

EMILY BARAGWANATH AND MATHIEU DE BAKKER (eds.), *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus*

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Narrative has always powerfully transferred memories, fantasies, and understanding to other men's brains. Many sorts of fiction and history, biography, drama, and judicial briefs either organize themselves entirely along a consecutive story-telling axis or insert fractured narratives, whether proleptic, analeptic, or "alloleptic", into a necessarily linear presentation of words in an oral-aural telling or on an inscribed stone, written roll, scroll, tablet, or printed page, or even a glowing computer screen. Book reviewers often follow in the steps of their targets' organization, so they rarely tell a story in chronological order. Herodotos, unlike Heliodoros (one of his admirers), often tries to begin at the beginning, although he often spirals back into the story behind his story, and there always is one. This method (once called "epic regression") is natural to human story-tellers, as any reader who has been a narrator knows well.

Myth and Truth—our title's other abstractions—need not be opposed, although they often are.¹ Myths present communities' central narratives of the distant past (creation, end times, social organization, migrations), often involving supernatural intervention, stories that one specific group (or groups) finds helpful, comforting, and explanatory of woes and blessings. Ancient debates continue, of course, on designing pigeon-holes for the multi-level labyrinth housing discourses of knowledge. Legends deal with a past less remote, conceivably historical, like the Trojan War, the Theban Expedition, Napoleon's napping on horseback and before battle, Washington's or Lincoln's exemplary honesty encapsulated in tidy anecdotes. These narratives function to promote ethnic or national cohesion and reduce anxiety. Mythic ideas are always embedded in narrative procedures of coherence, although truths are not. Myth and truth are both slippery concepts, although, or perhaps therefore, good to think with.² The variously inclined classicists assembled here supply,

¹ E.g., "oh, that story about Romney's dog on the roof" or "General McAuliffe's Bastogne obscene response to the Germans' invitation to surrender is just apocryphal—a myth."

² W. Schadewaldt, "Herodot als erster Historiker," *Die Antike* 10 (1934): 144-68 and T. Krischer, "Ἔτυμος und ἀληθής," *Philologus* 109 (1965): 161-74 distinguish between ἀτρεκείη and ἀληθείη, and their relationship to ἱστορίη. Thucydides and Attic prose avoid the first word, a legacy of epic. Omitting direct speech examples, Herodotus employs *aleth-*

or sometimes choose not to supply,³ their own definitions, and the different frontiers between history, legend, and myth consequently (possibly unavoidably) remain blurred.

In their fifty-six-page introduction,⁴ de Bakker and Baragwanath acknowledge the reaction in Herodotean studies to Jacoby's masterful *RE* article of 1913 (Suppl. II. 205-520). One still must read the stimulating German studies of Wolf Aly (*Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle*, 1921) and Max Pohlenz (*Herodot, Die Erste Geschichtschreiber*, 1937), and an American refugee from Nazism, Henry R. Immerwahr, who published five deft articles even before his pioneering structural study of Herodotos' *Histories*.⁵ Decades passed before the full tsunami force of these interpretations—more unitarian (less focused on the order of *logoi*-composition) and acknowledging Herodotos' greater control of his material—enabled the flood of Herodotean historiography in the last two decades. More of these analyses have attended to his perceptible mental habits, intellectual milieux, and historiographical methods than to his historico-geographical “facts.” Historiographical “patterns” (v) emerged that, for some, diminished the chances for excavating any facts and factoids lurking in Herodotos' text, while, for others, these patterns revealed manners of organization, essential for comprehending any study that tries to sort the chaos of past events. Familiar story-patterns create presumptions of how narratives end: crime impels punishment; effective governments permit the growth of imperial power; oath-sealed crafty bargains come a cropper; and greed (personal and imperial) prompts come-uppance. Herodotos' pessimistic *Histories* highlight more failures than successes.

Historians (e.g., Herodotos, Thukydides, Polybios, Sallust, Tacitus) may pick the historical subjects that they write up on the basis of how well a “set” of events conforms to their preconceived expectations. That is to say, winners write the histories in part *because* the history has confirmed their conceptions of how human events “work.” Is Herodotos master of the narratives that he heard, of his moral mapping and his communities' signs? To what extent is he their unwitting victim? Has this master story-teller employed and manipulated his inherited structures, assumptions and traditions, to facilitate his Hellenic

stems 54 times, *atrek*- stems 49 times. He eschews Thucydides' overly optimistic term ἀκριβεία (23 times in Thucydides: adjective, adverb, or noun), while the later historian eschews *atrek*- words.

