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## VII

ALAN B. LLOYD

### HERODOTUS ON EGYPTIANS AND LIBYANS

The subject of this paper is the analysis of Herodotus' account of the culture and history of Egyptians and Libyans. Since his statement of intent in the proem of the *Histories* is relevant to both these concerns, we can do no better than begin with a discussion of its content. It runs as follows:

This is the publication of the enquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus in order that neither should the remembrance of actions of men be lost through the passage of time nor should be the great and wondrous deeds, some performed by Greeks, others by βάρβαροι, lack their due meed of glory, both other things and, in particular, the reason why they fought each other.

The implications of these words are far-reaching. In the first place, Herodotus insists that his entire narrative is to be regarded as *ιστορίη* or "enquiry". He is, therefore, signalling at the very beginning that he is not simply the passive recipient of impressions but had been actively seeking information on clearly defined issues. Indeed, there can be little doubt that in this context the word would have implied to a contemporary reader that the entire work should be seen, at one level, at any rate, as a scientific enquiry with a clear

awareness of problems of evidence and a determination, where possible, to solve them.<sup>1</sup>

The second point to make is that the wording of the purpose clause places the work firmly within the epic tradition; i.e. one of its concerns is commemorating the "glorious deeds of heroes" (κλέα ἀνδρῶν).<sup>2</sup> However, the end of the proem demonstrates that this function proceeds in conjunction with a second role, that of explaining historical phenomena. A further issue on which Herodotus insists is that he has a particular interest in things great and wondrous (μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά),<sup>3</sup> but, as far as we are concerned, perhaps the most important point is that Herodotus expresses the intention of dealing not only with Greek achievements but also and on equal terms with those of peoples whom he describes as βάρβαροι.

The use of the term βάρβαρος in Classical Greek shows a complex and nuanced picture. In origin and for much of its history it functioned as the term for the second element in the simple antithesis Greek: non-Greek. As such, at one level, it

<sup>1</sup> On ἱστορίη see B. SNELL, *Die Ausdrücke für den Begriff des Wissens in der vorplatonischen Philosophie*, Philologische Untersuchungen, 29 (Berlin 1924); Alan B. LLOYD, *Herodotus. Book II. Introduction*, EPRO 43 (Leiden 1975), 81 ff.; H. A. WEBER, *Herodots Verständnis der Historie. Untersuchungen zur Methodologie und Argumentationsweise Herodots* (Bern/Frankfurt am M./München 1976); J. MARINCOLA, "A Selective Introduction to Herodotean Studies", in *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 35 ff.; C. DEWALD, "Narrative Surface and Authorial Voice in Herodotus' *Histories*", *ibid.*, 147 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., A. W. GOMME, *The Greek Attitude to Poetry and History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1954); H. STRASBURGER, "Homer und die Geschichtsschreibung", SHAW 1972, 1 (Heidelberg 1972); S. BROUWER, *Een Studie over enige archaische Elementen in de Styl van Herodotus* (Meppel 1975); M. L. LANG, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1984), particularly Ch. 3. The influence of tragedy is, of course, also detectable (cf., e.g., H. FOHL, *Tragische Kunst bei Herodot*, Inaug.-Diss. Rostock [Borna-Leipzig 1913]).

<sup>3</sup> Ph.-E. LEGRAND, *Hérodote. Introduction* (Paris 1966), 45 ff.; H. BARTH, "Zur Bewertung und Auswahl des Stoffes durch Herodot (Die Begriffe θῶμα, θωμάζω, θωμάσιος und θωμαστός)", in *Klio* 50 (1968), 93 ff.; M. KAISER, in S. MORENZ, *Die Begegnung Europas mit Ägypten*, Sitz.-Ber. Sächsischen Akad. der Wiss. zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Kl. 113, 5 (Berlin 1968).

constituted one of a series of polarities by which the Greeks mapped out and imposed order on their conceptual world. At another, and for our purposes more important, level it exemplified one of the basic preoccupations of all societies, i.e. the need to establish and maintain a sense of corporate identity. When such ideas take the form of a perception of state or national identity, their content is compounded of various elements: shared religious systems, ideologies, historical experience, territory, and, to a greater or lesser extent, language. To some degree, both state and national identities maintain themselves at a subconscious level by the habits of routine social behaviour, but it is invariably the case that they will also be periodically reasserted and confirmed in various formal and ritualized ways (e.g., in a Greek context, the Panathenaic Festival at Athens or the pan-Hellenic games). They are, in addition, always consolidated by an awareness, subconscious or actively promoted, of the differences between one's own group and those of others. Such recognition of distinction can be accompanied by a variety of psychological responses ranging from admiration and emulation through neutrality to unease, fear, contempt, hatred, and even active hostility. Usually the reaction is a complex blend of several of these, but, when the emphasis is laid on the negative side of the spectrum, we can obtain perspectives comparable to modern attitudes of cultural or racial prejudice.

The earliest Greek text in which the word *βάρβαρος* appears is *Iliad* II 867, where the Carians are described as *βαρβαρόφωνοι*, "incomprehensible in speech". Here the basis of the distinction is a perception of cultural difference without any detectable sign of distaste or disapproval, and the word's pre-eminent insistence on cultural dissimilarity remains constant throughout its history in Classical Greek; particular aspects of culture emphasized are language, dress, political organization, and sexual and related morality. When



attempts are made to explain such differences, they are attributed to geographical circumstances, institutions, and, in some cases, to φύσις, 'nature' (Hippocrates, *Aer.* 16). In the overwhelming majority of cases where the word occurs we cannot detect any trace of our concept of barbarians as peoples who are uncouth or uncivilized, though contempt for βάρβαροι political systems is recorded on more than one occasion (e.g. Euripides, *IA* 1271 ff.; 1378 ff.; 1400 ff.; Aristotle, *Pol.* I 2, 1252 a 24 ff.; III 14, 1285 a 14 ff.), and, generally speaking, we cannot detect any trace of a notion that the βάρβαρος (non-Greek) falls below acceptable standards of civilized behaviour. This notion is, however, occasionally identifiable and appears clearly, e.g., in Herodotus (IX 78-79), Aristophanes (*Nu.* 492; *Av.* 1573), and Xenophon (*Anab.* V 4, 30-34). Nevertheless, even in the Hellenistic period it is evident that Greeks could show great admiration for non-Greeks (e.g. Strabo, I 4, 9, p. 66-67).<sup>4</sup>

Let us now turn our attention to Herodotus' accounts of the society and history of Egypt and Libya to determine the extent to which they reflect the features discussed above.

### *Egyptian Culture and History*

The bulk of Herodotus' discussion of Egypt occurs in Book II and the early part of Book III. Book II breaks down into two main parts: Chs. 1-98 and Chs. 99-182. The first section is devoted mainly to contemporary Egypt and is dominated by two themes: the geography and geology of the country (5-34) and ethnography (35-98). The treatment of these topics is, however, interspersed with other comment including history or pseudo-history (1-2), the issue of the

<sup>4</sup> On the βάρβαρος concept see the papers published in *Grecs et Barbares*, Entretiens Hardt, 8 (Vandœuvres-Genève 1962).

temporal priority of Egyptian culture (2-4), agriculture (14), ornithology (22, 75-76), the culture of Nubia and of Libya (29, 32-33, 42), zoology or pseudo-zoology (66, 68, 71, 73, 75, 93), and botany. In the context of this paper it is only the ethnographical and historical aspects of this material which need concern us.

In ethnography there are few aspects of Egyptian culture which he fails to discuss: in Ch. 2, we have an account of an experiment of king Psammetichus I designed to determine the oldest nation, an experiment which is based on the conviction of the potency of environmental determinism in human behaviour; Herodotus then proceeds, wrongly, to assert Egyptian temporal priority in inventing the calendar and introducing the names of the Twelve Gods, altars, statues, and temples; at 14, 2, he discusses Egyptian agriculture and explicitly makes a comparison with that of other nations. Here he pinpoints key features of the system and emphasizes the uniqueness of Egyptian practice, but he is quite misleading on the difficulties which the Egyptians faced; at 29, 2, he comments on an Egyptian method of navigation, betraying an interest which we should expect of a member of one of the greatest seafaring nations of antiquity; at 35-36 occurs his famous catalogue of Egyptian customs which he alleges to be diametrically opposite to those of everyone else, pointing to differences in the freedom of women, weaving, sex distinction in carrying burdens, posture when urinating, attitudes to privacy when defecating or eating, the organization of priestly offices, rules on the care of the elderly, priests' practices in cutting hair, mourning rituals, living with animals, cereals used in bread-making, methods of kneading bread and mud/clay, the practice of circumcision, clothing, arrangement of rigging in ships, and the direction of writing. There is some justification for most of his observations, but Herodotus clearly pushed the contrast too far. In 37 he rightly emphasizes Egyptian punctiliousness in religious observances, and

