

EMILY BARAGWANATH & MATHIEU DE BAKKER (eds.), *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus*, Oxford: University Press, 2012, pp. 384, ISBN 978-0199693979.

Herodotus has always posed a problem to his readers: how to reconcile his masterful storytelling with the pursuit of historical truth? He has been weighed in the balance many times and found wanting, from antiquity to modern times. Part of the problem (if it is really a problem) has to do with precisely with Herodotus' use of myth, with which he firmly engages in the very first part of his work, that curious rationalization, carefully attributed to Persian *logioi*, of familiar Greek myths involving the abduction of women. It is his engagement with myth that forms the subject of this rich collection of papers, originally given at a conference at Oxford in 2007.

The introduction to the volume, jointly written by the editors, is substantial (at fifty-six pages, it is the longest contribution) and gives a very good description of the paths modern scholarship on Herodotus has taken up to the present as well as giving an excellent exposition of the ways that myth may work in the *Histories*.

It is clear that Herodotus uses myth. The questions contributors ask are how and why? Whereas earlier scholarship might have viewed the mythical material as embarrassing remnants of an archaic mode, the contributors fully subscribe to the idea that Herodotus embraced myth as a way to enrich his work and as part of his toolkit to find out about and present the past.

The contributions are divided between two sections, both of which deal in some way with Herodotus' treatment of and attitude toward myth. The first ("From Myth to Historical Method") investigates how Herodotus applies historical method to "the form and content of the traditional legendary heritage" (57), which presumably is another way to say "myth". The second concerns itself with "the status of myth in relation to historical truth, as source for history and in historical explanation" (192).

Carolyn Dewald's chapter ("Myth and Legend in Herodotus' First Book") focuses on the first book of the *Histories*, so important in the way it introduces themes or moral and ideological patterns (a major one is "unjustified aggression tends to lead, both in supernatural and entirely human terms, to catastrophic results" [83-84]) that will surface again and again in subsequent books and that suggest a way of reading this vast work. One conclusion she comes to, which applies not just to Book One and is echoed by other contributors, is that mythic materials are a way for Herodotus to position and present new (and foreign) material for his (Greek) audience in terms that

are more familiar to them. *Logoi*, which seem to adhere to certain places and people, are gathered and presented by Herodotus to organize and suggest connections between past and present as well as foreign and native. They may also enable figures within the work to explain, motivate, and persuade. Herodotus may use myth to help the audience make these connections, to “grid it in the larger Greek *imaginaire*” (60).

Further, the first book acts “as a methodological *mise en abyme*, in which the mythic *logoi* within the narrative allow Herodotus as narrator tacitly to reflect upon the power of traditional stories and mythic beliefs to shape actions taken by historical actors in the nearer past of concern to him, the world of the Persian Wars fought in his father’s generation” (83). Figures in the work may realize the myths they are caught up in (as when Croesus realizes he is in a story that Solon the Athenian once told) but as Dewald concludes, “we do not generally see our own myths for what they are until, like Croesus, we look back from an already burning pyre” (85).

Suzanne Saïd (“Herodotus and the ‘Myth’ of the Trojan War”) concerns herself with this significant complex of myths in the *Histories*. An important question she addresses is whether Herodotus differentiates between a *spatium mythicum* and a *spatium historicum*. Saïd does not think so, but considers that Herodotus sees the past in its entirety as a continuum right from the abduction of Io to the capture of Sestos by the Athenians at the end of Book Nine. In her view, Herodotus rejects the Persian and Phoenician accounts of the snatchings of women as the *aitiê* of the conflict between Greeks and Easterners because of the problem of lack of accurate knowledge. He uses “distancing techniques” such as source attribution. But this does not mean that the Trojan War cannot function as a chronological landmark for him, as it clearly does at 7.20 and 7.171. The Trojan War is what Saïd calls part of the “deep past” (90) and accordingly falls in the *spatium historicum*. She wants us to take the proemium seriously: it is not a false start or a feint but introduces major themes in the work (transgression, women as objects of lust, reciprocity and punishment). But does the one have to exclude the other? It is worth comparing the take of fellow-contributor Rosaria Vignolo Munson on Herodotus’ rejection of the Persian and Phoenician account: he does so not just because of the problem of knowledge but because they connect stories that have nothing to do with each other and contrive connections where there are none (see further below).