³ E.g., they explain: “I shall not pause to consider...” or “I concentrate upon ‘myth’ in its looser form.”

⁴ Nearly all these papers derive from a conference held in 2007 at Oxford. In this volume the editors present an introduction and twelve essays (two of the editors').

⁵ *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, 1966. His first index alone (of *logoi*) was worth the price.

audience's understanding of new orderings and explanations (call it "*historiê*")?⁶ In any case, as Dewald notes in the volume under review (74), community traditions, accurate or false, shape assumptions and decisions for the actions of the readers in their own or subsequent ages. Crisis situations provoke hysterical responses, desperate policies, and skewed recollections including "miracles" and alleged coincidences (see the bold Athenians repeatedly panic, as Datis or Xerxes comes across the sea or down the pike, 6.109, 8.41, 8.51). More dramatic is a report that two battles won on one day were fought near Demeter sanctuaries (9.101) than to note that one was fought near her sanctuary and another, some days after, near another god's sanctuary. When American football sports teams and fans pray god(s) for their own Friday-night victory, and victory ensues (for one team only, inevitably), do observers recognize in the participants' accounts mythic thinking, belief, and small-scale mythic history? And, if winners write the histories, Herodotos' losers must interpret defeats that disconfirm their cherished ideas.

BARAGWANATH and de BAKKER singly and in tandem contribute one-third of the book's pages. Their introduction forcefully addresses questions rather than merely summarizing the topics and the contributors' theses. They discuss *mythos* (a word but twice found and roundly rejected at Hdt. 2.23 and 2.46) but, unfortunately, not Thucydidean *akribeia*.⁷ Many other stories and versions are rejected as *ou pista* (not trustworthy) or *ouk ekhei elegkhon* (beyond refutation) or without evidence (*ergoi ...ouk apodeiknusi*). The editors outline Herodotean *Quellenforschungen*, consider the presence of his *novellae*, and explore the historian's influences from and on Attic tragedians, the sophists, and the Hippocratics.⁸ They sidestep the lively presence of the Olympian divinities in Trojan battle legend as compared to their absence from Herodotos' presentation. One may, for instance, compare Athene, Ares, Artemis, Here, Apollo, Hephaistos, Poseidon (Zeus only at a distance), and the irritated

⁶ Alexander Hollmann, *The Master of Signs: Signs and the Interpretation of Signs in Herodotus' Histories* (2011), finds an unconventional, strategic semiotician directing the narrative. A few others (e.g., T. Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 2000) find a conventional believer, a collector of popular prejudices. D. Fehling, *Herodotus and his 'Sources.' Citation, Invention and Narrative Art* (1971/1989: 7, 11, 243, 259 et passim) argues that Herodotos concocted his too dramatic narratives from whole cloth, a new species of fiction *avant la lettre*.

⁷ Or the related, ð-privative Herodotean and Hippocratic term for "untwistedly correct," *atrekeiê* (cf. D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, 1989: 231 n. 20). All Greek in this volume is transliterated.

⁸ D. Lateiner, "Early Greek Medical Writers and Herodotus," *Antichthon* 20 (1986): 1-20, or R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 2000.