his comments on the priesthood are sound, but he commits a strange lapse when he denies that the Egyptians grew beans. The cult of the Apis bull receives attention at 38 and methods of sacrifice at 39-42. Not all the details can be substantiated, but the general picture is consistent with Egyptian evidence. This survey brings him at 43-45 to a discussion of the origins of Herakles, and he then continues his treatment of Egyptian sacrifice with comments on goat and pig sacrifice (46-47). Here there can be no doubt that the major factor in drawing Herodotus' attention to the Egyptian avoidance of pig sacrifice was its very frequency in Greece. He also paints an exaggerated picture of exclusive intermarriage amongst the swineherds of Egypt. He then passes to an account of the festival of Dionysus at 48, and this leads, in turn, to his detailed, though misguided, exposition of the view that Greek religion was almost entirely Egyptian in origin (49-58). There follows a description of the major Egyptian festivals (59-64). At 65 he directs his attention to the cult of sacred animals and continues in that vein until 76, interspersing his discussion with some zoological comment. There is much that is sound in all this, but eccentricities are not lacking. In Chs. 77-84 he moves on to secular culture, dealing with medical practices, food, feasts, attitudes to age (explicit comparison with Spartan customs), clothing, omens, oracles, and hemerology. Here, again, there is much sound observation. Chs. 85-90 are given over to a survey of funeral customs which contains much good information, though in the analysis of the technology of embalming he is certainly guilty of oversimplification. The interest in the festival of Perseus at Chemmis in Ch. 91 is clearly motivated by the paradox that here the Egyptians appeared, for once, to have taken over a custom from the Greeks. The entire ethnographical discussion is then wound up with a description of customs which are claimed to be distinctive to the marsh-dwellers in matters of marriage customs, diet, oil-production, protection against

mosquitoes, and boat-building (92-98). Not all of this can be substantiated, but the general picture gives no cause for alarm.

Ethnographical comment also occurs elsewhere. The second half of Book II contains, in particular, a considerably oversimplified description of Egyptian class structure (164-168: cf. VI 53, 2-55); at I 182, there is a reference to the virginity requirement for one of the women officiants in the temple of Amon-rē' at Thebes; and in Book IV he twice insists on similarities between Egyptian customs and those of Libyans (168, 1; 186, 1).<sup>5</sup>

In all this ethnographical comment there is one item lacking which most modern observers would expect to find. Egyptian physical characteristics, as such, do not interest Herodotus; he only discusses them in the context of the Sesostris *logos* at II 104, 2, and even here he simply picks on the standard Greek stereotype of Egyptian physiognomy. There were and are many Egyptians who would not fit this description; it is simply one of several common physical types but had become, for the Greeks, the Egyptian type *par excellence*.

Chs. 99-182 of Book II are taken up mainly with historical matter, and this continues into Book III. Book II, 99 ff., breaks down into two main sections: 99-142, the reigns of kings Min to Sethos, and 147-82, the reigns of the Dodecarchs to Amasis. The structure of the narrative is simple: kings are discussed in what Herodotus believed to be their chronolog-

<sup>5</sup> On Herodotus as ethnographer see A. GRASSL, *Herodot als Ethnologe*, Inaug.-Diss. München (Sulzbach 1904); K. TRÜDINGER, *Studien zur Geschichte der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie* (Diss. Basel 1918); K. VON FRITZ, *Die Griechische Geschichtsschreibung I* (Berlin 1967), 128 ff.; K. E. MÜLLER, *Geschichte der antiken Ethnographie und ethnologischen Theoriebildung von den Anfängen bis auf die byzantinischen Historiographen I* (Wiesbaden 1972); M. ROSELLINI and S. SAÏD, "Usages de femmes et autres nomoi chez les 'sauvages' d'Hérodote: Essai de lecture structurale", in *ASNP* S. III 8 (1978), 949 ff.; F. HARTOG, *Le miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris 1980); F. MORA, *Religione e religioni nelle storie di Erodoto* (Milano 1986), 60 ff.



ical order, though in the first section he makes many errors in this respect. However, the sequence in the second part is impeccable. Not infrequently this framework is supplemented by statements about the length of a reign (127, 1 and 3; 133, 1 and 5; 137, 2; 139, 3) or the period of time which had elapsed between particular points (13, 1; 142, 2-3), but for the earlier section this information is invariably incorrect. In the historical narrative he recognizes the classic Egyptian distinction between the dynasties of gods and human kings (4, 2; 144, 2), and, when he deals with the latter, he mentions rulers of most of the major periods of Egyptian history.<sup>6</sup>

This historical narrative continues into Book III with an account of the conclusion of the reign of Amasis and the brief and disastrous career of Psammenitus. This section is dominated by the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses (1-38; 61-66), but there is also an account of relations between Amasis and Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, at 39-43. Interesting and important though the account of Cambyses' activities may be, it is not, in itself, our concern in this context. If, however, we consider what we are told about the Egyptians, we are confronted with several instances of Amasis as a trickster (1; 16), a most implausible and profoundly hellenized picture of the defeated Psammenitus lamenting the fickleness of fortune (14-15), and an account of Amasis' exchanges with Polycrates which provides an example of a similar phenomenon.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from these solid blocks of material on Egyptian history there are scattered references elsewhere: at I 105, 1, Psammetichus dissuades the Scythians from attacking Egypt; at IV 42 there is a description of the expedition allegedly sent by Necho to circumnavigate Africa (cf. IV 44, 2), and later in

<sup>6</sup> For detailed discussions, see K. von FRITZ, *op. cit.* I 158 ff.; R. DREWS, *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History* (Cambridge, Mass. 1973), 56 ff.; A. B. LLOYD, "Herodotus' Account of Pharaonic History", in *Historia* 37 (1988), 22 ff.

<sup>7</sup> On the Polycrates episode and the fate of Psammenitus see A. B. LLOYD, *art. cit.* (*supra* n. 6), 42 ff.; 51.

the same book there is a mention of the defeat of Apries' forces at Theste (159, 4-6); the alleged Egyptian ancestry of the rulers of the Dorians features at VI 53; Herodotus also refers to the use of Egyptians in the Persian fleet employed against Miletus (VI 6); there is a reference to a rebellion against Persia in 487 at VII 1, 3 (cf. VII 4); and their participation in the campaign of Xerxes against Greece is frequently a matter of comment (VII 25, 1; 34; 89, 2-3; 97; VIII 17; 68; 100, 4; IX 32, 1).

In Book II the process of *ιστορίη* highlighted in the proem is very much to the fore. Here Herodotus shows a particularly keen awareness of the problem of evidence and states on several occasions the principles which he observed in processing his data. For the early part of the book, which includes most of the ethnographical comment, he makes the following claim:

Up to this point my statements are based on what I myself saw (*ὄψις*), my own opinion (*γνώμη*), and personal enquiry (*ιστορίη*) (99, 1).

For the historical section, however, the situation changed:

... from this point [i.e. Ch. 99, 1] I shall proceed by retailing Egyptian traditions as I heard them; these will be supplemented also in some measure by what I myself saw.

However, within this historical section he was aware of a radical change in the nature of his sources:

This, then, is what the Egyptian themselves say, but from now on I shall record all these things which both other men and the Egyptians say happened in this land. This will be supplemented in some measure also by what I myself saw (147, 1).



It emerges a little later that the 'other men' are preeminently Greeks:

Once these [sc. Carian and Ionian mercenaries] had been settled in Egypt, we Greeks, through intercourse with them, have accurate knowledge of all Egyptian history from the time of king Psammetichus onwards (154, 4).

He does, however, make it quite clear that he does not necessarily believe what he has been told (123, 1; VII 152, 3).

I have already dealt with the significance of these passages in detail elsewhere and will content myself here with summarizing the main points.<sup>8</sup> Ἱστορίη proceeds by autopsy and hearsay in the earlier section of Book II, and these techniques are supplemented by a process of assessment which he describes as γνώμη. There is no mention of any written source. Overall, he insists on his autonomy in confronting and describing Egyptian culture. For the second half, as a result of the historical subject matter, he is forced to rely on hearsay information from a variety of sources. To his credit, Herodotus himself recognizes the variable quality of these sources, and he attempts throughout Book II, where possible, to subject his data to a process of assessment, mobilizing the full apparatus of argument provided by contemporary scholarship (e.g. II 103-106), but often he is not in a position to weigh up the truth or falsehood of what he is told and is, therefore, obliged to insist that he cannot vouch for the truth of everything which he purveys. Sadly, however careful he might be in dealing with the oral traditions on Egypt's past which came his way, neither he nor any other Greek had the apparatus of scholarship to distil the truth from falsehood in such matters. In transmission over many years—even centuries or millennia—the historically specific was progres-

<sup>8</sup> A. B. LLOYD, *Herodotus. Book II. Introduction*, 77 ff.; Id., *art. cit.* (*supra* n. 6), 23 ff.

sively eroded and overlaid by such elements as folklore, propaganda, ethical and ideological preoccupations, distortions of time-scale, and confusion and conflation of individuals, and this corrupting process, conducted in the first place by Egyptians, was then continued by Greeks who further modified the traditions to suit their own attitudes and interests. It is, therefore, no surprise to find that very little of the first section of Herodotus' narrative of Egypt's past in Book II has any value as history, and that even the account of Saite history has to be treated with great caution.<sup>9</sup>

An important corollary of Herodotus' insistence on working with the apparatus of research described above is that he prefers to confine his comments to the phenomenal world. This empiricist position appears clearly at II 3, 2-4, 1:

As for such narratives of divine activity as I heard, I am not anxious to expound them save only the names of the gods, being of the opinion that all men have equal <lack of> knowledge of them. As for what I do mention, I shall mention it only by absolute necessity...<sup>10</sup>

In view of this approach to the study of culture and history it is hardly surprising that he has recourse to the highly tangible and mechanistic doctrine of environmental determinism when he tries to explain the bizarre features of Egyptian civilization:

Inasmuch as their climate is different [from that of others], and their river displays a character at variance with all others, the Egyptians have arranged for themselves all other things differently from the rest of mankind, both in respect of customs and laws (35, 2).

