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Edited by:

Edward Anson & Michael Fronda & David Hollander
Timothy Howe & John Vanderspoel
Pat Wheatley & Sabine Müller & Alex McAuley
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Communities of Honor in Herodotus' Histories¹ Benjamin Keim

Abstract: Rather than emphasizing the "Otherness" of (non-)Greeks within the Histories, recent studies of Herodotean ethnography have focused on the complex ambiguities and nuances marking Herodotus' presentation of his world. Here I contribute to this reassessment by examining the historian's remarks on the fundamental roles of honor in constituting and differentiating communities across the Mediterranean. After surveying these roles of honor within Herodotean communities, I explore the workings of honor within the Scythian and Persian logoi and then consider the negotiations of honor carried out within four critical scenes of cross-cultural engagement. I conclude by briefly considering three fourth-century passages that similarly attest the fundamental roles played by honor within Greek and non-Greek communities.

Early in his Thracian excursus Herodotus considers the customs "of those who live above the Crestonians" (Hdt. 5.5):²

Έχει γυναϊκας ἕκαστος πολλάς· ἐπεὰν ὧν τις αὐτῶν ἀποθάνῃ, κρίσις γίνεται μεγάλη τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ φίλων σπουδαὶ ἰσχυραὶ περὶ τοῦδε, ἥτις αὐτέων ἐφιλέετο μάλιστα ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρός· ἣ δ' ἂν κριθῆ καὶ τιμηθῆ, ἐγκωμιασθεῖσα ὑπό τε ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν σφάζεται ἐς τὸν τάφον ὑπὸ τοῦ οἰκηιοτάτου ἑωυτῆς, σφαχθεῖσα δὲ συνθάπτεται τῷ ἀνδρί· αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι συμφορὴν μεγάλην ποιεῦνται· ὄνειδος γάρ σφι τοῦτο μέγιστον γίνεται.

Each man has many wives, and whenever a man dies, a great contest with fierce rivalry is held among his wives and their families concerning which of them was the wife whom he loved the most. The woman who is judged most worthy of this honor is eulogized by both the men and the women, after which her closest relative cuts her throat over the grave and she is buried with her husband. The other wives consider their rejection a terrible misfortune and the greatest possible disgrace.³

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¹ Earlier, more wide-ranging versions of this Herodotean inquiry were presented at Duke University and the Perse School. I am thankful to Jed Atkins and James Watson for their kind invitations to present, and to Joshua Sosin and William Johnson for their conversations while I was in Durham. Additional thanks are offered to Robin Osborne and the *AHB* readers for their critiques, and to Douglas Cairns for the opportunity to consult forthcoming material. All infelicities remain entirely my own.

² On this passage see Asheri 1990: 149-150, Munson 2001: 160-1, Irwin 2007, and Hornblower 2013 *ad loc.* On Herodotus' handling of "true" and "false stories" see now the discussion by Thomas 2018.

³ Translations of Herodotus follow those by Purvis in *The Landmark Herodotus*.

Although few of the *nomoi* recorded by Herodotus are as "rare, gaudy, and curious" as this competitive *suttee*, 4 funerary rituals and matrimonial arrangements feature regularly within his discussions of cultural norms, as does the double-edged desire to win honor and avoid dishonor. Here the Thracian "winner" is selected by the assembled community, eulogized by men and women alike, and reunited with her departed husband; the inheritance for those who survive the ordeal is misfortune and disgrace. Brief and bloody, this remarkable account encourages us to consider more closely how honor (denoted by the Greek vocabulary of τ μ and its cognates) features across both the ethnographic and the historical sections of the *Histories*. How, in Herodotus' eyes, does the honor encountered within Greek and non-Greek communities compare?

This exploration of honor must be situated in relation to two broader conversations marking Herodotean scholarship. The first concerns the concept of the "Other" and the relation between Greeks and non-Greeks. Whereas thirty years ago scholars such as François Hartog, Paul Cartledge, and Edith Hall advanced our understanding by emphasizing the polarities within Greek portraits "of Self and Others," more recent studies have been encouraging greater attention to the "complexities and nuances" of the ancient evidence and its modern interpretation(s). Thus across a series of studies Joseph Skinner has explored the evolution (and historiography) of ancient ethnography, while Kostas Vlassopoulos has drawn out the complexities arising from the myriad cultural communications back and forth across the Aegean. Comparison, rather than contrast, is now proving the more fruitful means of analysis.⁶

The second conversation centers around contextualizing Herodotus within his fifth-century surroundings. As we have occasion to recognize Herodotus both as the "most Homeric" of Greek historians yet also as a more Classical and less Archaic thinker, as an author active perhaps as late as the 410s and keenly interested (in his own less abstract way) in diverse intellectual matters, the potential value of the *Histories* for illuminating the fifth-century Greek world becomes even more marked. As is often the case with τιμή, however, the nature and negotiations of honor within the *Histories* have received relatively little scholarly attention, and thus I would argue that consideration of Herodotean honor may yield not only

⁴ Other accounts of this practice may be found in Diodorus Siculus, Jules Verne, and William (on Charles) Napier: on Diodorus and the later tradition see Szczurek 2008. "Rare" comes from Redfield 1985: 99.

⁵ From Homer onwards, there is plenty of ancient Greek evidence that suggests women might be just as concerned about honor as men were: on the complexities of feminine negotiations of honor see the Herodotean remarks of Cairns 1996 and, more broadly, Keim 2016.

⁶On the "Other" see Hartog 1988, Hall 1989, Cartledge 1993 (whence "Portraits"); of the current responses see Gruen 2011, Skinner 2012, Almagor and Skinner 2013, Vlassopoulos 2013a and 2013b, and now the taking-stock by Skinner 2018. Laurot 1981 and Pelling 1997 are excellent, earlier studies that are keenly aware of the nuances of Herodotus' representation, while McWilliams 2013 approaches these issues through the vocabulary of hybridity.