river-god Skamandros' active interference on the busy Iliadic battlefield (e.g., *Il.* 21) or on the beach and in the hill-country of Ithaka (*Ody.* 1, 2, 13, 16, 20, 24) to the total absence of these gods in the run-ups and battles on the Marathonian plain or across the muddy stream Asopos at Plataia.⁹ Herodotos' battle-narratives stick to his explicit principle of reporting human perceptions and actions: τὰ γεγόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, avoiding the Homeric penchant for double motivation and divine meddling.¹⁰ Herodotos deliberately demythologized and rationalized certain characters (gods and heroes) and events (see below on Gray and Saïd)—writing them out of or marginalizing their presence in Hellenic oral traditions. Where he cautiously includes divine and priestly tales, after having dismissively asserted that “everyone knows equally much [or little] about god matters” (2.3.2, quoted on 31), generally he is citing the committed testimony of one or another person or community. Herodotos has not certified that the vision or oracle is historically verifiable, and he often suggests that such stories are inherently unlikely or elaborated out of historical likelihood, e.g., glorified tales of Kyros' divine birth (Chiasson in the volume under review), black doves bringing revelations from Egypt to Libya and Dodona, divine retribution for killing diplomats (1.95, 2.54, 7.133). The editors (35) contribute to refuting Fehling's clever “armchair-deskbound historian” interpretation. Tales of shabby or sordid priests and bogus prophets are supplied, but “enough about deeds of long ago,” as his Athenian ambassador at Plataia says (9.27.5). As that eloquent individual goes on to show—although not say, “myths have an argumentative function,” they are good to persuade with (41). One could say the same of popular American legends of Betsy Ross, Horatio Alger, or General George Patton. Many characters in Herodotos' text employ mythic *exempla*, persuasive appeals to authority or entertainment or timeless paradigms, but rarely does the context suggest that Herodotos allows any veracity for the story (45). The editors refer to Herodotos' ‘change of gear’ (crediting the phrase to Alan Griffiths) when he segues from historical to mythic moments in the Mykale *logos*. This insight may offer an exit from the dead-end dichotomy that finds Herodotos either overly credulous in or impervious to traditional Olympian feats in the atrabilious manner of a modern monotheist or atheist.

⁹ Pheidippides and Epizelos' crisis apparitions during the Marathon campaign (6.105, 6.117) and the anonymous interpretation of a Pythian oracle about the “daughters of Asopos” (5.80), apparent exceptions, prove the rule: they are other anxious humans' perceptions and interpretations or they are hedged with “allegedly reported” qualifications.

¹⁰ Contrast Simonides' god- and hero-drenched “Plataia Elegy.”

The editors appreciate Herodotos' focus on discontinuities among civilizations (in contrast to Thucydides' essentializing *to anthrôpinon*, 1.22.4), dubious verifications (e.g., 2.131), elaborated factoids, and his reluctance to build grand historical theories of political development like that found in his more widely admired epigone's so-called "Archaeology" and speeches. Herodotos more frequently tags unverifiable reports and disvalues the "unknown unknowns." Thucydides both dismisses the poets *and* builds paradigmatic castles in the air on various verses of Homer, while the skeptical Herodotos usually dismisses (2.23, 117 fin.), mocks, or depreciates (2.53, 7.20) the Muse's revered mouthpiece, he who had preserved legends of fair Helen in epic amber or maximized errant brigandage into long wars. The editors reasonably suppose that some historical sequences (55) did develop analogously to mythic *exempla* rather than encountering deformation from mythic expectations and validating paradigms. For example, Leonidas in his last minutes at Thermopylae acted as Herodotos reports, because he had Homeric and legendary Spartan antecedents of standing ground, or Leonidas behaved far otherwise but benefitted from later remodeling to fit the victors' heroic Hollywood cut-outs.

Carolyn Dewald and Rosaria Munson, co-editors of the future Cambridge "Green and Yellow" Herodotos I each contribute a chapter. DEWALD thus is the right scholar to discuss "Myth and Legend in Herodotus' First Book." As she notes (60), 'mythic thinking' is "an exceedingly polyvalent concept." Dewald betrays justifiable anxiety with the conference topic. Perhaps it is the word itself, since she too notes that mythic and truthful narratives can coincide.¹¹ Herodotos himself proclaims several times that he is not keen to report god-stuff and will avoid theogony, cosmogony, and theology—divine matters—as much as he can (2.3). Nevertheless, divine and heroic genealogies, supernatural narratives (oracles, portents, perhaps dreams),¹² "signs and wonders," and traditional folktale motifs such as vulnerable salvific circles,¹³ failed reciprocity, prophets' gnomic advice, or trickster acquisition of the sacred bones of Orestes in Argos (1.68) intrude into his investigation/history of the recent and distant pasts (60). To twenty-first century investigators, these elements are entirely "mythic." Herodotos will recall τὰ θεῖα as reported to him, he says, when his narrative forces him to (ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου

¹¹ The vulgar equivalence of "myth" and "falsehood" in English presents pedants with an unwinnable battle in the classroom—except for a semester when one brandishes a grade.

¹² Dewald (63 n. 7) knows that Herodotos discerns or ascribes "cynical attempts to generate or influence religious belief: 1.59-60, 6.66, 7.6" (Peisistratos, Kleomenes, Onomakritos, *inter alios*).