As Saïd points out, Herodotus himself rationalizes the Trojan War myths in Book Two, removing the gods and the supernatural so that Proteus, for example, is no longer the all-knowing shape-shifter hiding among evil-smelling seals but a king of Egypt, who upbraids Paris for his unjust behaviour and makes him leave Helen there. But what differentiates Herodotus from Hecataeus or the Persian and Phoenician *logioi* is that in addition to this demythologizing he brings in the authority of the Egyptian priests, who

preserve accounts of King Proteus' meeting with Alexander and Menelaus, and reads this evidence against internal evidence of the *Iliad*, adding his observation of monuments in Egypt and also appealing to probability and likelihood (the Trojans would have been mad not to surrender Helen if she had been at Troy [2.120.2]).

Saïd then considers the rhetorical use made by individuals and collectives of the Trojan War stories and Herodotus' own rhetorical use of these. Far from avoiding the Trojan War, "he employs the story, in a fashion typical of contemporary Greek art and literature, as a means of deepening his audience's understanding of the more contemporary events that are the subject of the *Histories*" (97).

Mathieu de Bakker ("Herodotus' Proteus: Myth, History, Enquiry and Storytelling") and Irene de Jong ("The Helen *Logos* and Herodotus' Fingerprint") focus in particular on Herodotus' treatment of the Paris-Helen-Menelaus in Egypt *logos*. Herodotus uses information from Egyptian sources not only to maintain that Helen was brought to Egypt by Paris on the way to Troy and did not go on to Troy, but that not even her *eidôlon* was present at Troy, since the Egyptian king Proteus forced Paris to hand over Helen. Further, when Menelaus called to retrieve Helen he had a run-in with Proteus over Menelaus' attempt to sacrifice two Egyptian children to ensure a safe sailing home. De Bakker sees this remarkable take on the Helen in Egypt *logos* as significant and important in a number of ways. Firstly, it illustrates Herodotus' methodology: he is able to top the traditional (mythical) account by the sensational coup of introducing fresh and direct evidence from the Egyptian priests. They (or presumably their predecessors) claim they know the facts from *historiai* conducted with Menelaus himself (2.118.1)! Secondly, the episode models the key theme of respect for *xenia*, and the proper acknowledgement of the responsibilities and rights of guest-friendship is tied to the theme of justice, reciprocity, and the effects and punishment of aggression and violence. For de Bakker, Proteus is an example of the trope of the foreigner pointing out to a Greek wrongdoing and educating them. This is of a piece with Herodotus' claims in the rest of Book Two about the Egyptians as being the source for several Greek rituals and institutions. Proteus also models the kind of inquiry Herodotus practices. Thirdly, using a comparison originally suggested by Dewald, de Bakker argues that the characteristics of the mythical Proteus, the tricky shape-shifter of *Odyssey* 4 who grudgingly yields up his valuable information about the future only after being physically subdued by Menelaus, still operate in Herodotus' text. Proteus is emblem and symbol "of the struggle he has to undergo himself in this process, the search for the truth, and the presentation of it by means of a convincing story" (126).