⁷ On these contexts see especially Fowler 1996, Thomas 2000, Raaflaub 2002, and Bowie 2018.

⁸ One might well wish to contest these categories, rather than Herodotus' placement.

⁹ Thus Raaflaub 2002: 153-4.

¹⁰ The most notable recent discussion of honor in Herodotus occurs within Baragwanath's 2008 monograph on Herodotean motivations. Yet apart from her second chapter on Homeric influences, and her later

a better understanding of the Herodotean project but also of the Greek concept of $\tau\iota\mu\dot{\eta}$ and its critical role in shaping his world. For Herodotus, concern with honor is a universal feature of humans and their communities, from Thracian wives to Spartan hoplites, even as the rituals, markers, and values elaborated as and by honor provide varying degrees of diversity within that unity. Or, put in traditional Herodotean terms, individuals' sensitivity to honor and desire for honor ($\tau\iota\mu\dot{\eta}$) are part of human *physis*, while instantiated honors ($\tau\iota\mu\alpha\dot{\iota}$), from their particular forms to the grounds for their award, are part of human *nomoi*.

Communities of Honor

Let us begin by surveying how the *Histories* show honor defining, structuring, and distinguishing "communities," here broadly understood to encompass both the Greek *poleis* and the diverse forms of non-Greek associations, from nomadic tribe to established empire. Although the evidence contained within the *Histories* is neither equally distributed nor weighted, there is enough to draw our attention to three key roles played by honor within Herodotean communities.

First, there is the broadly horizontal and egalitarian manner in which members of the community are explicitly recognized as members of an honor group. Although often passed over without comment, the Greek vocabulary of citizenship ($\dot{\epsilon}\pi$ ítiµo ς for the enfranchised citizen male, ἄτιµo ς for the disenfranchised male) is etymologically rooted within the vocabulary of honor: thus citizenship regularly served as a horizontal honor binding the community together and, more rarely and by extension, as a vertical honor drawing a new citizen into the group. Herodotus' remarks about this egalitarian honor of community membership often occur within the context of negotiations over such honors. The Lycians, we are told, enfranchise children sired by slaves and borne by citizen mothers, while children sired by citizen men but borne by non-citizen women "have no civic status or civic rights" (1.173). The Athenians received the Gephyraians "on their own terms—admitted as citizens but excluded from a few negligible privileges" (5.57). When the Minyans, descendants of the sailors aboard the *Argo*, landed in Lacedaemonia and met with the Spartans, they asked "to live there

discussion of Leonidas at Thermopylae (a key example within her discussion of "kerdos" vs. "ideal" motivations) there is rather little on honor as a personal motivation. Within earlier studies there are very occasionally acknowledgements of honor's importance—see Lloyd 1990 on $\tau \mu \dot{\eta}$ in Book 2, or Immerwahr 1966 on the Zopyros narrative in Book 3—yet many of the passages discussed below pass without much notice. Throughout what follows, I am interested in the *Histories* as presented, rather than the historicity of what is presented.

 11 For overviews of modern scholarly engagement with ancient Greek honor see Cairns 2011 and Keim 2011: 10-37. Further remarks on the resonances and functions of honor ($\tau\iota\mu\dot\eta$) within Herodotus will appear within Cairns forthcoming.

¹² Consider the definition advanced by Aristotle (*Politics* 1278a34-35) that the "citizen is he who shares in the honors of the state" (πολίτης ὁ μετέχων τῶν τιμῶν).

¹³On naturalization as an honor see especially Henry 1983: 63-115 and Osborne 1981-3. Such grants of citizenship immediately remind us that the discourses of honor are inextricably linked: horizontal and vertical are endlessly negotiated, and the individual is almost certainly involved in multiple communities simultaneously. Hall 1989 offers a sound elaboration of the dynamics of individuals' multiple identities and communities.

with them and to share in the government and in the allotments of land" (4.145.4); subsequent demands, however, led to the Minyans being jailed, condemned, and re-settled on Thera. More positively, the Delphians, in exchange for Croesus' lavish and recurrent gifts and dedications, extended an offer of citizenship to any Lydian so inclined (1.54.2), while the Spartans naturalized Teisamenos and his brother in order to secure and benefit from his prophetic powers (9.33-4). Whether they are enfranchised by birth or naturalized later in life, citizens enjoy the privileges and community of membership within an honor group.

With these privileges, however, comes responsibility—for the honor of the community and of her citizens are inextricably bound together. The reputations of individual men, such as those who won at Olympia (e.g. Cylon of Athens (5.71), Kallias (6.122) or Demaratus of Sparta (6.70)), attracted honor to their cities. Mandrokles, honored by Darius for designing the bridge over the Bosphorus that allowed the Persian invasion of Scythia, took the first-fruits of these gifts and commissioned a painting, which he duly dedicated at the Samian Heraion, inscribed that he was "winning a crown for himself, and glory $(\kappa \tilde{\upsilon} \delta o \varsigma)$ for Samos" (4.88). When Themistocles returned home from his celebratory, honor-collecting tour after Salamis, he was heckled by one Timodemos—"an enemy of Themistocles but otherwise not a prominent man"—on the grounds that he had been awarded those honors not because of his own merits but because of his Athenian ties (8.125.1). After the plot of the Skionian general Timoxeinos to betray Potidaea went awry when an arrow bearing conspiratorial correspondence hit a local resident, the other generals determined "not to strike Timoexeinos with the charge of treason for the sake of the city of Skione, so that its people would not be considered traitors afterward and for all time" (8.128). 15

Second, communities throughout the *Histories* are regularly marked by vertical hierarchies of honor. Herodotus expects communities to have hierarchies and leadership, ¹⁶ whether such roles are filled by ascription or achievement. ¹⁷ These hierarchies could be institutional (in the form of temporary or permanent offices, or Solon-style class distinctions) but they could also be more informal. Thus some Egyptian individuals are formally tasked with caring for particular animals, an honor and appointment which is handed down within families (2.65.3); ¹⁸ similarly hereditary at Sparta are the positions of king (6.51ff) and herald (7.131ff). The opportunities for and terms of advancement vary by regime: Herodotus emphasizes that Peisistratus, on first attaining tyranny at Athens, retained the previous offices and their incumbents (1.59), while Persians' public greetings are said to vary depending on the respective ranks of individuals (1.134.1). ¹⁹ More informally, there are regular references to

 $^{^{14}}$ On the difficulties of Herodotus' epigraphic endeavors see West 1985.