¹³ Anent Melas' lion and Deïokes' perimeters (1.84, 1.98).

ἐξαναγκαζόμενος ἐπιμνησθήσομαι), but ἀνθρωπῆια πρήγματα, what his preface calls “human happenings,” are his meat and potatoes.¹⁴ When, however, does his account “leave him no choice?” and what does that mean? The compulsions of his *logos* sound metaphorical, not metaphysical.¹⁵

Dewald rightly considers the proemial (and later Helen-centered) stories of wife-stealing as demythologization, debunking the deluded and parochial self-serving versions of the *logioi* (cf. Saïd). She does not consider whether they are a critical jab at the myth-citing tendencies of geographers such as Hekataios.¹⁶ Frequent genealogies in Book I, like “begats” in Genesis, are non-narrative contexts that meant more to the clan griots from whom Herodotus obtained them than they do to us. Herodotus includes aetiological and etymological narratives and oracles, whether Delphic or just delphic. These “stories” shaped individual and community immediate responses—as well as memory—and so gain inclusion in the *Histories*, whatever Herodotus’ own (dis-)belief in them and disavowal of them (7.152.3, a blanket *caveat*, deserves daily recital).¹⁷

One can arguably read all of Book I as prefatorial pattern-setting for the extended climax, Xerxes’ invasion.¹⁸ Dewald memorably says (84): “Belatedly, ...Kroisos... realizes that he is in a story that Solon the Athenian once told.” Everyone—even, or especially, Shah Xerxes—chooses roles from the array that men and women of a particular culture perceive as possible options.

¹⁴ The first essay raises a problem that no subsequent essay adequately addresses, although none entirely avoids: do our muddy categories of the Historical map onto the ancient Greeks’ or even one ancient Greek’s?

¹⁵ On this compulsion, e.g., 1.95.1, 2.3.2 and 2.65.2, 9.65.2, consult her article in the *Brill Herodotus*, “I didn’t give my own genealogy: Herodotus and the authorial persona,” 267–289, esp. 274–277, at 275: “Occasionally he views the *logoi* he retells as having a mind of their own, that heads the on-going narrative off in a particular direction (1.95, 4.30).”

¹⁶ But cf. 70 n. 24, where she cites Lionel Pearson, “Thucydides and the Geographical Tradition,” *CQ* 33 (1939): 50 = *Selected Papers of Lionel Pearson* (D. Lateiner and S. Stephens, edd.) 1983: 30.

¹⁷ λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, and πείθεσθαι γε μὲν οὐ παντάπασιν. This reviewer’s analysis emphasizing Herodotus’ focus on historical causes has met opposition from scholars quite confident that his explanations are often, not always, god-determined. Thus, these critics find him mired in Homeric, or at least man-in-the-street, Hellenic, conceptions of anthropoidal divinities’ interference. Herodotus’ unknowable “religious” convictions seem to them entirely conventional. See Lateiner (1989, above, note 7) 65–7, 195–202. Neither position is Dewald’s, I hasten to add. She carefully states (n. 37) that Herodotus believed “that forces greater than human shaped the direction events would take...” without identifying these as anthropomorphic gods rather than inanimate leveling principles.

¹⁸ Ch. Fornara, *Herodotus. An Interpretive Essay*, 1971, 17–19; Lateiner (1989; above, note 7: 13–17, 40–3) argues just this about proemiology.

In hindsight, on better days, we perceive our follies. Human circumstances, individual and community choices and consequences, drive Herodotos' research, although Dewald thinks that Herodotos believes that the obscure "Setters" (2.52: *hoi thenetes*—an obvious folk etymology) are behind the scenes that men elect to construct. As the novelist Milan Kundera would have observed of Kroisos or Histiaios, as he does of his Edward, a decent but feckless, apolitical Czech protagonist caught up in Communist rituals: "But this is the way life goes: a man imagines that he is playing his role in a particular play, and does not suspect that in the meantime they have changed the scenery without his noticing, and he unknowingly finds himself in the middle of a rather different performance."¹⁹