<sup>9</sup> A. B. LLOYD, *art. cit.*, 23 ff. For a detailed discussion of the text see Id., *Herodotus. Book II, Commentary* 99-182, EPRO 43 (Leiden 1988).

<sup>10</sup> On Herodotus as empiricist see D. MÜLLER, "Herodot—Vater des Empirismus?", in *Gnomosyne. Festschrift W. Marg* (München 1981), 299 ff.; V. HUNTER, *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides* (Princeton 1982), 110 ff.

He uses the same principle in a specifically medical context at 77, 3:

In other respects also are the Egyptians, after the Libyans, the healthiest of all men [and this arises] in my opinion because of the seasons, because the seasons do not change; for it is in changes that diseases arise for men, in particular changes of seasons.

The same thinking is also in evidence at 142, 4, where Herodotus claims that there had been no change in Egyptian life for 11,340 years despite the fact that the priests asserted that there had been reversals in the movements of the sun. Evidently, these anomalies were not to be regarded as involving climatic changes.

Less obviously, the principle of environmental determinism also emerges in the experiment of Psammetichus at II 2, where the process is clearly conceived of in a simple mechanistic way; for this experiment will only prove what it is claimed to prove when the view is taken that, if these conditions were created anywhere by anyone and with anyone of the right age, the children would still end up speaking Phrygian. In this case, of course, Herodotus is not himself using the principle for his own purposes, but he accepts its application without demur.

Herodotus, then, has his scientific commitments, but it would be a mistake to press this aspect of his work too far by making anachronistic demands of him. His concern for establishing the truth did not bring with it anything approaching the twentieth-century obsession with precision and accuracy for its own sake.<sup>11</sup> This is most clearly seen in his information on dimensions of buildings and distances which are not infrequently erroneous, even though it would not have been

<sup>11</sup> St. WEST, "Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests", in *CQ* N.S. 35 (1985), 304 f.; J. MARINCOLA, in *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 40. If this observation is correct—and I have no doubt that it is—the task of those who use inaccuracies in Herodotus to disprove his claims to autopsy becomes virtually impossible.

impossible for him, even in the conditions of his time, to provide a much more realistic figure (e.g. II 148, 7).<sup>12</sup> In some cases, it is evident that the principle behind quoting figures is not that of providing precise information at all; they are rather being used symbolically to give an impression of size or are intended to create a greater sense of actuality. The symbolic use is clear with numbers based on the figure three, e.g. the total of 30 feet for the minimum size of stones used in building the Great Pyramid is far too large (II 124, 5), and the figure 30,000 for the Carian and Ionian mercenaries of Apries is equally suspicious (II 163, 1). To his Greek readers Herodotus would presumably not have been in the least misleading in proceeding in this way since it must surely have been a well-known and accepted practice in the oral tradition of literature to which he owed so much.

The second feature of the proem isolated at the beginning of this paper was Herodotus' clear implication that his work should be seen within the epic tradition. This dimension is easily identified in the *Αἰγύπτιος λόγος*. The very moral and theological framework underpinning the entire work (see below, p. 233) is an epic legacy, and war, the central preoccupation of epic, is a recurrent theme (e.g. II 102-106; 161-169; III 1-15). Some of the subject matter itself is derived from the epic cycle (II 112-120), and in technique this influence is equally potent: there are echoes in language (e.g. II 13, 1; 32, 3; 148, 4);<sup>13</sup> there is the same mixture of speech and narrative (II 114-115; 173; III 14; 40 the letter here being equivalent to a speech), a parallel to epic catalogues (II 164-166), and a looseness of structure which belongs to oral tradition in general

<sup>12</sup> J. W. S. BLOM, *De typische getallen bij Homeros en Herodotos*, I: *Triaden, hebdomaden en enneaden* (Nijmegen 1936); D. FEHLING, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot* (Berlin and New York 1971), 155 ff.; A. B. LLOYD, *art. cit.* (*supra* n. 6), 41.

<sup>13</sup> II 13, 1: εἰ μὴ... ἀναβῆ; here the subjunctive without ἄν is Homeric; 32, 3, the shift from active to middle in ἴδοιεν... ἰδομένων is paralleled in epic, cf. *Il.* I 262; 148, 4, τοῦ γάρ: the use of τοῦ as a straight demonstrative pronoun is another Homeric echo.



but must have presented itself most often to Greeks in the form of epic poetry. This manifests itself most conspicuously in the numerous excursuses of which Book II is itself an example (cf. II 148; 155-6 for other instances).

The interest in things great and wonderful is best discussed in conjunction with the ramifications of the concept of the βάρβαρος. It will be remembered that in our earlier analysis of this word the most important single point to emerge was that the concept reflected a keen awareness of difference from Greek culture.<sup>14</sup> Herodotus makes it clear at an early stage that this factor dominates his perception of Egypt when he insists that Egypt is a land of marvels, i.e. phenomena at variance with Greek experience:

I am going to speak at some length of Egypt because it possesses very many marvels (θωμάσια) and works which surpass the power of description beyond those of any other land (II 35, 1).

The word θῶμα and its roots occur elsewhere in Book II in relation to Egyptian culture and history: extraordinary situations at 121 β 1; 121 ζ 2; the complexity of the Labyrinth (148, 6); Lake Moiris (149, 1); the monuments of Buto (155, 3; 156, 1); and the monuments of Sais (175, 1 and 3). The same reaction is expressed by the word τεθήρα used at 156, 2, of the floating Island of Chemmis. However, even though such words are not necessarily employed, it is evident that this reaction to Egypt permeates his account. It is patently present in the account of the disparities between Egyptian culture and other civilizations at 35-36; it pervades his account of Egyptian religion (cf. the recurrent interest in circumcision [36, 3; 37, 2; 104, 2-4], the copious comment on sacred animals [38; 41; 46; 65-76], and the interest in mummification [86-88]). It is also ubiquitous in his account of Egyptian history where

<sup>14</sup> M. ROSELLINI and S. SAÏD, *art. cit.* (*supra* n. 5); F. HARTOG, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 5); F. MORA, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 5).

the extraordinary time-span of the pharaonic past attracts attention in several contexts (142-144), and the titanic achievements of Egyptian kings are a recurrent theme, e.g. 99; 101; 108; 124-135; 148-150; 157; 158; 175-176.

Given this overwhelming sense of Egypt as a land which excites endless wonder through points of striking dissimilarity with a Greek cultural milieu, any points of *similarity* would stand out in particularly sharp relief. On customs Herodotus himself comments with powerful emphasis:

They [sc. the Egyptians] use the customs of their ancestors and do not supplement them with any others (79, 1).

and

They shun the use of Greek customs and, as a general rule, those of other men as well (91, 1).

For all that, he has no difficulty in identifying points of similarity. He insists at 48, 2, that, in general, Egyptian practice in the cult of Dionysus is the same as that of the Greeks even though the Egyptians use images instead of phalli. He notes that the Egyptian Maneros song is similar to the Greek Linus (79, 2). He claims that Spartans and Egyptians agree in their respect for the aged, but his comment immediately suggests to him an area of acute difference of behaviour (II 80). He insists on the similarity of what goes on at Chemmis in honour of Perseus and what Greeks themselves do (91, 2 ff.). At 164-168 it is indisputable that Herodotus is thinking of the Μάχιμοι as the Egyptian equivalent of the Spartan ὁμοῖοι. Finally, he emphasizes the similarities between features of cult at Delos and Sais (171).