De Jong's approach to the same *logos* is characteristically narratological: she wants to find Herodotus' fingerprint on this material. "The Helen *logos*,

said to derive from Egyptian priests, upon closer inspection reveals the hand of Herodotus everywhere” (141). “Just as Homer exploits the Muses, eyewitnesses of history ... to pass off his *Iliad* as the one and only true story of the Trojan War, Herodotus uses the Egyptian spokesmen/eyewitnesses to authorize his particular version of the Helen logos.” (141-142). De Jong, as do other contributors, tackles the question of *spatium mythicum* vs *spatium historicum* in Herodotus and concludes that there is no decisive break between them: “... though for Herodotus ‘myth’ or the time of the heroes may be distinct from ‘what is called the human age’ (3.122), it is not a completely separate category: it is, at least in this case, open to historiographical enquiry and connected with the present via a chain of information, and displays the same patterns and motifs as elsewhere in the *Histories*.” Though de Jong does not want to get into the insoluble question to what extent Herodotus’ account is based on authentic Egyptian material, it is refreshing that she offers an opinion. Her feeling is that it is all his own, based on a kernel known from Greek sources: “I would hazard a guess that at most he heard that Helen had stayed with Proteus in Egypt. ... He put it in the mouths of Egyptian priests in order to promote it to his Greek readers” (141).

Elizabeth Vandiver’s piece (“Strangers are from Zeus’: Homeric *Xenia* at the Courts of Proteus and Croesus”) touches some of the same passages and themes as the preceding contributors: she too visits the *logos* of Paris, Helen, Proteus, and Menelaus, which clearly revolves about the theme of proper *xenia*. As does de Bakker, Vandiver notes that Proteus and his Egypt “provides a template of true civilization against which the misdeeds and violations of both Trojan and Greek can be evaluated. Proteus and the Egyptians protect and obey the obligations of *xenia*, which is expanded from its essentially Greek status to appear as a moral value of the much older Egyptian civilization; Herodotus backreads Greek constructs into Egyptian culture in the case of *xenia*, much as he does in the case of religious beliefs and ceremonies” (154). Herodotus’ pronouncement at 2.120 is of major importance: “This sentence, with its assumption that Paris’ theft of Helen was a crime deserving of divine punishment, foregrounds Trojan wrongdoing over Greek, and especially foregrounds the tendency of Eastern potentates [here Paris] ... to grasp more than belongs to them. The reason for this is to be found, I think, not just in Herodotus’ view of the Trojan War but also in the overall construction of his entire narrative. Divine retribution for Greek misdeeds in and after the Trojan War was not his main topic, but a demonstration of the inevitability of divine retribution for the transgressions of non-Greek monarchs was. Thus, the text can allow Menelaus’ sacrifice of two Egyptian children to go unpunished, while Paris’ theft of Helen brings down divine wrath upon his city and leads to its total destruction” (155).

Vandiver also considers the Croesus, Atys, and Adrastus *logos* as an episode that revolves around correct *xenia*. Here too she is concerned to

point out that Homeric allusions mean that it is a specific flavor of *xenia* that is presented, one grounded in Homeric tradition: "...the remote past of Troy and the almost-legendary past of Croesus and Solon are made paradigmatic for the recent past of the Persian Wars through the traditional Homeric concept of *xenia*" (165).

From myths surrounding the Trojan War, Vivienne Gray ("Herodotus on Melampus") moves to myths surrounding the healer-seer-ritual specialist Melampus. One of the interesting things about Melampus (and the other seers with which he is linked in Book Nine, on which see the contribution of Baragwanath below) is the way in which Herodotus has two different ways of looking at this figure. He is the ritual specialist or cultural hero who acts as a bridge between the far more ancient Egyptians and the Greeks, introducing the rites of Dionysus to the latter (2.49). Then he is again the ritual specialist, curing the women of Argos of madness (9.34): this is the madness of Dionysus, though Herodotus does not say so here, so that this is connected to his knowledge of the rites of Dionysus described in Book Two. But the emphasis is quite different: his knowledge and skill in ritual seems to take a back seat to his skill and cunning in bargaining as he manipulates the Argives into giving him a half of the kingship and then a third again to his brother, Bias. This story Herodotus introduces by saying that the seer Tisamenus "imitated" Melampus in using the same technique of making an initial outrageous offer for his services; when his clients in desperation are forced to return and agree to the initial outrageous offer they find he demands even more outrageous terms. Gray analyzes the narrative structure of both accounts of Melampus. She finds traditional patterns in this narrative which Herodotus adapts to his own purposes. In the passage from Book Two, however, the narrative of the importation of culture, while attested elsewhere in the *Histories* (Lycurgus imports system of *eunomia* from Crete or Delphi [1.65], Cadmus imports writing [5.57-61]) seems to draw on new elements that "produce a new version of the 'myth', which includes a pattern of the cultural hero's importation of customs from abroad in the case of Melampus" (190-191). Gray explains the two different Melampodes as a result of the combination of his three "heritages": that of critical enquiry, storytelling, and poetry.