 $^{^{\}rm 15}\,\text{The}$ fabrications of many civic sepulchres after Plataea (9.85) offers another example of reputation management.

¹⁶ See Konstan 1987: 65 on "the elaborate hierarchy in the Persian army, in which everyone has his rank and place." Briant 1990 confirms the basis of this Herodotean representation through consideration of Persian *realia*.

 $^{^{17}}$ For the *locus classicus* on the tensions arising from these contrasting methods of determining leadership and rank see *Iliad* 1.

¹⁸ See the Talthybiads at Sparta, Hdt. 7.131ff. and discussed below after n. 42.

¹⁹ This passage foreshadows the Old Oligarch's complaint (1.10) about (the lack of) Athenian dress codes.

individuals, anonymous or named, who are "leading" or "much esteemed" or "noteworthy" within their communities: before the battle of Salamis Xerxes arranges his lieutenants in such an order (8.67.2), and Artemisia's criticism of his battle-plan evokes glee from those who felt she had been honored excessively (8.69.1).

Third, in addition to these horizontal and vertical parameters by which communities were defined, Herodotus also elaborates on the manner in which matters of honor differentiate and distinguish communities. Throughout the Histories, and especially within the Egyptian logos, we read regularly about communities and their gods, with frequent emphasis on the way(s) in which, with regard to pantheon or ritual, their worship is distinctive. Thus, the Caunians are cited for their bibulousness and for their spear-rattling expulsion of foreign gods from their land, after which they worship only their own ancestral gods (1.172). The Egyptians honor Isis and Osiris in the same way throughout the country, but the other gods feature regional variations (2.42.2). When the festival of Isis at Bousiris is held, the expatriate Carians disfigure their faces with knives, "and thereby reveal themselves to be foreigners, not Egyptians" (2.61). Herodotus describes local cults for the beautiful Philip of Croton (5.47.2), for Onesilaos (5.114), for Miltiades as oikistês (6.38.1), for Timesios as (original) oikistês (1.168), and for the Achaemenid Artachaias by the Akanthians (7.117). The community-defining implications of such cult are thrown into relief by the various reforms carried out by Cleisthenes of Sicyon (5.67-9): while communities were differentiated from one another by their cult commitments, those same communities were also constituted by those practices.²⁰ Cult honors, like the honor of citizenship, worked in multiple ways and across multiple registers simultaneously.

Community values are best revealed by honors bestowed on a regular basis to those who embody the values of their community and the dishonor/punishment given to those who do not embody these ideals. On some occasions, such as the aristeia debates after battles, the contestants all play by the same rulebook.²¹ On other occasions, as with Tellus the Athenian (1.30), honorary burial reflects the values of their particular community, and a celebration of their living up to (that is, dying for) those values. The Scythian celebrations, examined at greater length below, are perhaps the quintessential Herodotean juxtaposition of ritual and values, clearly denoting to everyone within the community (i.e. those bound horizontally by their participation within the honor group) just who has, and has not, lived up to communal expectations that year. Herodotus is keen to draw attention to difference, and this allows for the assessment of different communities' economies of honor in an absolute as well as relative fashion. How does a community proclaim its views, incentivize its desired activities, and carry that reflexive process forward?

Before turning to the Scythian *logos* and its splendid example of such economies of honor, I close this section with a final note on the relative "honorableness," the sensitivity to honor, of the Greek and non-Greek inhabitants of the Herodotean *oikoumene*. All are aware of honor (a matter of *physis*) yet their customs (their *nomoi*) surrounding honor differ widely. Bearing in mind the final characteristic recorded within Herodotus' programmatic passage on Hellenicity

²⁰ For an intriguing reassessment of Cleisthenes' endeavors see Forsdyke 2012: 90-113.

 $^{^{21}}$ On *aristeia* generally, Pritchett 1974: 276-290, with attention to the emphasis on Greek rather than non-Greek participants in Herodotus; within Herodotus Book 4, see Hartog 1988: 161ff.

(8.144.2), we should not conclude that the Greeks were all peculiarly honor-hungry whereas the non-Greeks were not, but rather that the Greeks, unlike the barbarians (e.g. the Scythians or beyond-the-Crestonians) all bestow honored more or less similarly, as befits their common way of life. While there is certainly some variation in honorific practice amongst the Greeks—consider the unique inclusion of the Spartan logos, marked by the unusual honors afforded the two Spartan kings²²—in the broad terms of that Herodotus passage or the classical catechesis of Euripides fragment 853, the Greeks honor the same pantheon and hold to the same values.²³

Honor Among the Scythians and Persians

In the previous section I drew on passages from across the *Histories* to show the centrality of honor to the conception and distinctiveness of Herodotean communities. In this section I explore Herodotus' remarks about two significant non-Greek communities, the Scythians and the Persians, focusing on those sections devoted to their respective customs (4.59ff., 1.131ff.). Herodotus clearly attests the recognition of honor and the development of economies of honor within non-Greek communities, and thus sets the stage for the cross-cultural negotiations that ensue.²⁴

Let us begin with the quintessential "Others," the Scythians, who are first encountered in Book One, during their twenty-eight-year reign of Asia, and who return, as the object of Darius' vengeful thoughts, at the start of Book Four. Issues of valuation arise immediately, within Herodotus' account of the Scythians' blind slaves and their methods of processing the milk: "then they skim off what rises to the top, which they value more (τ_{1}) than what sinks to the bottom" (4.2). While the exact meaning of this illustration remains uncertain, we are immediately placed on notice about the Scythians and their values.²⁵