SUZANNE SAÏD said, in the first of four consecutive essays on the Helen *logoi* scattered throughout the Halicarnassian's text (1.3, 2.112-13, 2.115-20, 5.94, 6.61, 9.73), that Herodotos does "not overtly separate the world of men from the world of heroes" (88 on 3.122—usually understood to identify a clear separation). To her thinking, Herodotos distances the poorly known "deep past" (90) from the period for which there is some dependable knowledge, especially first-hand informants—like the Egyptian priests. She notes that he "deletes the gods and the supernatural from" the Trojan Cycle (91). Saïd shows how individuals and states use myths as arguments for their claims, e.g., the Athenian claim to Salamis, the Spartan claim to military leadership during Xerxes' invasion, the Athenian claim to the left wing at Plataia. As other contributors also state, the Trojan War *mythos* (heroes, if not gods) serves as a paradigm for understanding the recent, potentially ephemeral, *genomena eks anthrôpôn* of his preface. Helen reverberates in accounts of past abductions.²⁰ The closing story of last-to-leave Artaÿktes' punishment in Eastern Europe for sexual sacrilege is again tied to Protesilaos' first-to-arrive landing at Troy in Western Asia.²¹ Saïd's provocative essay gently concludes that, while Herodotos did not consider the Trojan War explanatory of "his" war, he uses it to "highlight universal laws."

MATHIEU de BAKKER looks at Proteus, Herodotos's fifth Egyptian king and Helen's protector, not just as a figure in an entertaining story; he is

¹⁹ "Edward and God" in *Laughable Loves*, orig. 1969, Penguin publ. transl. 1987: 227.

²⁰ Books 1, 5, 7, and 6.61: Demaratos' father's passion and allusions to the future such as 9.73.1: a digression about the reason for Dekeleia's being spared despoilment during the Peloponnesian war.

²¹ 9.120; cf. D. Boedeker, "Protesilaos and the End of Herodotus' *Histories*," *ClAnt* 7 (1988): 30-48, C. Dewald, "Wanton Kings, Picked Heroes, and Gnostic Founding Fathers: Strategies of Meaning at the End of Herodotus' *Histories*," in D. Roberts et al., edd., *Classical Closure. Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, 1997, 62-82.

nothing like his Odyssean homonym but a “methodological *exemplum*” (108; 2.112-20). Like the Egyptian *logos* as a whole, Proteus provides polemical ammunition attacking Greek claims to priority and superiority. For example, he objects to the Atreid practice of human sacrifice (here Menelaos’, but Hellenes recall Agamemnon’s execution of his own daughter). Proteus expounds *xeniê* to Greeks as Solon had expounded vicissitudinal anxieties to barbarians. De Bakker takes at face value Herodotos’ detailed questioning of the Egyptian priests (2.119.3), although they were hardly de Bakker’s “eyewitnesses,” at best the only source of any information—cockamamie or otherwise—on the subject. Herodotos is critical of the poets, although not always for the reasons that contemporary historians would suggest. De Bakker notes that no other story of Egyptian pharaohs contains so much *oratio recta* (OR), and the Rhampsinitos story has the longest run of *oratio obliqua*, but, contrary to de Bakker (125), OR in Herodotos is never a proof of “authoritative knowledge,” assent or agreement. There are many tools of distancing in the workshop of Herodotos, and few instances when he claims “the correct version” (125-6). If we style Herodotos as another Proteus, he is hard to pin down for indisputable, reliable explanations, and he is also shape-shifting any generic identity (*histôr?*) that we allege for him.

IRENE de JONG views the same Helen passage as a test case for Herodotos’ engagement with “the mythical past.” Some scholars consider it Egyptian, others entirely Greek, or even solely Herodotean. De Jong does not buy de Bakker’s interpretation of OR but considers it a tool of a “more engaging narrative style” (131). Its presentation with OR and many historical presents arises from Herodotos’ “shrewd narrative strategy” (132) in presenting his own story and his own point: the Trojan War was fought “because people fail to check a story” (142, her italics), in this case, concerning the whereabouts of the abducted Helen. She wonders whether some of her analysis is “too far-fetched” (135), a concern about attributing to the divine what Herodotos does not. The “fingerprint” of her title refers to human crime and (divine) punishment (140, her parenthesis). Here Herodotos certainly does refer to divine balancing or *tisis* (2.120.5), a violation of his own usual methods of explaining *historical* events. Readers find Herodotos elaborating a polemic disputing Homeric myth and Hellenic *communis opinio*. A heated Herodotos, perhaps following or refuting a *logos* of Hekataios, is subjecting the bizarreries of myth to his own methodological questioning (*historiê*) of second- or seventieth-hand reports.