I found the language of Proppian analysis confusing at time, especially the term "Hero" amidst stories involving cultural, cultic, and mythic heroes (e.g. "The story of how Melampus acquired kingship of Argos (9.34) is an abbreviated form of the pattern established for Tisamenus. The Argives are the Heroes, and their Task is to cure the madness of their women. Melampus is the Helper, and his healing ability is the supernatural power they seek." [172]; "Lichas is in fact the chief Helper in the story, and he comes from the ranks of the Heroes rather than outside." [174]) I also find the distinction Gray draws between storytelling and poetry one that is hard to define and

maintain, like the distinction between legend, myth, and folktale that the editors of the volume reject (15).

Rosaria Vignolo Munson considers Herodotus and the heroic age, concentrating in particular on the figure of Minos, whom Herodotus, in a move similar to his rejections of the abductions of mythical (but rationalized) women as cause of the Greek-Easterner enmity, declines to recognize as the first to *thalassokrateein* (3.122.2). She points out that this is not simply because the remote past is difficult to know (which is Thucydides' position) but because "the heroic age is a special sort of past that also objectively partakes of another level of reality" (196). Why does Herodotus reject the Persian interpretation of the heroic age? Because the heroic characters have not just become "fully human (as in Thucydides' Archaeology), but downright ordinary" (198). The Persian *logioi* do not just reinterpret causes (as in Thucydides' Archaeology) but "string together in a continuous causal chain heroic-age events that no one had ever before represented as factually connected. This is a parody of super-secularized, super-rationalized mythology," a game (198). Munson seems to say that Herodotus preserves a sort of mystery surrounding the heroes, such as when she comments on the Artayktes episode that "the causality Herodotus here establishes is, unlike that of the proem, entirely transcendent and mysterious" (200), revolving as it does about the hero Protesilaus. (She compares Herodotus' request at 2.45 that the gods and heroes forgive his audacity in saying the Greek Heracles is different from the Egyptian god.) The heroic age "is a mysterious time, subject to special rules: as such, it often lies beyond the competence of the *histôr*, who investigates and records *ta genomena ex anthrôpôn*, events of *men*" (201). *Historiê* can reveal factual truths from this period, but remoteness and the tendency of people to change the facts for their own purposes make this difficult. This may be because of political motivations but also for reasons of genre, as Homer does, choosing a (false) version that has Helen present at Troy because it is more fitting for poetry (*euprepês*, 2.116).

Munson then turns to Minos in the *Histories*, an important figure in fifth-century Athenian self-definition and myth. She points out that he could be presented as the antagonist of the Athenian hero Theseus (now being figured as the founder of Athens) or as "the archetypal ruler of the Aegean", the first hegemon of the sea. This is the Minos of Thucydides' Archaeology: "as the early analogue of contemporary Athens, he justifies the very existence and mission of the Athenian empire" (203).