Later in Book Four, after five chapters on the Scythian pantheon and sacrificial ritual (4.59-63), Herodotus devotes three chapters to their customs concerning war (4.64-66). These customs, although brutal from a Greek perspective, provide an excellent view into the values—

²² The description of Spartan *nomoi* is noteworthy here, more generally, as the only such description of the *nomoi* of Greek community within the *Histories*, and, more particularly for our purposes, as it is catalyzed by consideration, first, of the relative standing of the Eurypontid and Agiad kingly lines at Sparta (τιμᾶν, 6.52.5; τιμπῶσαν, τιμώμενον 6.52.7), and second, of the various privileges (γέρεα, 6.56.1) with which they are honored (τιμᾶσθαι, 6.57.3), both while they reign and after their deaths. On Sparta "often serving as a sort of *internal* Greek 'Other'" see Pelling 1997: 54.

²³ Thus Euripides frg. 853 (tr. Collard): τρεῖς εἰσὶν ἀρεταὶ τὰς χρεών σ' ἀσκεῖν, τέκνον, / θεούς τε τιμᾶν τούς τε φύσαντας γονῆς / νόμους τε κοινοὺς Ἑλλάδος καὶ ταῦτα δρῶν /κάλλιστον ἕξεις στέφανον εὐκλείας ἀεί. "There are three virtues you should practise, child: to honour the gods, the parents who begot you, and the common laws of Greece. If you do these things, you will always have good repute, the fairest of crowns." For a summary of honor within Greek religion see Mikalson 1991: 165-202.

 $^{^{24}}$ I acknowledge that there are many descriptions of communities by Herodotus that do not include any τιμή-vocabulary, and that (as Cartledge 1993 *et al.* have noted) other (albeit related) cultural markers, such as funerary rituals and marriage practices, are more prominent.

²⁵ On this discussion of *koumiss* see West 1999.

and commemoration, and thus continuation—of the Scythian way of life. As Hartog rightly suggests, "[t]he fundamental 'otherness' of Scythian behavior can be reduced to this, the manner of their quest for *aristeia*, and we may use it to gauge the difference between their concept of *aristeia* and the Greek one." Here, rather than focusing on the differences elaborated by Hartog, I focus instead on the workings of honor within this Scythian system. For by focusing on the similarities, we can clearly recognize the essential Scythian economy of honor at work: through its incentives and disincentives, the community makes its values and its voice heard, as it recognizes past achievements and encourages future endeavors.

According to Herodotus, after drinking the blood of his first victim the Scythian warrior brings back to the king the head of every enemy he kills; those who return with heads are apportioned plunder, those without are not. The skin of the victims may be used in various ways – as handkerchiefs, in the first instance, or, with many stitched together, as cloaks, or, an entire skin, stretched over a wooden frame and displayed. Whoever has the most skins is considered the best man $(\mathring{\alpha}v\mathring{\eta}\rho\ \mathring{\alpha}\rho\iota\sigma\tau\circ\zeta,\ 4.64.2)$. "Manly valor" (andragathia) is defined by reference to the skull drinking cups taken from enemies (or from family members whom they have bested!), and covered in leather or gold, that they amass and then bring out for display.

The local ruler reinforces these values when he brings his men together: those who have killed enemies drink a cup of wine, those who have slain many enemies drink two cups, and those who have not managed to achieve this are both kept from the wine and forced to "sit apart in dishonor, this being the greatest disgrace among them" (ἀλλ' ἠτιμωμένοι ἀποκατέαται· ὄνειδος δέ σφι ἐστὶ μέγιστον τοῦτο, 4.66). While we are told that the Scythians avoid foreign and especially Hellenic (4.76) customs at all costs, and their own customs are rather more savage than the Hellenic ways, the underlying motivations and intentions of honor—to align individual and community values over time, towards the (anticipated) good of the community—are very similar to those found in Greek communities.

We see here how their choice of whom to honor distinguishes the Scythians from other communities. Their customs are not entirely unique – *e.g.*, the skulls of the Issedones (4.26) – but they are distinctive. The distinctiveness of honor has both a vertical aspect, seen within the distribution of booty after battle and in the award of a *second* cup of wine for those who had been very successful, and a horizontal aspect (inclusion within the community). Although the Herodotean account at 4.64-6 does not attest the possibility of a Scythian being driven out entirely from their community, both the post-battle and annual celebrations include the possibility of dishonor, first by lacking booty, second by being symbolically and spatially isolated from those who had upheld the community's ideals.²⁷ In different ways, for different purposes, the relics preserved from earlier victories attest the standing, and the honor, of the individual Scythian; just as tripods or arms or crowns or other material goods might provide a reminder of a Greek's earlier *aristeion*, so these tokens function evocatively within the Scythian system. This Scythian section, then, is a brilliant study in miniature of their economy of

²⁶ Hartog 1988: 163.

 $^{^{27}}$ The subsequent stories of Anacharsis and Scyles (4.76-80) suggest that deviation from Scythian customs could be punished, not merely by shunning but by the most scarring and irreversible removal from the community.

honors; prefaced by a study of religious practice, one in which "Ares" unsurprisingly takes pride of place, these remarks help explain the values of Herodotus' Scythians and propagation of their culture. What better way is there to get to know a people, than by assessing what they honor?