The observation of such similarities, whether real or imaginary, was not without its pernicious side; for it led not only Herodotus but also his fellow countrymen to postulate that these similarities were not coincidental but the result of



borrowing by the younger culture from the older. This ready application of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* principle made him and many others convinced diffusionists.<sup>15</sup> The insistence on the Egyptians' temporal priority in numerous areas occurs as early as II 4 where they are claimed to have invented the calendar, the names of the Twelve Gods, altars, sculpture, and shrines. Only in the case of the gods in this passage is it specifically claimed that the Greeks took the invention over, though it is far from improbable that Herodotus regarded them all as legacies to Greece. There are many other examples of this trait in Herodotus' account of Egypt. The conviction that Greek religion was largely Egyptian in origin is the most striking of these notions and receives close attention at 49-53, 81, 171. Geometry is claimed to have been invented in Egypt and then to have passed to Greece (109, 3), and a similar assertion is made about the doctrine of the transmigration of souls at 123, 2-3. In similar vein one of the laws of Solon is alleged to have had an Egyptian origin at 177, 2. Though all of these assertions are presented by Herodotus with great confidence and sometimes with detailed argument, he is almost certainly wrong in every single case.<sup>16</sup>

A keen perception of cultural difference must always raise for the observer the issue of what attitude he should take to the differences. Is he to adopt a negative, neutral, or positive valuation of what confronts him? One of the most striking features of Herodotus' response to foreign cultures is his willingness to treat Greek and non-Greek achievements on the same terms, and this, again, is a feature in his thinking of which he gives explicit notice in the proem. This characteristic could easily lead to cultural relativism, and in the case

<sup>15</sup> A. B. LLOYD, *Herodotus. Book II. Introduction*, 147 ff.; V. HUNTER, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 10), 102; 272 ff. See also A. KLEINGÜNTHER, ΠΡΩΤΟΣ ΕΥΡΕΤΗΣ, *Philologus Suppl.-Bd.* 26, 1 (1933), 1 ff.

<sup>16</sup> See nn. *ad loc.* in A. B. LLOYD, *Herodotus. Book II. Commentary 1-98* (Leiden 1976) and *Commentary 99-182* (Leiden 1988).

of Herodotus it clearly did. There is an explicit statement of this position at III 38:

In every way, therefore, is it clear to me that a great madness afflicted Cambyses; for otherwise he would not have tried to make mock of religious practices and customs; for, if someone were to make a proposal to any people, commanding them to choose the finest of all customs, each group, after conducting a thorough survey, would choose their own; so does each group consider its own customs much the finest. Therefore, it is reasonable that nobody but a madman would make mock of such things ... and rightly does the poet Pindar seem to me to have written when he said that custom is king of all things.

Such a standpoint is the very antithesis of cultural arrogance, and, in Herodotus' case, has a number of important consequences. In the first place, it led to a greater receptivity towards and interest in foreign cultures of which Book II is an impressive illustration. Secondly, it considerably facilitated the willingness to concede the Egyptian legacy to Greek culture which we have already discussed. In the third place there is a readiness to admit Egyptian superiority which could, at times, disturb a Greek audience:<sup>17</sup> at II 2, 5, the foolishness of the Greek version of a tradition is starkly contrasted with that of the Egyptians (cf. 45, though here there is no opposing superior Egyptian view); at II 4, 1, the superiority of Egyptian calendrical arrangements is a subject of comment; similarly, Egyptian priests can be presented as being better informed than Greeks (II 8, 1); at II 9 Greek behaviour is contrasted unfavourably with that of the Egyptians; and at II 4-115 we find an Egyptian castigating the immorality of Alexandros and pinpointing the key ethical issues raised by his despicable behaviour.

When we come to examine Herodotus' conception of the φύσις of the Egyptians and how far the differences between

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Plut. *De Herod. malign.* 12, 857 A-B.

Greeks and Egyptians went, we are confronted with an intriguing picture. He insists at several points on the Egyptian distaste for physical cruelty: when discussing the experiment of Psammetichus in II 2 he concludes by rejecting an alternative version which would involve cutting out the tongues of women placed in charge of the boys. He does not, at this point, give his reason for dismissing the tale but, if we turn to 45, 2-3, all becomes clear; for here he refuses to accept the tradition that the Egyptians had tried to sacrifice Herakles to Zeus on the grounds that such behaviour is at variance with the φύσις ('nature') and the νόμοι ('customs') of the Egyptians.<sup>18</sup> He can, however, admit lapses; for at III 13, 2, the savage murder and dismemberment of the Persian peace embassy was not only a violation of all humanity but a transgression of international law which would have deeply offended Herodotus' Greek readers.

In general, however, Herodotus shows little awareness that the Egyptians might operate on the basis of a different value system or a discrete ideology from that of Greeks.<sup>19</sup> For him they inhabit the same moral universe and respond to the same moral laws despite his willingness to concede at 45, 2, that they have a different φύσις. This corpus of ideas is directly relevant to the final aspect of the proem to which I drew attention at the beginning of this paper, i.e. Herodotus' concern with explaining historical phenomena. Since I have

<sup>18</sup> The polarity φύσις: νόμος was of consuming concern to Herodotus and his contemporaries (V. HUNTER, *op. cit.*, 264 ff.; A. CORCELLA, *Erodoto e l'analogia* [Palermo 1984], 74 ff.). Herodotus clearly believed that φύσις, like νόμοι, was a product of environment (IX 122, 3), but whether he thought of the relationship as a simple linear sequence of causation: environment → φύσις → νόμος, or envisaged a more complex interplay of these factors is far from clear. Cf. Hippocrates, *Aer.* 12 ff.

<sup>19</sup> The only obvious exception is his awareness of their monarchical political system (II 172, 5), but even here his comment amounts to a stock statement of disapproval for monarchy as such (cf. III 80 ff.). There is no recognition of anything specifically Egyptian in the institution.

discussed these concepts in detail in several contexts, a brief summary will suffice here.<sup>20</sup>

To Herodotus the universe was dominated by a moral order (δίκη) which had two interpenetrating dimensions, the human and the divine. According to this concept all things and all beings had their allotted time and place, their assigned spheres of action outside which they must not break. Any attempt to upset this order would be visited sooner or later by retribution (τίσις). It was the obligation of all men to recognize this situation, regulate their behaviour by it, and integrate themselves with the cosmic order. If they did so, they were δίκαιοι; if they did not, they were ἄδικοι. The most common failure was transgression of boundaries which is often motivated by attitudes which modern writers conventionally, though not perhaps always accurately, describe as ὕβρις.<sup>21</sup> There are two further concepts integral with this

<sup>20</sup> A. B. LLOYD, *Herodotus. Book II. Commentary* 99-182, 1 ff.; Id., *art. cit.* (*supra* n. 6), 28 ff. See also Ph.-E. LEGRAND, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 3), 131 ff.; L. HUBER, *Religiöse und politische Beweggründe des Handelns in der Geschichtsschreibung des Herodot* (Diss. Tübingen 1965); H. R. IMMERWAHR, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland 1966), 306 ff.; G. LACHENAUD, *Mythologies, religion et philosophie de l'histoire dans Hérodote* (Lille-Paris 1978), 757 ff.; V. HUNTER, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 10), 176 ff.; 264 ff.; A. CORCELLA, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 18), 74 ff.; K. A. RAAFLAUB, "Herodotus, Political Thought, and the Meaning of History", in *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 221 ff.

<sup>21</sup> For a survey of the word in Herodotus see M. GIRAudeau, *Les notions juridiques et sociales chez Hérodote. Etudes sur le vocabulaire* (Paris 1984), 73 ff. The work of N. R. E. Fisher on ὕβρις suggests that the word has come to be used by modern scholars and indeed laymen in contexts where the Greeks would not have employed it ("Hybris and Dishonour: I", in *G & R* S.S. 23 [1976], 177 ff.; cf. D. M. MACDOWELL, "Hybris in Athens", *ibid.*, 14 ff.). It does not simply mean 'vaulting ambition' or 'arrogance', and cases where we perceive such an attitude in relation to the gods would not necessarily have been regarded as ὕβρις by a Greek observer. Fisher comments: "... the basic point about *hybris* that I believe has not received nearly enough attention, is that the concept is essentially linked to the ideas of honour and shame. Much of the best of recent work on Greek social and moral values has been concerned with revealing and delineating the importance of such ideas, and I wish to suggest that *hybris* too is to be seen in that general context" (*art. cit.*, 177). In Aristotle's words it is "doing and saying things at which the victim incurs shame, not in order than one may achieve anything other than what is done, but simply to get pleasure from it" (*Rb.* II 2, 1378 b 23-35). This was, of course, an offence which could be



system and of recurrent importance in Herodotus: the notion of the transitory nature of fortune (i.e. it was something allotted by the gods and removable at their will), and the concept of fate which I have described elsewhere as essentially "a symbol of the fixed and implacably self-maintaining order of the universe".<sup>22</sup> It should further be remembered that there was a firm belief in the existence of lines of communication between the divine and human spheres in the form of oracles, omens, seers, and warner-figures. However, for all his conviction that the cosmic order was a moral order Herodotus had a keen perception of the savage ironies of human existence, a particularly good example being the fate of Adrastus described in Book I where the very man sent to protect the young prince Atys is responsible for his death (34-45).