ELIZABETH VANDIVER examines the Helen *Doppelgänger* mystery and the Kroisos catastrophe in pursuit of Herodotos’ demonstrable Homerism.

Herodotus' Homerific Kroisos *logos* is motored by *xeniê*, as Vandiver notes, although here the central character sits enthroned at home and the travellers come to him (Solon, Phrygian Adrastos, his trusty messengers). Although Homer is more often explicitly pilloried than praised when a source for Herodotus, his theme of *xeniê* is repeatedly invoked by his presumptive heir, the prosateur. Homer was Herodotus' necessary model for extended—really extended—war narratives,²² not to mention heroic deeds (Herodotean prefatorial *aklea* responding to Homer's *klea andrôn*). Of course, this "ancestral reciprocal hospitality" reflects the importance of ancestral reciprocity in a world without Hilton hotels, but all kinds of reciprocity powerfully inflect the *Histories*.²³ Somehow, Pythios, the fabulously generous Lydian dynast (7.27-9) and the brief 'beneficiary' of Xerxes' *xeniê*, escapes this analysis of *xeniê* (cf. Thomas' paper in the volume under review). The Kroisos story exhibits tell-tale names, oracles misinterpreted, limits transgressed, *anagnôrisis*, *peripeiteia*—elements exhibiting tragic as well as epic dimensions of human achievement and suffering. Vandiver shows well how central xenic hospitality is to various panels of the *logos*—even if Kroisos' exasperated prayer never invokes expectable Zeus Xenios (161). The supple Herodotean literary wares offer an autocrat's delusion and/or fate; they suggest that we confront here both generic Hellenic literary and ethnic ideological characteristics. In this *logos*, Herodotus' paradigmatic investigation,²⁴ the exotic power of nemesis, or Nemesis, makes its only appearance, and *aletheiê* makes its first two appearances in the historian (1.34.1, 46.3: dreams and oracles).²⁵ Kroisos, at the leading edge of both Herodotus' text and "the so-called human era" (1.5, 3.122), conveys historical truths for an author who seeks out pleasing and meaningful patterns that he inherited and discovered to be truthful—if not truthish or even true. The Kroisos *logos* embodies many examples of what

²² L. Huber, "Herodots Homerverständnis," in H. Flashar and K. Gaiser, edd., *Symusia: Festgabe für Wolfgang Schadewaldt*, 1965, 29-52.

²³ See D. Braund, "Problematics of Reciprocity," in C. Gill et al. edd., *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, 1998: 159-80, J. Gould, "Give and Take in Herodotus," in *Myth, Ritual, Memory and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture*, 2001: 283-303; also, D. Lateiner, "Oaths, Theory and Practice," in E. Foster and D. Lateiner, edd., *Thucydides and Herodotus*, 2012, 154-84, examines sanctioned asseverations. Note that Herodotus will bypass some easy claims of reciprocity, the idea that always an X's penalty afflicts the misstep of X. At 7.133.2, for example, he explicitly denies that the burning of Athens was divine payback for the moral and diplomatic blunder of murdering Persian heralds.

²⁴ Following H. R. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, 1966: 20-30, Charles Fornara, *Herodotus. An Interpretative Essay* 1971: 18, Lateiner 1989 (above, note 7): 219.

²⁵ "True facts," Powell's *Lexicon*; *atrekeiê* and poetic *etymos* are inadequately discussed. *Etymos* never appears in Attic prose.

Detlev Fehling and John Morgan term ‘historiographical poses,’ verisimilitude, *glaubwürdig* tokens of authenticity (including pretended uncertainty!).²⁶ Kroisos was a legend in his own time, and later times never minimized his great fortune and misfortunes (1.29, 34; 6.125). When Herodotos writes, however, that Kroisos was the “first (historical) man we *know* of”²⁷ to attack the Greeks, he is not claiming equal historicity for everything Herodotos includes about him. The “almost legendary” autocrat establishes the Persian pattern for Kuros to Xerxes, the latest Persian attempting to expand their empire (165). The established paradigm of powerful autocrats living up to their ancestors’ examples and crossing geographical and cultural boundaries provides a ready-made vocabulary and explanatory template for the latest land-grabber, but Herodotos privileges other, more historical, systems of explanation (Lateiner 1989 [above, note 7]: 196-210, 219-20).