While Hartog assimilates Scythians and Athenians as common opponents of the Persians, the Persian economy of honor often appears far more similar to that of the Greeks.²⁸ Not only are there numerous passing mentions of the sorts of men the Persians esteem particularly highly—fighting men, as noted at Thermopylae (7.238), or sons of kings, such as Psammenitos (3.15)—but within the Herodotean logos of Persian customs (1.131-140) we are told a great deal about Persian honor, and the ways in which honor structures their perceptions of time and space as well as their culture. The Persians honor their own birthdays supremely (1.133), marking these days with various celebrations as befits their respective wealth, and arranging their view of the world by reference to themselves, at its center. It is striking how clearly the "hierarchical" aspect of Persian society is woven into what might be thought a more "horizontal" section on customs: the contents of their birthday meals vary by wealth (1.133.1); their practice of prosyknesis within their greeting rituals (1.134.1) confirms the membership of both parties within the Persian community, 30 and this point is re-emphasized, in a very Greek (and Median?) fashion in the very next sub-chapter, when we read of the Persians positioning themselves at the center of the world, as those who are highest in honor, and the honor/rank of others decreases with their distance from Persia; ³¹ Persian men are honored for valor in battle and the King-envisioned as an active participant and adjudicator, whether at court or on campaign—constantly rewards the man with the most sons (1.135); the most disgraceful matters are lying and debt (which engenders lying, 1.138). The logos closes with mention of the Magi, who themselves—as Herodotus accepts on the basis of its antiquity—have great competitions to kill ants and snakes and other creeping and flying creatures (1.140.3). Within this logos Herodotus not merely introduces some particularly illustrative Persian customs, but in the space of ten chapters he encapsulates the Persian Weltanschaaung, the basic order of their internal relations and their external rule, making clear both how honor includes (horizontally), hierarchizes (vertically), and establishes a distinctive Persian identity.

The conversations that take place around the battles at Salamis and at Babylon provide further evidence for Herodotus' perspectives on Persian honor. As we have already seen, in the run up to Salamis Xerxes summons and arranges his tyrant subjects and their subordinates "as the King granted honor to each" (8.67); during the subsequent battle, the King was "constantly watching to see if any of his men performed some remarkable feat," and would have his scribe

²⁸ For a rather different assessment of Herodotus' Persians as a sophistic antithesis to his Greeks, see Provencal 2015.

 $^{^{29}}$ The treatment of Leonidas being an immediate exception to this rule. See also their treatment of Pytheas of Aegina, discussed after n. 45 below.

³⁰ Compare the traditional Greek refusals to acquiesce in such practices, *e.g.*, Spartan envoys at 7.136 and discussed below.

³¹ Consider the Medes' (1.134.3) farming out governance of the *eschatia* to those in the not-quite-*eschatia*; if you are in the *eschatia*, being effectively ruled over by the non-quite-*eschatia*-dwellers, that is less honorable than being ruled over directly by the illustrious Persians.

record the name and details of anyone carrying out an extraordinary deed (8.90); chief among these was Artemisia of Halicarnassus, whose tactical advice (albeit unheeded) won praise (8.69) and whose crafty attack on an ally after the turn of battle allowed her ship to survive (8.88). The most "wonderful" instance of this Persian incentivization occurs in Book 3 the story of Zopyrus which clearly sets forth a Persian economy of honors. Startled by an omen (a mule giving birth) fulfilling an utterance from twenty months previously, when the siege of Babylon began, Zopyros made designs to undo singlehandedly the Babylonian defenses and thereby gain great honor, "for among the Persians such noble deeds are highly honored as a means to elevation in rank to greatness." Mutilating himself, he "defects" to the Babylonians; through a series of arranged victories over lesser Persian contingents he ingratiates himself into a position of authority; and ultimately opens the gates and allows the Persians to sack the city. The length at which Herodotus relates this story can be explained by the wealth and significance of Babylon itself, but also by Darius' judgement (3.160), that no Persian save Cyrus ever excelled Zopyrus in "good works." As he expected, Zopyros was rewarded with high honors and gifts: the Persian economy of honors here works as it was intended.

Cross-Cultural Negotiations of Honor

Thus far I have outlined how honor defines Herodotean communities, and then explored how particular passages concerning the Scythians and Persians show those dynamics of honor in practice. In this penultimate section I examine a series of "negotiation" scenes in which concepts of honor feature prominently within conversations between Greeks and non-Greeks. These four scenes—the conversations of Croesus with Solon and with the Pythia, of the seven Persian envoys to the Macedonians, of the Spartan envoys with Hydarnes and the Great King, and of the Arcadian defectors – reveal again the universality of honor in Herodotus' world, as well as some of its particular ramifications.³²

Croesus

"Adviser, adviser in my hall," asks Croesus, "who is the happiest man of all?" The paradigmatic status of the Croesus narrative in Book One has been widely acknowledged; here I focus, within the context of two conversations between the Lydian potentate and Greek interlocutors, on the negotiation of honor that occurs, first, between Croesus and Solon and, thereafter in several stages, between Croesus and the Pythia at Delphi. Given the legendary wealth of Croesus it is unsurprising that themes of material wealth feature prominently within both

 $^{^{32}}$ These negotiation scenes cluster around key moments in the military narrative: Croesus is said to be the first to act unjustly against the Greeks (1.5.5); the Persian request for earth and water from the Macedonians was (per Laurot 1981) the first actual conflict between Greeks and Persians (5.20); the odd Spartan embassy of 480 B.C. is prompted by a curse grown out of the Persian request for earth and water in 491 B.C. (7.131ff).

conversations; echoes of this note will be found amongst the passages from Books 7 and 8 below.³³

Solon appears in Sardis amidst his travels, and given these travels and his wisdom is sensibly seen by Croesus as a reasonable adjudicator for the question posed above—who is the most prosperous (*olbiôtatos*) of men? Although Croesus asks for *olbiôtatos*, not *timôtatos*, it is honor that plays a key role in the answers given by Solon. The happiest of men, Solon claims, was his fellow countryman Tellus: acknowledgement of his material situation, well off if only by Athenian (rather than Eastern court) standards, is present but is overshadowed by the nonmaterial realities, i.e., the reputation of his hometown, the character of his children, and the remarkable survival of each of his children and grandchildren; moreover—since the moral of the Herodotean story is that amidst a world of fickle fortune a man may judged happy only after death—he died in a most splendid fashion (*lamprotatê*), driving the Athenians' enemy from the battlefield before dying there most nobly (*kallista*), and thereafter being honored with burial at public expense (1.30.4-5). Thus, material necessities are acknowledged (as Croesus gestures grandly at his own wealth) yet greater emphasis is placed on non-material aspects of prosperity, and the final word is given over to honor, the honor bestowed by the Athenians upon a citizen who, upholding their shared values, had given his life for that community.³⁴