In mentioning but ultimately bypassing Minos, Munson argues, Herodotus is showing disapproval of myth used in politics. "What Herodotus is saying is this: we do not need the heroic age, *in this case*, either to do history or talk politics" (212). Polycrates, who comes with an attractive narrative of rise and disastrous fall, "provides a more useful paradigm for present realities

than Minos" (212). Herodotus thus follows the same principle as he does when selecting Croesus over mythic actors of the more remote past.

Charles Chiasson ("Myth and Truth in Herodotus' *Cyrus Logos*") approaches the question of myth and truth in Herodotus' account of Cyrus. How can Herodotus claim to tell *ton eonta logon* (1.95.1) about how Cyrus and the Persians came to power, when Herodotus' own *logos* clearly possesses such mythical elements? Chiasson makes the distinction that Herodotus is mainly talking about Cyrus' birth and the accession of the Persians to power when he claims to tell *ton eonta logon*, and claims that Herodotus' contribution is the presentation of the vengeance of Harpagus. The latter is moved to rebel against Astyages and help Cyrus to power because of Astyages' killing of Harpagus' sons and the *Atreusmahl* that he serves to him. In others words, Herodotus chooses the show the reason for Persian overthrow of Median authority in an act of personal vengeance that conforms to well-known Greek mythic patterns (the vengeance of Atreus for example). As several other contributors underscore, Chiasson shows that these mythical patterns seem to be there to present foreign material in a way meaningful to Greeks, to give them heightened importance and impact by assimilating them to the heroic age, and to make them more persuasive or truthful, and, not least, to assert the authority of Herodotus.

Rosalind Thomas also considers Herodotus' account in relation to Eastern traditions, concentrating on his *logoi* about Deioeces the Mede, who secures absolute power for himself by making himself in the eyes of the people an indispensable judge and arbitrator in a lawless period, and Pythius the Lydian, whose eldest son is cut in half, with Xerxes marching his army between the two halves. Did Herodotus draw on authentic near-Eastern material and, a point that Thomas is more interested in, could one say that these are really just Greek stories? What is the process of Greek or Herodotean transformation? In the case of the Pythius story, there is in fact evidence from several places in the ancient Near East for the ritual of marching an army between the halves of an animal, and more pertinently, a description of a Hittite ritual of marching an army (after defeat) between the halves of not just animal victims, but a human victim. The Pythius story begins to look like it could be based on actual ritual practice (laying aside the fact that the Hittites are not Persians or Lydians) and not wholly constructed by Herodotus as an example of foreign despotic cruelty. Greeks (and Herodotus) did not have to make this all up, but could make it fit into their own categories: "We surely have here a religious rite whose importance Greek observers were incapable of appreciating" (242); "Herodotus did not need to do all the work of making this a repulsive tale of Persian autocracy" (242). Thomas suggests that the ritual behind the action described in Herodotus could have been one of purification, either in connection with the eclipse mentioned by Herodotus (7.37.3) or as a preliminary to the army's embarkation on its

campaign. Thomas is inclined to see Herodotus' contribution or angle in the interaction between Pythius and Xerxes. She views Pythius as "a strangely Croesus-like figure" and notes the Herodotean emphasis on the theme of imperfect reciprocity, where Pythius' previous favours and his request for favour to be granted to his eldest son are answered with a perverted favour in return: Pythius and his other four sons will be saved because of Pythius' *xeiniê*, and that is Xerxes' more generous response to Pythius' (who is after all his slave) lack of gratitude.

The Deioeces story might seem, by contrast, to be a completely free, Greek invention, clothed in Persian (or Median) garb to function as a meditation on state-formation and the beginnings of tyranny (it has been linked to constitutional debate at 3.80-82). But Thomas is reluctant to write it off in this manner as a Protagoras-like invented myth, and does not exclude the possibility that there may have been some Near Eastern founder story which then received undeniable Hellenization and Herodotean reworking. She points out the emphasis on justice in the story (it is as a judge that Deioeces is particularly in demand and he puts an end to the *anomiê* suffered in the region) and connects this to the Persian (and Zoroastrian) idea of the king as guarantor of justice and cosmic order (*arta*). Thomas' general conclusion is that Herodotus and the Greeks may have misunderstood much, or chosen to develop certain themes they found in a purely Greek fashion that had little or nothing to do with their Near Eastern sources, but that a fascination with the Near East lay behind these reworkings and that they were not necessarily based on nothing. One could also mention the ruse of Dareios' groom, Oibares, to obtain the kingship for his master by making his horse neigh at the right moment, which may in fact be connected to Indo-Iranian kingship rituals, mentioned by Bowie (270).