The frequently scrutinized Herodotean Helen story²⁸ presents another twisted nail in Homer’s coffin. If her Trojan sojourn were as false and indeed unlikely as Herodotos fulminates, why does he include the polemical divagation? The *parekbasis* provides another window, a clerestory, into the famous workshop of Herodotos (Momigliano). In another metaphor, we might declare that Helen is the bathwater thrown out, while the argument about the poets’ unvaracity and the hypothetical argumentation about women’s insignificance are Herodotos’ preserved baby. Paris conveniently provides a prototype, yet another Eastern potentate grasping Greek goods (including a woman, 155).²⁹ Whereas Bowie shows Homeric trivia references are woven into the larger story of Xerxes’ progress (and regress), Helen here is Herodotos’ palmary example of Homer’s (or someone else by that name) illegitimate freedom from rationality’s shackles and dependable sources. She emerges from the epical jewel case, or the historical dustbin, for a brief and ugly moment (2.120) to illustrate *tisis*. The Egyptian anecdote illustrates Egyptian observance and Asiatic and Hellenic violations of *xeniê*. Well, both Kroisos’ family and rule

²⁶ Fehling usefully, if unintentionally, decodes the techniques of novelists like Heliodoros’ (and Longos’) pseudo-verism and historiographical phrases, many of them borrowed from the early historians. John Morgan, “Heliodoros and the Historiographical Pose,” *ClAnt* 1 (1982) 221-65 discusses this art: scrupulosity, feigned or real uncertainty, different sources, different explanations, excurses, superabundant details. Vandiver (143), following Nino Luraghi, terms these narrative techniques the “creation of authority”.

²⁷ Ἰδμεν, not λεγόμενα or ἀκουόμενα, e.g., Hdt. 1.6.2, 7.152.3, 2.99.1 & 123.1.

²⁸ She or her phantom appears in every paper in this collection!

²⁹ Meanwhile Menelaos is never punished (divine *tisis*) for practising human sacrifice—a practice that Greeks prefer to ascribe to their Egyptian acquaintances.

and Helen's Troy were destined/had to come to a bad end, and Herodotos had to find the reasons for these known outcomes.

VIVIENNE GRAY discusses Herodotos' Melampous the seer (9.33-4), a Homeric character without the trappings of mythology, who is cited as the *exemplum*, the prophet behind and before Tisamenos, the Spartan seer at Plataia. The Elean priest imitated (ἐμιμέετο) the mythic Melampous, whose trickster story is accepted as received. Gray invokes the folkloric pattern of the hero in need of assistance (170) who must bargain for it. The Spartans, forced by circumstances, contrary to their expectation of what might be asked for (viz. money), must share their own (*leôspheteron*, *hapax*) precious and hardly ever bestowed citizenship.³⁰ Here too, amusingly, Tisamenos doubles the demand (although he wants only citizenship, not Melampous' Argive kingship), escalates his wage-demand, so that his brother also be granted Spartan citizenship. Earlier, Herodotos had argued that Melampous imported the rites of Dionysos and divination (2.49), part of his (ironic?) determined exposition of Greek dependence on Egyptian supernatural expertise. Gray points out (189) that Herodotos often admits to less than the omniscient knowledge asserted in epic (ἀτρεκέως) to promote confidence in the incomplete and fractured, but best available information that he offers. Herodotos, again a Janus figure in his thinking and his writing, inherited a poetic tradition about Melampous and a traditional story-telling technique (about the cure for mad Argive women), to which he added his own evolving critical inquiry.

"The Case of Minos" attracts ROSARIA MUNSON's deft attention. She too, following the Ionian and the editors, distinguishes the age of heroes from that of men. She notes significantly that "*mythos*" is a derogatory, dismissive term in Herodotos' only two uses of it (2.23, 2.45; cf. scepticism again at 2.53)—polemical daggering. After three other views are rejected (Thales and later Euthymenes the mariner, Hekataios, Anaxagoras—a priamel), Herodotos attacks some clever writer's (Homer's) another—most attractive but most mistaken, and anyway irrefutable—theory about the nature of alleged Ocean. Then, he scorns the Egyptians' foolish tale about Herakles. Ambivalent about heroic parentage and Hekataian genealogy (196-7), the sceptical Herodotos assigns Minos to some race and epoch other than "the recognizably human."³¹ If Polykrates is the "first of whom we *know*," then Minos' historicity must be

³⁰ Gray cites similar "open" bargains in Herodotos—such as Agetos/Agenor, 6.6; and Xerxes/Artaykte/Masistes' wife, 9.109-10—the motif of the blank cheque. Usually, although not here, it is sealed by an oath; cf. D. Lateiner 2012 (see above, note 23).