While Tellus is honored after his death, Cleobis and Biton are, on the other hand, recognized with death as the reciprocal benefit for the honor they showed their mother (and, by extension, the goddess, Hera, whom she served). Their material resources are also noted in passing, as sufficient for their needs, but greater stress is placed upon their physical prowess and the prizes which that prowess had brought them in athletic contests, as well as on the story that follows. Solon's narration suggests that Cleobis and Biton, even before their final act, were credible candidates for "happiest of men"; and that the final episode, conveying their priestess mother to her ritual duties, is simply an extension of their previous actions, 35 inasmuch as their physical prowess won them prizes at athletic contests (which were themselves held in honor of gods) and then granted them the "best possible departure from this life." Just as Tellus was honored by the community, so, too, Cleobis and Biton and their mother are surrounded by praise (rhômê, phêmê); their mother invokes the goddess, pleading that since her sons honored her so, they should be rewarded with the best reward available to humans. Amidst feasting and communal ritual and celebration the young men are fêted, then fall into the grasp of death. They, like Tellus, are memorialized by their community after their death; that this occurs at Delphi, the Greek site most associated with Croesus, is surely not coincidental. Honor, on the basis of these two stories, is not the only part of being olbiôtatos, and thus may not be sufficient in and of itself, but it is nonetheless a necessary component of prosperity.

³³ As Konstan 1987 urges within his discussion of 8.26 (discussed below at n.45), we should pay careful attention throughout our consideration of these negotiation passages not merely to the "spoken" elements of these conversations but also their dramatic contexts—with "viewing" and "eating" and "material wealth," for example, featuring prominently.

³⁴ Shapiro 1996 rightly and gracefully notes many of the parallels between the Tellus and Cleobis and Biton narratives, though she does not remark at all on the honor-aspects of the latter story.

³⁵ Just as Tellus, the good citizen, was reasonably prosperous even before he made his final sacrifice.

Croesus' shaky grasp of prosperity—and, by extension, of honor in all of its complexities—resurfaces in the wake of his capture by Cyrus. When the Persian leader, appreciative of Croesus' advice, offers him any gift he might wish, the Lydian responds thusly (1.90.1-3):

My Lord, you could give me the greatest pleasure by allowing me to send these shackles to the god of the Hellenes, the one I honored above all other gods (τ òv έγὼ ἐτίμησα θεῶν μάλιστα), and so that I might ask him if he typically deceives those who have treated him well.

Here, as Croesus explains, he refers to earlier gifts to the Delphic Oracle (1.50-1) and by extension to the citizens of Delphi (1.54); these later gifts, which the grateful recipients acknowledged and honored with grants of *promanteia* and citizenship, further implicated Croesus within a Greek economy of honors, but he is unable to obtain the ends he desired.³⁶ For the Pythia responds that Apollo is not at all at fault: the god sought to delay the fall of Lydia until after Croesus' death, but the Fates could not be swayed, and on Croesus fell the penalties for his ancestor Gyges' wrongdoings, for his usurping, several generations earlier, a title that was not his (1.91). Taken together, the Solonian and Delphic strands of the Croesus narrative show the Lydian potentate engaging with Greek interlocutors and slowly coming to understanding. While Solon's conversation with Croesus provides an early foreshadowing of the Greek vs. Persian, non-material vs. material discourse elaborated by Konstan on the basis of *Histories* 8.26, this early Delphic narrative reveals a Croesus who is no naif in the ways of (religious and political) honor, yet who does not entirely understand Greek ways nor escape divine intervention.³⁷

Macedonians

From the expansion of Cyrus into Lydia let us move forward to Book Five of the *Histories*, to the scene that, as Laurot reminds us, "is significant because it is presented as the first actual conflict between Greeks and Barbarians." After crossing the River Strymon and conquering the Paionians, Megabazos of Persia sent seven of his most distinguished men, ³⁹ to the court of Amyntas of Macedon, to demand the ritual symbols, earth and water, of Macedonian submission to Persia, and, as we learn shortly thereafter, to the customs of the Persians. Amyntas, we are told, readily agreed to this demand, and invited the Persian ambassadors to an official dinner (*xeinia*). As the wine began to flow, the Persians urged the submissive Amyntas to follow *their nomos* and admit women into the room; the Macedonian king, first acknowledging the difference between Macedonian and Persian *nomoi* and then the Persians'

³⁶ That the residents of Delphi *do not equal* Apollo of Delphi is perhaps obvious, but nonetheless encourages us to think about the interweaving of religion and politics across these relationships. On the Lydian details at Hdt. 1.50-52 see Mills 2014.

 $^{^{}m 37}$ See Konstan 1987 and Vlassopoulos 2013.

³⁸ Laurot 1981: 45, my translation.

 $^{^{39}}$ Here, as in 7.134-5 (Spartan heralds) and 8.26 (Persian audience), there is clear emphasis on the *leading, prominent* status of these Persians.

newly confirmed status as masters (*despotai*), agreed. Unsatisfied with the women merely sitting across from them—their feminine beauty, in an ironic twist, is "painful" (ἀλγήδονας, 5.18.4)—the drunken Persians lay hold of the women and begin fondling and kissing them.⁴⁰ Amyntas, aware that the evening has gone badly wrong, is ushered away by his son, Alexander, whose youthful spirit burned for revenge. Approaching the Persians, Alexander encourages them to let the women go and bathe; in their place he sends back an equal number of smooth-chinned youths, dressed in women's finery, and reintroduces them to the Persians as follows:

Persians, it seems that your entertainment shall be a banquet complete to its last course. You have now received everything. We were already giving you everything we had when we discovered what we could provide in addition, so that now everything is yours. In particular, you get the greatest gift of all: we lavishly bestow upon you our own mothers and sisters. We do this so that you may realize how completely we honor you exactly as you deserve ($\dot{\omega}_{\zeta}$ $\pi \alpha v \tau \epsilon \lambda \dot{\epsilon} \omega \zeta$ $\mu \dot{\alpha} \theta \eta \tau \epsilon$ $\tau \iota \mu \dot{\omega} \mu \epsilon v \tau \dot{\omega} v$ $\tau \dot{\epsilon} v \tau \dot{\epsilon} \sigma \epsilon$ $\dot{\epsilon} \dot{\sigma} \epsilon \dot{\sigma} \epsilon$ $\dot{\epsilon} \dot{\epsilon} \iota \iota \iota \dot{\omega}$, and also so that you may report to the King who sent you that a Hellene, his governor of the Macedonians, has welcomed you warmly with both bed and board.