Pietro Vannicelli ("The Mythical Origins of the Medes and the Persians") stays with the Medes and Persians and considers Greek mythological traditions that linked them to the Greeks through the figures of Perseus and Medea. He points out the presence in the proem of two heroines, Io and Medea, who are connected with these mythical origins: Io as representative of the Inachid line, which produces Perseus, whom Xerxes is made to claim as the eponymous ancestor of the Persian (7.61.3), and Medea, in whose honour the Arioi renamed themselves Medes when she settled in their country after leaving Athens (7.62.1). The Persian account of the origins of the conflict between Greeks and Easterners thus pointedly includes the two heroines connected with the Persians and Medes. The two references to kinship via figures of Greek mythology are connected, Vannicelli emphasizes, with Greek regions charged after the Persian Wars with collaborating with the Persians: Argos (Perseus) and Thessaly (where Medea lived with Jason). Seeing that Herodotus gives the information about the Persian connection to Perseus in the context of a story in which Xerxes makes an overture to the Argives

relying on their common Perseid ancestry (7.61.3), Vannicelli postulates that this ancestry could have formed a convenient tool for the Spartans to present the Argives and Persians as a connected threat, “a battle of propaganda conducted by means of genealogical tools” (261). The oracle given to the Spartans before Thermopylae could be seen to play on this connection, where it is foretold that their city will be destroyed by the Perseids or that a Heraclid king will die and preserve Sparta (7.220.4) and where “Perseid” could refer to Persians or to Argives. The Perseid genealogy seems to be at odds with the passage in Book One which describes the Perseid kings as descended from the *phrêtrê* of the Achaemenidae (1.125.3). The Achaemenid descent of the great Persian kings reflects Persian traditions. The “vacuum” between Greek genealogies of the Persian kings using Perseus and the Persian Achaemenid genealogy is one that is “plugged” in later attested sources such as Nicolaus of Damascus (*FGrH* 90, F.6), who has Achaemenes as a son of Perseus, and makes an etymological link between this name and the place Achaea. This genealogy thus has Achaemenes as the ancestor of all Persians, not just the kings. Vannicelli’s comment on this is that Herodotus at 1.125.3 reflects the problem of the two genealogies, one Greek, the other Persian, and “attests to the variety and complexity of the genealogical material he investigated and worked with” (268).

Angus Bowie (“Mythology and the Expedition of Xerxes”) turns to the later books of the *Histories* and “the interplay of myth with events about which reasonably good ‘factual’ knowledge was available to him [i.e. Herodotus]” (269). Is there a difference between the use of myth here and in the earlier books? The later books share a good deal of the types of myth found in the earlier ones but Bowie notices in the later books a greater integration of the myths into the narrative of Xerxes’ campaign. The more detailed mythological references “offer various viewpoints on the significance, moral quality, and likely failure of Xerxes’ campaign” (274). Mythological references attach also to the Greeks, in particular in debates, where they may be used to persuade and to argue a point, often in a hostile and competitive manner. As Bowie puts it, “if the myths surrounding Xerxes signify divine displeasure, those involving the Greeks paint a sad picture of deception and disunity” (279). Examples of this come from the beginning (e.g. when in Book Seven the Greek allies attempt to convince Argives, Syracusans, and the Cretans to participate) and towards the end of the conflict (e.g. wrangling between Athenians and Tegeans at Plataea over who will command the other wing, 9.26-27). Another category of myth in the later parts of the work involves stories about seers, whose skill is displayed here not just in their ability to read the signs of sacrifice accurately and favorably but rather in their ability to exploit situations to their advantage (e.g. Tisamenus and his demand for Spartan citizenship for himself and his brother, imitating Melampus (9.33-34)). Bowie concludes