Book II does not offer as much scope as most other parts of Herodotus' work for characters to be presented operating within this system, but this view of human action is certainly evident in his reading of Egyptian behaviour: at 111, 2, king Pheros is depicted as hurling a spear into the Nile "through arrogance" (*ἀτασθαλίη χρησάμενον*), and being punished with blindness; the confrontations between Proteus and Alexandros at 114-115 present the Egyptian ruler highlighting and castigating the *ἀδικίη* of Alexandros in very Greek terms, and the moral of the whole Helen episode is explicitly stated in the traditional format in 120, 5; the rewards of piety, i.e. of recognizing and integrating with the divine will, emerge at 141, 6; at 151-152 the attempt of the Dodecarchs to avoid

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perpetrated against the gods as easily as against one's fellow man, but it would not necessarily be an adequate description of every act of human arrogance *vis-à-vis* the gods. This is not to say that the Greeks did not think that transgression of boundaries set between gods and men would not be punished. *Ἀτάσθαλος* is a favourite word of Herodotus for describing the attitude which gives rise to such errors (cf. J. E. POWELL, *A Lexicon to Herodotus* [Cambridge 1938], 50).

<sup>22</sup> A. B. LLOYD, *art. cit.* (*supra* n. 6), 29.

fulfilment of a prophecy is a catastrophic failure and leads to their own deposition; finally, 161, 2-3 and 169, 2, taken together, provide a classic statement of the view so eloquently expounded in the confrontation between Solon and Croesus in Book I, i.e. no man can presume that his good fortune is his own; the gods give, and the gods take away as they choose. Herodotus' sensitivity to the ironies of human existence is also not lacking (133; 151-152; 162-163 and 169), and oracles and dreams, at any rate, feature in the narrative (e.g. III, 2; 139; 141; 152, 3-4; 158, 5).

When we turn our attention to Book III, we continue to find the Egyptians depicted as model βάρβαροι functioning firmly within the thought-world described above. At 14, 10, Psammenitus gives expression to the doctrine of the transitory nature of human fortune in terms of great pathos; the same notion is also dominant in the exchange between Polycrates of Samos and Amasis at 40 and 43. The oracle, portents, and warners are very much in evidence (10; 16; 36; 39-43), and there is a particularly fine example of Herodotus' predilection for ironical situations in Ch. 15.

These cosmic principles do not, however, exhaust Herodotus' apparatus of historical explanation; for he is perfectly capable of viewing human behaviour on the level of individual psychological motivation. When we come to analyse what he has to say about Egyptians in this respect we encounter a situation similar to that described in relation to world pictures: the motives attributed to Egyptians are indistinguishable from those of Greeks or indeed any other nation in Herodotus' narrative. The most important impulse to action is τιμή, "prestige", which manifests itself in many forms such as the desire for revenge (II 100, 2; 152, 3), the wish to leave behind memorials of oneself (II 110; 148), the determination to defeat opponents (II 121 ε 3) or to surpass ancestors (II 136, 3), and national prestige (III 2). Other motives are also easily identified, including imperialist aggrandizement



(II 102 ff.), curiosity (II 2), arrogance (II 111, 2), the bonds of ξεινίη (II 115, 4 and 6; 182, 2), religious scruples or belief (II 139, 3), anger (II 162, 5), favouritism (II 178, 1), and fear (III 1).

So much for Egypt. We shall now address ourselves to the Λιβυκὸς λόγος to determine how far the picture which has emerged of Herodotus' attitudes and aims is also reflected in that material.

### *Libyan Culture and History*

Herodotus' comments on the culture and history of Libya are considerably less extensive than those on Egypt, but they are far from negligible. There is a substantial excursus on the geography and ethnography of the Libyan tribes in Book IV (168-196), and references are frequent elsewhere. However, even a cursory survey immediately reveals that the history of Libya is a minor concern and that it is very much Herodotus the ethnographer and geographer who is to the fore.<sup>23</sup>

In his Libyan ethnography Herodotus presents us with the spectacle of a *Randvolk* who become progressively less sophisticated the closer they live to the western ἐσχατιαί of the inhabited world. His discussion shows a keen awareness of regional differences and refers on several occasions to the capacity of some Libyan tribes to assimilate or be assimilated to neighbouring cultures. Egypt is a favourite here. He sometimes goes so far as to claim a direct borrowing of certain

<sup>23</sup> For surveys or discussion of details see R. NEUMANN, *Nordafrika nach Herodot* (Leipzig 1892); O. BATES, *The Eastern Libyans, an Essay* (Plymouth and London 1970; repr. of the 1914 ed.); St. GSELL, *Hérodote: Textes relatifs à l'histoire de l'Afrique du Nord* (Alger 1915); J. DESANGES, *Catalogue des tribus africaines de l'Antiquité classique à l'ouest du Nil* (Dakar 1962); F. HARTOG, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 5), Index s.v. Libye; F. MORA, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 5), Index s.v. Libi.

items (II 42; 55; IV 168; 180-181), and in the case of the Ammonioi asserts that they were originally, in part, Egyptians (II 42). Other tribes are said to have taken over Greek customs (IV 170; 180), and the Maxyes even made the claim that they were of Trojan origin (IV 191). The tribal organization of Libya is something on which he insists frequently (IV 167 ff.), but, beyond references to kings and chiefs (II 32), we learn nothing of its political structure. Little is said of the character of the Libyans, but he does represent them as indulging in trickery at IV 158 and 179, and their aggression and opportunistic savagery are also in evidence (IV 183; 203). The extraordinarily high level of health amongst them attracts his attention at II 77 and IV 187 as well as aspects of their medical practice. It is, however, their customs which dominate his account, and here the range of interest is impressive: language (II 42; IV 155; 184; 189: cf. IV 183), dress (IV 168; 176), haircuts (IV 168; 175; 180; 191), a predilection for chariots (IV 170; 183; 193), marriage customs and sexual morality (IV 168; 172; 176; 180), food acquisition and production (IV 172; 173; 177-178; 181-183; 184; 186-187; 191; 194), methods of making oaths and pledges and obtaining prophecies (IV 172), weaponry (IV 175), cults (IV 179; 188), housing (IV 185; 191), sacrifice (IV 188), burial (IV 190), the practice of painting the body red (IV 191; 194), gold-prospecting (IV 195), trading methods (IV 196), and the treatment of lice (IV 168, 1). However, in all this information we fail to find any indication of Libyan physical characteristics.

The quality of this ethnographical information is less easy to evaluate than that on Egypt since contemporary evidence is infinitely less plentiful. For all that, Herodotus' claims stand up well to scrutiny. The tribal distribution is generally compatible with information in other classical sources, and even the more improbable statements in his description of customs can usually be supported by archaeological or anthropological evidence either from North Africa or else-

where.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, it must be admitted that exaggeration and oversimplification are clearly in evidence at some points.<sup>25</sup>

In Herodotus' work as a whole the Libyans are very much minor figures, and their fragmented tribal organization would not have been conducive to the development of a long and impressive historical tradition of the kind to interest a Greek *savant*. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we only get Libyan history when Libyans impinge on the history of states which were of major concern to Herodotus. Their relations with Greeks are mainly relations with Cyrene: we find Libyans treating early Greek colonists with circumspection and a measure of duplicity (IV 158); the expansion of Cyrene leads to war with the indigenous population at 159; and we encounter the Libyans supporting Arcesilaus' brothers when the latter rose up in rebellion against him, an episode in which the Libyans eventually succeeded in defeating Arcesilaus, allegedly killing 6000 of his troops. Subsequently, we find Dorieus, half-brother of Cleomenes I of Sparta, being driven out of Libya by the Macae and returning to the Peloponnese (V 42), Inarus the Libyan leading a revolt against Persia (VII 7), and Libyans forming part of a force under the leadership of Hamilcar which was used by Terillus, tyrant of Himera, against Gelon of Syracuse (VII 165).

Egypt figures little. The Libyan king Adicran succeeded in enlisting the support of Apries in the late 570s during his struggle against Cyrene, but the Egyptian force was disastrously defeated at Theste (IV 159). Historical involvements with Persia, on the other hand, were much more numerous

<sup>24</sup> E.g. the burial practices of the Nasamonians can be paralleled (St. GSELL, *op. cit.*, 181 ff.), and the claim that houses of the inhabitants of the far west of Libya could be built of salt blocks, though not strictly true, does have some basis in fact (*ibid.*, 180).

<sup>25</sup> E.g. the Lotophagoi could not have lived entirely from the lotos (St. GSELL, *op. cit.*, 95); the claims about the extraordinary health of the Libyans are exaggerated (*ibid.*, 156 ff.); and the rigid distinction between νομάδες and ἀποτήρες is overschematized (*ibid.*, 167 ff.).

and present a variegated picture. At III 13 the Libyans nearest to Egypt surrender to Cambyses without a fight, but at III 17 and 25-26, we find Cambyses planning an attack on Sîwa. The intention to subjugate the place we need not doubt, but the details presented by Herodotus must surely be fictitious.<sup>26</sup> At IV 167 the army of Aryandes is sent to subdue the Libyans, of whom the majority do not seem to have relished Persian control, but this force, after a misguided attempt to take Cyrene, was eventually compelled to withdraw, suffering losses at the hands of Libyan raiders (IV 203). In the satrapal organization of Darius described in Book III they are included with Egypt, Cyrene, and Barca in the Sixth Satrapy (91), and in Xerxes' army used against Greece in the great campaign of 480-79 they figure both in the infantry and chariotry forces (VII 71; 86; 184, 4).