The seven Persians and their retinue are then done away with, without a trace. The significance of this passage is emphasized by the following chapter: once the Persians have disappeared and the one subsequent Persian investigator bought off, Herodotus assures us that Alexander and the Macedonians were Hellenes. The entire story—with its lack of subsequent imperial vengeance—may be fantastic, but this (chronologically) early clash of customs, this interplay of *nomos* and *despotes*, and the ambiguous, open-to-interpretation language with which Herodotus' Alexander brings it to a close, is another indication of honor's fundamental importance within the structure and negotiation of Greco-Persian relations.

Spartan Heralds

The Persian heralds dispatched by Darius, in 491 B.C., to request earth and water from the Athenians and Spartans suffered more immediate punishment: so that they might retrieve as much earth and water as they wished, the Athenians threw their guests into a pit, while the Spartans threw theirs into a well (7.133.1). While the Athenians, in Herodotus' stated opinion, escaped any punishment for their impiety, the Spartans were struck by the curse of the Talthybiads, the family who provided the Spartans with their own heralds. Atonement was required, and our third negotiation scene reflects the conversations between two Spartans, sent to Susa as offerings for that earlier impiety, and their Persian hosts.

 $^{^{40}}$ Thus, hearkening back to the opening chapters of the *Histories* (1.1-4), we find yet another conflict between Greeks and non-Greeks over women.

⁴¹ Lévy (*pers. comm.* cited by Laurot 1981: 48) notes that this extension of Hellenicity applies only to the dynasty.

⁴² Compare the similar interplay at Hdt. 7.101ff.

The two Spartans who volunteered, Sperthias and Boulis, are emphatically credited with both nobility of birth and top-notch wealth (7.134.2); their subsequent daring (τολμή) and utterances ($\dot{\epsilon}\pi\dot{\epsilon}\alpha$)⁴³ are described as a wonder ($\theta\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$, 7.135). Their first encounter, *en route* to Susa and their anticipated deaths, occurs when they dine formally with Hydarnes, general of coastal Asia, who encouraged them to make allegiance with the King. In a manner reminiscent of Croesus, since his own station shows that "the King knows how to honor good men," Hydarnes encourages the heralds to surrender and thereafter enjoy their own dominion under the King. 44 Hydarnes' words attest the riches on offer via the Achaemenid dynast, even though the verb he uses is τιμᾶν. Echoing Croesus and foreshadowing 8.26 he seems to construe "honor" in material terms; the Spartans construe it in political terms, decline this offer, and attribute Hydarnes' suggestion to his limited experience: had he experienced freedom, he would know its sweetness and the necessity of fighting for it, "not only with spears but with axes" (7.135.1-3). Representatives of their respective communities, leading Spartans and Persians, they can converse in mutually-understandable terms of honor and yet reach very different conclusions about the privileges and responsibilities afforded within each community.

Although the Susa chapter, with its threat of *proskynesis* and invocation of Spartan *nomos*, clearly notes differences between the two communities and their customs, it is the earlier chapter, with Hydarnes, that offers greater food for thought. These Spartans, leading men within their community, are not swayed by Persian promises of wealth or authority, nor by the fear of death, but remain devoted to their way of life (like Tellus of Athens, or their Spartan countrymen at Thermopylae). This ultimately leads us into the matter of Herodotean explanations for why the Greeks, overall, were victorious in the Greco-Persian wars.

In Search of Excellence

The final and most famous of our negotiation passages is the conversation between Arcadian deserters and the Persian leaders shortly after Thermopylae (8.26). Brought into the presence—and presents?—of the King, the Arcadians were asked about the disposition of the other Greeks; the deserters replied that their fellow Greeks were celebrating the Olympic festival, watching an athletic competition and an equestrian contest. Asked what the prizes for

⁴³ On *epos* in Herodotus see Hollman 2000.

⁴⁴ If the recent etymology suggested by Jim 2013 is correct, then such surrender would indeed see these Greek speakers become *barbaroi*, *i.e.*, tax-payers to the Persian throne.

these contests were, the Arcadians said "that the winner would receive an olive wreath." At this unexpected answer the Persian Tritantaichemes, son of Artabanus, exclaimed to Xerxes: "What kind of men did you lead us here to fight, who compete not for money but for excellence alone?" (οι οὐ περὶ χρημάτων τὸν ἀγῶνα ποιεῦνται ἀλλὰ περί ἀρετῆς). 45

Lest we make too much of this contrast between chrêmata and arete, possessions and excellence, let us consider the fate of one Pytheas of Aegina and his remarkable nostos (7.181, 8.92). When his trireme was captured by the Persians off of Sciathus, "he continued to fight until he had been almost completely butchered." When Pytheas was no longer able to fight yet still able to breathe, his Persian captors brought his broken body to their own vessel and tended his wounds, we are told, "on account of his valor" (δι' ἀρετήν). His aretê not merely saved his life but brought him some modicum of renown, as an object of amazement and admiration amidst the entire Persian contingent; less fortunate were his less valorous colleagues, whom the Persians treated as slaves (ὡς ἀνδράποδα). When Pytheas reappears at Salamis, his Sidonian captors' ship itself captured by an Aeginetan trireme commanded by Polycritus, Herodotus reminds us that he was still onboard (rather, perhaps, than being worked or sold off into slavery) "because they respected his valor" (ἀρετῆς εἴνεκα). While Pytheas' survival provides anecdotal support for the common Greek exhortation to "fight hard," because those who fight hard are more likely to survive, its key importance for our present purposes is the indication—as with Xerxes' watchful eye at Salamis—that the Persians were perfectly able to comprehend excellence and honor in ways readily translatable and understandable to their Greek opponents. 46

