Thucydides, and other texts. The third option, which Otanes favors in the vertically analogous context of a society’s internal organization, is οὔτε . . . ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄρχεσθαι (3.83.2).

256. 8.3.1; see chap. 3, “The Evils of War.”

and intertribal struggle. After the initial battle, the Scythian adults and the Scythian young men do not fight with the Amazons, nor do the Amazons fight with them. Hoping to coopt the Amazons as child bearers, the Scythian adults find themselves deprived of the sons they already have, but they let them go without resistance. The young men even obtain from the Scythians their share of family property before leaving for good (4.115.1). More directly emphasized, for obvious corrective reasons, is the behavior of the Amazons themselves. The Amazons realize that their initial sea crossing into Scythia has entailed a number of more or less voluntary and aggressive violations that now put them at risk.

We are afraid and frightened to have to live in this place, because, firstly, we have deprived you of your fathers and, secondly, we have greatly devastated your country.

So they plan to undo the invasion and leave.

Since you think fit to keep us as your wives, do the following together with us. Come, let us move away [ἐξαναστέωμεν] from this land and, crossing [διάβαντες] the river Tanais, live over there. (4.115.2–3)

In the *Histories*, the fearless men who cross rivers (with the verb διαβαίνειν) do so to subdue and conquer, appropriate what belongs to others, add to their rightful share, and, in concrete metonymic terms, acquire more land.<sup>257</sup> Here the Amazons and their new husbands, who once again “were persuaded” (4.116.1), abandon a country that is not or is no longer their own and cross the river (διάβαντες), removing themselves—at a distance of a three-day journey away, to be exact—from conquest and war.<sup>258</sup>

According to the symbolic code of the *Histories*, the Amazons’ crossing of the Tanais is a violation of boundaries in reverse and a spectacular display of *sophrosune*. The subtext of the Amazon myth determines the

257. See my introduction, n. 26 and corresponding text. For words of the διαβαίω family marking “unwise imperial ventures,” see Lateiner 1989, 131–32; Payen 1997, 140.

258. The “three days” may belong to the contemporary political code. Diodorus (12.4) reports a clause of the Peace of Callias that stipulated that Persian armies should not come nearer to the coast than three days’ march. The crossing of the river in reverse is also noted by Flory (1987, 112–13).

polemic intent of the story and enhances its participation in the general message of Herodotus' ethnographic *historie*. According to the traditional image, the Amazons were invaders who lusted for conquest, while the autochthonous Athenians were and are by nature just and would never deprive another of his land.<sup>259</sup> Representing the product of Herodotus' historical and ethnographic research, the Sauromatian *logos* shows that the Amazons were neither wild, nor violent, nor cowardly, nor gutless, nor eager to enslave, nor ignorant of justice, nor the enemies of the race of men. Here, as elsewhere in the work, female is not the antithesis of male, barbarian is not the antithesis of Greek, and the alternative of conquering or being conquered appears invalid. Herodotus' pursuit of the similar within his representation of difference confounds mythical constructs of alterity. His scientific ethnography teaches that difference pervades the world, to be sure, but not according to the schematic intellectual map devised by the Greeks.

### Conclusion

I have begun by exploring the extent to which the narrator's explicit comparative interventions confirm the cohesiveness of the *Histories* and throw light on their meaning. In the historical narrative, I have argued, the rule of diachronic similarity predominates on its own by implicit analogy. The juxtaposition of narrated data in itself conveys that similar events and features recur (horizontal analogy) and that certain actions or objects figuratively represent more abstract qualities and general processes (vertical analogy). Thus, the narrator rarely points out in his own voice, "Such and such is analogous to such and such." Two cases of this sort provide to the recipient of the narrative additional help on shocking or particularly obscure connections. In doing so, they confirm the correctness of the listener's interpretation of the history through both horizontal and vertical analogy. To the extent that these glosses make patent the narrator's own process of interpretation, they also reveal the encompassing range of the analogical field that revolves around kingship as both historical reality and historical symbol.

If historical events emerge as being like each other diachronically,

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259. See the Athenian ambassadors at 7.161.3. The Amazons' lust for conquest is already implicit in Aesch. *Eum.* (685–90). See also Isoc. *Paneg.* 4.68–70; Lysias 2.4. In Demosthenes (6.4–8) the connection between autochthony and justice is immediately followed by the mention of the Amazons' invasion. See Tyrrell 1984, 114–16.



ethnography and geography describe synchronic difference around the world. Without difference, there is nothing to narrate. Glosses explicitly declaring the difference of a phenomenon from another or its uniqueness periodically underline this inherent presupposition of the narrative. Glosses of difference are not always advertisements of narratability, however. Rather, in certain cases, they aim at breaking down ethnographic categories into smaller, if often more elusive, groupings. This maneuver seems designed to contradict and scramble excessively schematic notions, much in the same way as when Herodotus devalues the conventional subdivision of the earth into large sections. Conversely, explicit glosses of difference that engage as whole categories the Greeks, on the one hand, and the barbarians, on the other, are almost entirely absent. This constitutes again a move away from convention. Herodotus is reluctant to theorize the Greeks as special or even as the norm in an absolute sense.

Most important is the frequency with which the whole representation of difference is counterbalanced by glosses that explicitly state that an ethnographic or geographic phenomenon is like another one somewhere else, either foreign or Greek. These statements scan the objective account of specific facts and add plausibility to its intended direction. When Herodotus describes how various ethnographic subjects differ from the Greeks and emphasizes their separate identities—the different ways in which they differ from the Greeks—this also conveys the different ways in which they resemble the Greeks or different groups of Greeks. The glosses of similarity compensate for the propensity of ethnography to result in a discourse on alterity, especially the alterity of the *barbaroi* as a whole to the Greeks as a whole. They are reminders of an ideology of sameness that manifests itself also in the unmarked representation of shared features in the context of the objective description of difference.

The identification with the other, like the partial devaluation of geographical boundaries, participates in Herodotus' overarching idea of a world that is differentiated and homogeneous at the same time. This in turn is designed to spoil for the Greeks the pleasure of contrast effects, to uncover for them surprising paradigms, and also to deny them the separate role of spectators of barbarian woes, such as Aeschylus' *Persians* had allowed them to take. Each *ethnos* possesses its special identity and history, but pervasive and unexpected likenesses among all *ethnea* guarantee on principle eventual resemblances in their historical experience, as happened with the Scythians and Greeks. The synchronic patterning of the world confirms and explains the predictability of the patterns of history.