Overall, this historical information presents little which is intrinsically improbable, but, as so often with Herodotus, we are unable to control it in detail. Furthermore, it is so limited in range that it provides him with considerably less scope for his talents as an historian than Egypt, and we find inevitably that several of the features identified in our analysis of the Αἰγύπτιος λόγος are either less in evidence or do not appear at all. Nevertheless, the general picture of his methods, aims, and interests yielded by his discussion of Libya is very much of a piece with that which emerges in the Αἰγύπτιος λόγος.

The process of ἱστορίη is clearly evident in the acquisition and processing of material. It seems probable that the essential framework for the account of the geography and ethnography of Libya as they emerge in II 32 and IV 168-194 was

<sup>26</sup> A. B. LLOYD, "Herodotus on Cambyses: Some Thoughts on Recent Work", in A. KUHR and H. SANCISI-WEERDENBURG (eds.), *Achaemenid History III: Method and Theory* (Leiden 1988), 55 ff. Cf. H. SANCISI-WEERDENBURG, *Yaunā en Persai. Grieken en Perzen in een ander perspectief* (Groningen 1980), 84 ff.; J. M. BALCER, *Herodotus & Bisitun* (Stuttgart 1987), 70 ff.



laid down by Hecataeus,<sup>27</sup> but Herodotus did not accept this earlier study uncritically and clearly went his own way on many issues. The operation of *ιστορίη* is explicitly indicated at IV 192, 3, and oral sources are mentioned at several points: the Cyreneans appear in this capacity at II 32; the Libyans give information on health at IV 187, 3 and on ethnography at IV 191; and the Carthaginians are responsible for the account of trading practices at IV 196. Herodotus' analytical powers are also mobilized to assess reports and provide an opinion (*γνώμη*) at several points: at IV 180 he attempts to establish what equipment was used to adorn the virgin in the festival of Athene before the Libyans had come into contact with Greeks; *γνώμη* figures also in the discussion of the Libyan origins of Greek ululation (IV 189); and at IV 195 Herodotus attempts to support a tradition on a Libyan technique of gold-prospecting by citing a Greek parallel.<sup>28</sup> This last case also shows his circumspection in accepting traditions: "as for this [sc. gold-prospecting on the island of Cyrauis], if it is really done, I do not know, but I write what is said" (see above p. 233).

Herodotus' concern with explanations in terms of the phenomenal world emerges in his attempt to account for good health amongst the Libyans, the unchangeable seasons<sup>29</sup> being made responsible at II 77 (see above p. 235) and medical therapy at IV 187, though he expresses some reserve about this second explanation. The epic dimension of his work has much less opportunity to manifest itself in the absence of a systematic treatment of Libyan history or major

<sup>27</sup> F. JACOBY, in *RE* VII 2, 2727 ff. and Suppl.-Bd. II, 437 f. Both St. GSELL, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 23), 55 ff. and F. MORA, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 5), 255, rightly insist that Herodotus showed considerable independence of his predecessor.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of this intriguing passage see St. GSELL (*op. cit.*, 85 ff.). It is well-nigh certain that gold could not have been obtained in the manner described in the relevant area, but the use of feathers by female gold-prospectors is known from West Africa.

<sup>29</sup> The cauterizing therapy described at IV 187 is paralleled by the emphasis on this technique in modern folk medicine in North Africa (St. GSELL, *op. cit.*, 157 ff.).

figures within it. Nevertheless, certain elements clearly derive from this tradition: the Λωτοφάγοι (IV 177-178; 183) first appear in the *Odyssey* (IX 84 ff.); one Libyan tribe actually claimed a Trojan origin (IV 191, 1); and epic catalogues are recalled in the satrap list where Libyans appear at III 91, 2 and in the Persian army rolls where they also figure at VII 71 and 86, 2. A typical compositional feature of oral literature in general also manifests itself in the example of ring composition at IV 167-197;<sup>30</sup> and it should also be noted that the entire Λιβυκὸς λόγος in Book IV, like the Αἰγύπτιος λόγος of Book II, is an excursus and exemplifies the looseness of structure typical of oral tradition and, *ipso facto*, the epic tradition.

The ingredients of the βάρβαρος concept and their ramifications are also detectable. The whole account of Libyan tribes at IV 168 ff. is permeated by an acute sense of cultural difference. Indeed, it might be said to be redolent of paradoxography. Most of what Herodotus chooses to describe is spectacularly at variance with Greek custom,<sup>31</sup> and, where this is not so, cultural syncretism is generally responsible.

As with Egypt an awareness of difference also generates a sensitivity to similarities, and hyperdiffusionism quickly follows. There are several clear examples: at II 50 we are told, wrongly but with total confidence, that the Greeks got Poseidon from Libya (this notion is the result of identifying Poseidon with a Libyan deity who was believed to be of great antiquity);<sup>32</sup> at IV 180, 2 we are confronted with a Libyan goddess who has been identified with Athene, and we are subsequently informed that the Greeks had derived elements

<sup>30</sup> On this device see I. BECK, *Die Ringkomposition bei Herodot und ihre Bedeutung für die Beweistechnik* (Hildesheim and New York 1971); M. L. LANG, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 2), 5.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. the custom of the *ius primae noctis* (IV 168), the Nasamonian eating of insects (IV 172, 1), and the practice amongst the Zaukes whereby the women drove chariots to war (IV 193).

<sup>32</sup> A much discussed issue (e.g. St. GSELL, *op. cit.* [*supra* n. 23], 159 ff.; 190 ff.; A. B. LLOYD, *Herodotus. Book II. Commentary* 1-98, 237 ff.; F. MORA, *op. cit.* [*supra* n. 5], 93 ff.; 195 ff.).



in Athene's iconography from this Libyan source (IV 189, 1).<sup>33</sup> Also in Ch. 189 (3) we are told that the four-horse chariot had been imported from Libya into Greece.<sup>34</sup>

Let us now summarize the conclusions of this analysis. In Egyptian and Libyan ethnography Herodotus covers a wide range of topics. Much of what he says is sound, though exaggeration and oversimplification are detectable in his comments on both cultures. The historical section of the Αἰγύπτιος λόγος attempts to cover the whole range of Egyptian history down to the Persian conquest. It contains many errors and is distorted by many non-historical elements such as folklore and propaganda as well as being thoroughly customized for a Greek audience. The Libyan history is much briefer, but, though it cannot be controlled to any significant degree from contemporary sources, it presents no major problems. In all this work Herodotus conforms closely to the programme described at the very beginning of the *Histories*. Throughout the discussion of both cultures the process of ἱστορίη is clearly operative, and Herodotus very much presents himself as the independent researcher providing his own personal view of phenomena. His approach is essentially empiricist and shows a keen awareness of contemporary scientific and philosophical thought, but his position as a continuator of epic tradition is equally clear. For our pur-

<sup>33</sup> See St. GSELL, *op. cit.*, 187 ff.; F. MORA, *op. cit.*, 94 ff. Gsell suggests that the original deity with whom Athene was identified may have been the Egyptian Neith or the Carthaginian Astarte.

<sup>34</sup> The claim must be nonsense: four-horse chariots are known from the Geometric Period in Greece, and it is hardly likely that they were imported into the area from North Africa at that early stage (cf. H. L. LORIMER, *Homer and the Monuments* [London 1950], 328; J. WIESNER, *Fahren und Reiten*, *Archaeologia Homerica*, Kap. F [Göttingen 1968], 66). They were surely brought into Cyrenaica by Greek colonists. Herodotus' opinion will reflect the importance of horses in the life of Cyrene and the frequent victories won by Cyreneans in four-horse chariot races as well as the role which chariots came to enjoy in Libyan life (St. GSELL, *op. cit.*, 172; F. CHAMOIX, *Cyrène sous la monarchie des Battiades* [Paris 1953], 234 ff.).