that panhellenic myth does not always make for panhellenic spirit; rather it is used to obtain personal gains. He moves to a conclusion about myth in the work as a whole: the stories Herodotus records and which men tell “are not innocent tradition, but weapons in the selective creation of an identity, the claiming of a privilege, or the justification of an act” (286). But do we need to see Greeks fighting each other in debate using mythology as a weapon as a “sad picture of deception and disunity”? Perhaps, if one wants to see the *Histories* as a warning about the excesses and dangers of the Athenian empire, as Bowie and some other contributors do, one can read this as a celebration of the independent, fiery spirit of the Greek poleis before the Athenians attempt to subdue them.

Emily Baragwanath (“Returning to Troy: Herodotus and the Mythic Discourse of his own Time”) is also interested in use of mythic discourse to persuade, propagandize, and think with. She looks first at the mention of Theseus’ theft of Helen and how the people of Decelea in Attica, where Theseus had hid her at Aphidnae, revealed her whereabouts to the Tyndaridae in order to prevent the whole of Attica suffering an invasion (9.73.1-2). In remembrance of this service the Spartans even in the time of the Peloponnesian War avoid laying waste to their territory. Baragwanath thinks that it significant that instead of myths that show Theseus as the benefactor of the Athenians and of Greece Herodotus refers to a myth which shows him as a “hubristic abductor of women”, just like Paris. For Baragwanath this is an “implied contrafactual”: what might have happened had the Deceleans not turned Theseus in, would there have been a great Spartan-Athenian war instead of the Trojan War? And what would have happened if the events leading to the Trojan War had been similarly avoided? She also sees the episode as raising “the spectre of future inter-Hellenic conflict and disunity” coming as it does as a discordant note in the description of Greek unity (especially between Spartans and Athenians) and success at Plataea.

Baragwanath moves next to the figure of Mardonius, whom she repeatedly calls “self-mythicizing” (though it seems to me that mythic elements gather about him rather than that he mythicizes himself). Through close reading she points out several possible instances of allusion and intertextuality: Aeschylus’ *Persians* as well as the *Oresteia* lurk in the background (the image of desire to take Athens “dripping into” Mardonius and his wish to send off a victory message eastward across the Aegean by fire beacons seem to recall striking passages from the *Agamemnon*). It is interesting that the allusions to the Trojan War here work not just to draw connections between the imminent defeat of the Persians and the destruction of Troy, with the Persians as easterners having a natural affinity to the Trojans, but precisely to “Greek excesses in destroying Troy, with grievous consequences.” She sees here also a turning of the “mirror” to Greeks and, in line with interpretations of the *Histories* as a warning to late fifth-century Greeks (and in particular

Athenians) about imperialism and conquest, she sees also “a reminder that the pattern of lust-impelled conquest applies equally to Greek ... that grand and deluded desires are not confined to Persia—nor to the legendary past” (309).

Baragwanath’s piece is a fitting conclusion to the volume, whose contributors agree (and demonstrate) that myth in the *Histories* is not the embarrassment it was once perceived to be but a vital part of Herodotus’ toolkit that not only elevates and enriches his discourse but also allows him using *historiê* to access the past and communicate in subtle and effective ways between past and present with messages for those that have ears.

This is a well-produced volume both in terms of contributions and presentation. I found only a few typos: “archaiological” (257), “straights” for “straits” 298, reference in index s.v. Solon to 220 n32 where no such footnote appears.

ALEXANDER HOLLMANN  
University of Washington  
hollmann@uw.edu