Pytheas' story offers a useful note on which to conclude discussion of these negotiation scenes. Here we find agreement, among Greeks and Persians on one definition/exemplar of $\alpha \rho \epsilon \tau \dot{\eta}$, and a successful and suitably roundabout nostos as well. While an initial reading of the Arcadian-Persian conversation at 8.26 might yield the impression that there were qualitative differences between the Greeks and their non-Greek opponents, I would suggest that their differences, while real, are more quantitative. The Persians, as portrayed throughout the Histories, are cognizant of honor and have their own finely-developed economy of honor(s). Both Greeks and Persians are familiar with honor, yet—as our earlier study of communities would suggest—they do not treat honor(s) in exactly the same way, with these differences in honor-related nomoi yielding various consequences.

Communities of Honor Revisited

Both the universality and the particularities of honor(s) are acknowledged in the extended definition of $\tau_{l}\mu\dot{\eta}$ given by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (1361a28-b2, tr. Kennedy):

⁴⁵ On this passage see especially Konstan 1987 on the differentiation drawn, by means of motivations by material and non-material means, by *chrêmata* and by *aretê*, between the Persians and the Greeks; compare the *agônes* of the Magi noted above as Herodotus' final detail on Persian *nomoi* (1.140).

⁴⁶ As the original remark in 8.26 indicates, with its horrifying realization that men who are motivated by a symbolic crown or desire simply to be the best are likely to be more vigorous and valorous.

Honor (τιμή) is a sign of reputation for doing good, and benefactors, above all, are justly honored, although one with the potentiality of doing good is also honored. . . . The components of honor are sacrifices [made to the benefactor after death], memorial inscriptions in verse or prose, receipt of special awards, grants of land, front seats at festivals, burial at the public expense, statues, free food in the state dining room; among barbarians such things as *proskynesis* and rights of precedence and gifts that are held in honor in each society (τὰ βαρβαρικά, οἷον προσκυνήσεις καὶ ἐκστάσεις, δῶρα τὰ παρ' ἑκάστοις τίμια).

This passage reminds us, first, of the wide variety of timai—honors, magistracies, rewards—denoting *timê*, honor; second, of the variation of these *timai* across communities; and, third, as Aristotle notes in the following lines, that individuals, even within a single community, will be motivated in diverse ways: "those ambitious for money get a possession, those for honor an honor."

As Aristotle suggests, one important way of demarcating "Greek" or "Barbarian," of indicating membership within various real or imagined communities, was by noting what, or whom, or how, an individual honored and was honored. Thus in the Demosthenic *Against Stephanus* of 350/49 B.C., the speaker suggests that the defendant might strike the dikasts as a barbarian, not merely because of his curious speech patterns but "because he hates those whom he ought to honour" (ἔστι δὲ βάρβαρος οὖτος τῷ μισεῖν οὓς αὐτῷ προσῆκε τιμᾶν, 45.30). Thus whom one chooses to honor—or not honor—serves to confirm the broader aspects of an individual's status and identity.

A more wide-ranging passage from Demosthenes' *Against Timocrates* (24.215-6) draws together *nomos*, the honors and punishment it manages, and the overall condition of the *polis*:⁴⁷

You ought to be especially angry with those who destroy the laws on which the inferiority or the superiority of the city relies. Which laws are these? The laws that punish those who err, and bestow certain honors upon those who are good (οἵ τε τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας τιμωρούμενοι καὶ ὅσοι τοῖς ἐπιεικέσι τιμάς τινας διδόασιν). For if everyone were eager to do some good deed for the community, because they were desirous of the honors and rewards given for such service, and if all men were to refrain from doing evil, because they were afraid of the pains and penalties handed down to such men, could anything prevent our *polis* from becoming the greatest?

Focusing on the positive, the bestowal of honor through various honors is a fundamental way of publicizing, rewarding, and encouraging community values.⁴⁸ Thus from the fourth century we may return finally to the honors recorded for the 11 Samian trierarchs who, while all the other Ionians sailed away, refused to abandon their cause and stayed to fight at the Battle of Lade in 494 B.C (Hdt. 6.14). "Because of what these eleven did," Herodotus tells us, "the Samian government awarded them a pillar inscribed with their full names and patronymics

 $^{^{47}}$ Although Demosthenes' use of *nomos* here is somewhat more formal and legalistic than what we regularly find in Herodotus, the central importance for communities of their *nomos* and their honors abides.

⁴⁸ On these dynamics see, e.g., Whitehead 1993 and Lambert 2018: 71-92.

proclaiming that they had proved themselves to be brave and valiant men. This pillar still stands in the agora of Samos."⁴⁹

Offering us safe harbor at the end of our voyages through Herodotean communities of honor, this Samian example reveals honor at work within one community, a Greek community that was—from Mandrokles' Persian honors to Polycrates' Egyptian connections—firmly embedded within the broader world of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Samians recognized those 11 trierarchs for services which were deemed to be in the interest, and in accordance with the values, of their community. We cannot know whether others took this to heart, or were more inclined to dismiss this memorial as a gesture to save corporate face after the Battle of Lade, but the literary account of this honorific dedication remains as yet another testimony that the world portrayed by Herodotus was—like the world seen through the writings of these Athenian authors—a world that was significantly defined and described in terms of honor, not merely as an individual or heroic concern but as a fundamental feature of communities and their experiences.

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