poses, the most important point of all is that we are confronted in both accounts with a perception of the Egyptians and Libyans as βάρβαροι, i.e. people who enjoyed a culture at variance with that of Greeks. Consequently, Herodotus' discussion of both is best seen as evolving in counterpoint to his perception of his own Greek culture. It follows that items of difference receive particular attention, and areas of similarity are also of consuming concern, not infrequently leading to misguided notions of cultural diffusion. However, whatever the differences in cultural practice or νόμοι, there is little insight into the ideology and value-systems on which the two cultures were based; the moral world and motivation of individuals are unequivocally Greek and in that respect indistinguishable from those of other nations in the *Histories*. Almost never in the treatment of the two cultures is there any clear trace of a negative valuation; his almost invariable stance is to accept what Egyptians and Libyans do on their own terms. Furthermore, it is typical of Greek concepts of the βάρβαρος that Herodotus shows no interest *per se* in describing the physical characteristics of Egyptians or Libyans; he, like other Greeks, did not regard this issue as an important part of his perception of the non-Greek, and racial prejudice, in the strict sense of the term, became an impossibility. For Herodotus truly νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς. We can, however, go further yet. The idea that the structure of the ordered universe was made up of a series of polar opposites was deeply rooted in the Greeks' perception of the world in which they lived. There could only be order if those opposites were maintained in equilibrium. However, it is clear that this equilibrium was not regarded as a static matter, something definitive once achieved. It is stated with particular emphasis by Heraclitus that the establishment and maintenance of such a balance was a matter of continuous effort and struggle: εἰδέναι χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν (*Vorsokr.* 22 B 80), "One should know

that war is a general principle, and that order consists in strife, and that all things come into existence by virtue of strife and necessity"; and again: πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε, τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε, τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους (*Vorsokr.* 22 B 53), "War is the father of all things and king of all, and some does it show forth as gods, others as men; some does it make slaves, others free men". One of the most insistent of these polarities was that between Greeks and βάρβαροι which presented itself to Greek consciousness as a matter of continual confrontation. The interaction between the two might declare itself in social or political terms, but, to the Greeks of Herodotus' generation, the most spectacular manifestation of the polarity and the πόλεμος to reconcile its elements was the Persian Wars themselves. This conflict raised in a particularly acute form the question of what precisely the terms of the polarity were: what is a Greek? What is a βάρβαρος? The *Histories*, therefore, acquired two interlocking dimensions. On the one hand, the work presents historical manifestations of the cosmic πόλεμος to maintain order; on the other, it takes the form of an intense enquiry into the fundamental nature of the two categories of being into which the human element in the cosmos was seen to divide and by such mechanisms as *interpretatio Graeca*, the detection of similarities, and the predilection for diffusionism attempts to bring about an accommodation between the two. The subject of the work is, therefore, ultimately neither war nor ethnography; it is the exploration of a major element amongst the dualities which, to Herodotus and his countrymen, were built into the very fabric of the universe. Ὡς ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ δηλῶσαι, the *Histories* are nothing less than an attempt to render comprehensible the human world in which Herodotus lived.

## DISCUSSION

*M. Harmatta:* Herodotus' account of the culture and history of the Egyptians and the Libyans was excellently analysed by Professor Lloyd. The basis for his analysis was given by his interpretation of the proem of the *Histories* in which he equally took into consideration all important elements of its object. Besides, comparing Herodotus' perception of historical processes and cultural differences with Pre-Socratic philosophy, he created a sensitive intellectual instrument for the understanding of Herodotus' ideas and world-concept. Lastly, by referring to the epic dimension of the *Histories*, he found an acceptable explanation for the catalogues appearing in the form of the list of satrapies or in the Persian army rolls.

It is striking to observe the difference in the treatment of the Egyptians and Libyans in Herodotus' work. Thus, even though his historical or ethnographical informations present little improbable concerning the latter, some questions deserve attention in this context. At first, the question arises whether the expedition of Cambyses against the Siwa oasis can be verified by help of archaeological finds which one would expect on the basis of some preliminary informations. The second question is how could Herodotus delimit Libye both from ethnographical and geographical view-points? Did he adopt the Egyptian views about the Libyan tribes or also had other sources? Lastly, how is it possible to identify the Libyan tribes, e.g. the Garamantes, from historical view-point?

*M. Lloyd:* There is no valid archaeological evidence of an attack by Cambyses on the Siwa oasis. Despite that, the operation seems to me to be intrinsically probable. Siwa had formed part of the territory of the Saite Dynasty which Cambyses had deposed, and nothing could be more likely than that he should have attempted to bring it under his control also. Subsequent events make it clear that this assault, if it was made, was unsuccessful. We can account for the lurid details which we find in



Herodotus by regarding them as products of the influence of the anti-Cambyses tradition.

The Greek ethnic Λίβυες derives from the name of one of the peoples inhabiting the area west of Egypt who occur in Egyptian texts from the XIXth Dynasty onwards as the *Lbw*. By Herodotus' time it had become a general term in Greek for the indigenous inhabitants of North Africa living in the territory extending from the western Delta of Egypt to the Atlantic Ocean. It is not inconceivable that this extension of the term was Egyptian, but there is not a shred of evidence that it was, and it is much more likely that it was the result of the Greek activities in North Africa which culminated in the establishment of Cyrene and other Greek colonies. The extensive Greek experience of North Africa suggests that Herodotus' information on the area would derive mainly from Greek sources, but we must make allowance for the injection of non-Greek material.

The identification of Libyan tribes on the ground has to proceed by bringing together the extensive information in ancient written sources on the area and demarcating the localities to which they belong on the basis of that information. We must, however, be careful because time brought changes with it, and there is no guarantee that the position of a tribe in Roman times was the same as that in the fifth century B.C.; furthermore, some tribes disappeared completely. Once we have done what we can with such material, it is then up to the archaeologists and even ethnographers to flesh out the picture using the grid which literary and epigraphic sources provide. The works of such scholars as Gsell, Bates, and Desanges have published the fruits of such enquiries.

*M. Briant*: La matière brassée par M. Lloyd et ses commentaires sont si riches qu'il faut faire un choix dans les questions. J'en poserai donc deux, la première sur un aspect très ponctuel, la seconde sur un aspect plus général:

1) Concernant les chiffres avancés par Hérodote (nombre de soldats, mensurations des bâtiments), je suis d'accord avec vous sur l'aspect emblématique de certains chiffres donnés par les auteurs anciens. Néanmoins, à

lire par exemple Hérodote I 193, on se rend compte que les auteurs grecs et leurs auditeurs/lecteurs étaient parfois plus exigeants.

2) A propos des *excursus* d'Hérodote. Je suis bien d'accord que la longueur de l'*excursus* égyptien tend à diluer le récit de l'historien. Cependant, il faut insister également sur la rigueur intellectuelle d'Hérodote, qui veut présenter à ses lecteurs l'état des pays avant leur conquêtes par les Perses.

*M. Lloyd:* I should certainly not wish to maintain that all the numbers in Herodotus can be treated as symbolic, and there are some which are demonstrably not very far from the truth. The point on which I should like to insist is that Herodotus, and presumably his contemporaries in general, did not expect the degree of precision in such matters that we have come to take for granted. Sometimes the figures are reasonably accurate, for reasons which could vary from the ease of obtaining them to the attitudes of his sources; sometimes the figures are impressionistic, and the presence of conventional symbolic numbers such as three and seven would have signalled this to his audience and should always put us on our guard; sometimes the figures are simply the result of visual assessments which would be as good, or as bad, as the eye of the person making them. When dealing with Herodotus' figures, we should never commit ourselves to them unless general probability or alternative evidence suggests that they should be treated with respect.

The question of the role of the excursuses is a tricky one. In English they are not infrequently referred to as 'digressions' which is a term I would generally avoid because it has distinctly pejorative overtones; it implies the notion of irrelevance which is usually inapposite. The presence of excursuses reflects the principle of composition by association of ideas which is a characteristic of the relative looseness of organization often found in oral tradition of the type from which so much in Herodotus emanated. In the majority of cases it is easy to see that they play an organic role in the work as a whole. A long excursus like that on Egypt helps to illustrate the power of Persia which now controlled such a great kingdom and also had the military might to subdue it; it also contributes much to the characterization of the nature of the βάρβαρος which, as I have indicated,

is one of the central issues of Herodotus' book. In a similar way the extensive excursuses on early Athenian and Spartan history in Book I help to characterize and define the Greek side of the equation. Nevertheless, by the standards of a writer raised and nurtured in the rigours of a literate tradition, such as Thucydides, Herodotean excursuses are unconscionably long and very numerous, and there are times when, by any standards, they get out of hand. The Αἰγύπτιος λόγος must be the classic example of that.

*M. Asberi:* I would like to know your view on what Herodotus says about the gods, created or invented in Egypt and thereafter imported into Greece. W. Burkert wrote recently on this problem (in *MH* 42 [1985], 121-132). It seems to me an important issue for a proper understanding of Herodotus' religious ideas.

*M. Lloyd:* The key passages here occur at II 3, 2 and II 49-53, which I have discussed in detail in my Brill commentary. It is evident that Herodotus' theological concepts were very sophisticated. He regarded the acquisition of precise information on the nature and powers of the gods as lying beyond the capabilities of ἱστορίη, and, when speaking on his own behalf, he tends to avoid definite statements, including names, preferring such general and non-committal expressions as ὁ θεός, ὁ δαίμων, and τὸ θεῖον. The cult, of course, is a different matter since it operates in the phenomenal world and can be subjected to rational enquiry. It is clear that he believed in a divine power active in human affairs and operating according to the Greek conception of a moral law (δίκη), but he regarded traditional Greek theology as a matter of convention only and quite devoid of objective reality. It drew the names and concepts of the gods from three quarters—the Pelasgians, Libyans, and Egyptians—and owed its formulation to Hesiod and Homer in relatively recent times.

*M. Nenci:* Vorrei chiedere qual'è il rapporto che Lei vede fra il λόγος sull'Egitto e la spedizione ateniese in Egitto e se non pensa che la grande importanza assegnata ad Eracle non sia da connettere anche al fatto che Ecateo dedicava molto spazio alle imprese di Eracle (abbiamo dodici frammenti su Eracle, sia nella *Periegesi* che nelle *Genealogie*).

*M. Lloyd:* There is, of course, the occasional reference to the revolt of Inarus which gave rise to the Athenian expedition to Egypt, but it is impossible to point with certainty to material which definitely originated with the participants in these operations. Nevertheless, it is intrinsically probable that the experience of Egypt acquired by members of the forces of the Confederacy of Delos filtered or was brought back to the Aegean area and became part of the general corpus of knowledge and impressions on which Herodotus drew either consciously or at a subconscious level.

It is beyond question that Herakles occupied a prominent position in the work of Hecataeus and equally clear that Herodotus derived much benefit from the work of his great predecessor. He was, however, very selective in what he used. Herodotus, and doubtless many others, found Herakles' travels of enormous value as a means of tying the world and its disparate traditions together. He will have taken material on his activities from Hecataeus when it suited him and because it suited him, but I strongly suspect that it would involve a considerable distortion of the relationship between the two authors to claim that Herakles figures prominently in Herodotus simply because he occupied such a position in Hecataeus.

*M. Dible:* Darf ich noch einmal auf den Topos Griechen/Barbaren zurückkommen? Es hat mich überzeugt, wie Sie das Prinzip der Polarität, das G.E.R. Lloyd als eine Leitidee früher griechischer Wissenschaft beschrieben hat, auf jenen Topos angewendet haben. Auch bei Aischylos ist der Gedanke einer solchen Polarität zwischen Griechen und Barbaren und der Notwendigkeit, ein Gleichgewicht zwischen den beiden Polen herzustellen oder zu bewahren, durchaus lebendig, wie die *Perser* es zeigen.

Die Variationsbreite der Bedeutungen des Wortes Barbar bleibt freilich durch die ganze Antike sehr gross. Dass Homer gerade die Karer βαρβαρόφωνοι nennt, hat vielleicht seine Ursache darin, dass sie den Griechen besonders nahestanden und gerade deshalb ihre nichtgriechische Sprache hervorzuheben war. Sie allein kannten im 7. Jhdt. die Hoplitentrüstung des griechischen Typus. Die pejorativen Assoziationen, die



sich mit der Vorstellung von der Barbarenwelt verbinden können, begegnen schon im 6. Jhdt. v. Chr., wie die Busiris-Hydria zeigt. Andererseits gibt es Zeugnisse für die Hochschätzung der 'Philosophie der Barbaren' durch die ganze griechische Philosophiegeschichte. Die Übereinstimmung griechischer Philosopheme mit jenen Überlieferungen betrachtete man gern als Bestätigung dafür, dass die Philosophie altes, in Naturkatastrophen verlorengegangenes und nur bei den Barbaren teilweise erhaltenes Wissen wiedergewonnen hatte (vgl. Arist. Fr. 13 Rose). Noch Clemens von Alexandrien zitiert einen in diesem Sinn formulierten Satz des Megasthenes (*FGrHist* 715 F 3) zustimmend. Der Begriff Barbar ist also vielschichtig.

Noch eine kleine, sehr marginale Frage. Sie glauben nicht an die Umschiffung Afrikas, von der Herodot—gleichfalls ungläubig—berichtet. Welches sind Ihre Argumente, abgesehen davon, dass die Fahrt entlang der Küste des heutigen Mauretanien sehr schwierig zu sein scheint?

*M. Lloyd:* On the question of the Greek-βάρβαρος polarity it occurs to me that a striking example of the notion of strife as mediating between poles occurs in Hesiod's *Works and Days* 11-26. Admittedly, here it is perceived as operating in a socio-economic context, i.e. as mediating between the poles honour: shame, but, in my view, the concept is fundamentally the same as that in Herodotus.

I quite agree that Greek attitudes to things foreign were ambivalent. The question of the pejorative overtones in the word βάρβαρος is far from straightforward. It is so easy to read them in when they may not be there, particularly since modern European languages have taken over the word and use it in a derogatory sense. As far as the tone of the context is concerned, when Homer uses the term βαρβαροφωνοί of the Carians it need mean nothing more than 'incomprehensible of speech'. This *may* have carried with it a negative valuation of Carians, but we certainly cannot be sure of it, and I should plead for circumspection in dealing with other cases in classical and later Greek. As I have indicated in my paper, there are instances where the word is certainly used in a critical sense—and that perhaps would be inevitable since any perception of differences in another culture can be affected by the conviction that what one does

oneself is superior—but, in many instances, context gives no indication of any such nuance.

The Busiris-hydria is an interesting document. We are here presented with a stock caricature of the Egyptian physical type in a state of extreme discomfiture. However, it would be easy to press this too far, and I suspect that, if we use such expressions as “die pejorativen Assoziationen, die sich mit der Vorstellung von der Barbarenwelt verbinden können”, we may be taking the scene too seriously. Exaggerated national stereotypes, like stereotypes of professions such as policemen, university professors, or army officers, occur in most, if not all, societies, as joke figures at which, in certain contexts, people poke fun, but the existence of such stereotypes need not, in itself, indicate anything as deep-rooted as a pejorative evaluation of the group as whole.

I have discussed Herodotus' tradition on the circumnavigation of Africa (IV 42, 2-4) in a long article published in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 63 (1977), 142-155. My principal objections are: 1) The expedition makes no sense within Egyptian terms of reference; it is extremely improbable that an Egyptian pharaoh would have seen any point in such an operation or would have had anything to do with it; 2) We should expect maritime explorations of this kind to take place step-by-step, e.g. Portuguese exploration of the west coast of Africa. Herodotus presents us with a spectacular leap of thousands of miles into the dark; 3) The method of provisioning the fleet described by Herodotus is incredible; 4) The tradition is often supported by the fact that, in the course of the voyage, the sun is claimed to have appeared ἐξ τὰ δεξιὰ, and this could only have happened if an expedition to the far south had taken place. This claim, however, is not as cogent as it looks since, given current Greek notions of how the cosmos was put together, this phenomenon was to be expected if anyone proceeded far enough south, i.e. it could be nothing more than a guess; 5) The motif of the pharaoh who solves, or attempts to solve, a major contemporary scientific problem is exemplified in impossible contexts elsewhere in Herodotus (II 2; 28).

*M. Bondi*: Rispetto a quanto si riscontra negli altri *logoi*, a me sembra che le notizie che Erodoto fornisce sulle genti libiche privilegino larga-

mente l'aspetto del 'meraviglioso' e trascurino quasi del tutto quello storico. I dati forniti, contrariamente a quanto accade altrove, sembrano quasi prospettati in modo 'atemporale', senza un prima e un dopo: si tratta di pochi elementi caratterizzanti per ciascuna tribù.

Sembra di poter dire, pertanto, che Erodoto ha avuto a disposizione fonti assai frammentate, greche ed egiziane, libiche e cartaginesi (provenienti queste ultime — si noti — da una Cartagine che ancora non si è assicurata una continuità di rapporti con il mondo dell'entroterra libico) e che la sua ricerca abbia comportato una sistematizzazione, necessariamente priva di spessore cronologico, di un materiale disperso, occasionale e vario, posto per così dire su un piano d'indeterminazione temporale. Ciò è anche l'indizio di una sostanziale mancanza di fonti orali epicorie, che certo avrebbero conservato la memoria di avvenimenti rilevanti nella vita — almeno recente — di varie tribù.

Per riprendere infine una notazione di J. Harmatta nella discussione ora svolta, relativa al problema dell'estensione della Libia per i Greci del tempo di Erodoto, può essere utile richiamare l'informazione fornita da Erodoto IV 43 che, in appendice al racconto sul periplo africano voluto da Neco, cita l'opinione dei Cartaginesi secondo cui la Libia stessa è tutta cinta da acque. Anche se sono da tenere in conto possibili oscillazioni nell'uso, mi pare che i due passi IV 42 e IV 43 si conferino a vicenda nel mostrare che con il termine s'intende l'intera estensione del continente africano, con l'eccezione dell'Egitto (cf. anche II 65); va anche sottolineato che nella circostanza Fenici d'Oriente e Cartaginesi sono considerati due fonti nettamente differenziate.

*M. Lloyd:* I am sure that one of the things that particularly fascinated Herodotus about the Libyans was precisely the fact that they were, like *Randvölker* in general, quintessentially βάρβαροι i.e. they were, in so many respects, different from Greeks. The absence of chronology may perhaps be explained, to some extent, by this focus of interest, but it is probably at least as much a reflection of the nature of Libyan tribal society. Such people, like the Scythians, quite simply do not have a history comparable to that of Egyptians, Persians, or Greeks.

The sources for the Libyans were evidently heterogeneous. Clearly, Greek settlements in North Africa would have been of crucial importance in acquiring and disseminating information about indigenous peoples, and the data would have been supplemented by reports of numerous Greek visitors; directly or indirectly the Phoenicians probably also played a rôle; Egyptians and native Libyans, directly or indirectly, made significant contributions; finally, there was also a literary tradition of some antiquity culminating in Hecataeus on which Herodotus drew but which he certainly employed selectively and with discretion.