³¹ 3.122, the modifier is necessary because some considered him to be a mythical son of Zeus. Saïd explains the participle differently.

in doubt.³² Munson (197) correctly argues, however, that Herodotos “needs the heroic age.” She suggests he would have disapproved of Thucydides’ “playing with myth” to produce a “fictitious sort of knowledge” (198). Thus, he parodies the “super-secularized...mythology” of the alleged Persian interpretation of heroic-age abductions leading up to the Trojan War (198). Myths brandished by distant descendants for rhetorical advantage earn his amusement not only in 1.1-5 but also in 2.116, 7.59 and 7.161, and 9.27. The heroic age is unknowable and therefore blessedly malleable. Bully Minos’ alleged, pre-Polykratean, and archetypal (for Thucydides) thalassocracy is villainous oppression for one fifth-century tradition (glorifying his young Attic opponent, Theseus), but, for others, it provides a progressive prototype for advancing military and political techniques. Perhaps a true interpretation, although I doubt it, Thucydides is “legitimizing” such a *mission civilatrice* before recording analogous Aegean subjections wrought by the Athenian Empire.³³ In sum (208), judging by his various references to legendary Minos, Herodotos is interested in, but wary about, pressing as authoritative any claims about the remote Heroic Age.

CHARLES CHIASSON explores the “Cyrus *Logos*,” especially the four stories of his birth from which Herodotos selects the “real” one, *ton eonta logon* (1.95) and the most plausible/trustworthy/credible of many stories of his death (1.214: *pithanôtatos*). Herodotos clearly signals to his audience that the truth of Kuros is difficult to determine. Persian Kuros was shrouded in myth from the moment the distant Hellenes first heard of him, and Lord Raglan already included him among stories of miraculous salvations from infantile slaughter. Unlike the Trojan War tales that arouse doubt from the get-go, Kuros was indubitably real, however much legend grew around him. His life even falls in the human epoch (3.122), but that is no firewall against well-known story patterns in a different realm that place his childhood on a remoter plane than his royal career. As Chiasson notes (216), and Thomas too (see below), transmitting the administrative and bureaucratic details of eastern regimes to a Hellenic audience, through Hellenic intermediaries, will inevitably filter out some elements and add in others. We know disappointingly little of Persian character and practice from Persian evidence, literary, documentary,

³² Pace Asheri, in D. Asheri et al., edd., *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I-IV* (2007) ad loc.

³³ 202-5; cf. E. Irwin, “The Politics of Precedence: First Historians on First Thalassocrats” in R. Osborne, ed., *Debating the Athenian Cultural Revolution*, 2007, 188-223.

or artistic.³⁴ If his birth seemed somehow providential (κως, 1.111.1), and if, after death, Kuros received some Persian equivalent of hero-cult (Arr. *Anab.* 6.29.4-7), the King, nevertheless, recognized his own vulnerability (1.86.6). He was indelibly human for Herodotos (219). Chiasson (225) recognizes “patterns of meaning” to be a device of historical (and other) narratives, dynamic structures and sequences (e.g., *koros*, *hybris*, *atē*)—not explanations for events. Such structures are all the more likely to appear in this writer, the more obscure were the facts of any incident. Thus, in the Kuros *logos* we find a more intrusive, pattern-dependent narrator/interpreter, one moreover influenced by Attic tragic vocabulary as well as by Attic habits of thought. Successful tragic kings and unfettered despots eventually run, with emphatic confidence, into brick walls—Kuros, Kambyses, Dareios, Xerxes, and, more recently, Napoleon and Hitler.

ROSALIND THOMAS chose to analyze two tales with probable eastern provenance. Pythios the Lydian, a minor figure of generous impulses towards his overlord, was crushed by the Persian commander of the advancing Asiatic war machine (7.28-9, 7.38-40), and Deïokes the mysterious Mede who established his people in an independent kingdom (1.96-100). How much is Median or Lydian, how much Greek? A translation of cultural codes remains difficult in more promising circumstances than Herodotos’ lack of linguistic expertise permitted, even if we think he traveled to some of the oriental locales he describes so persuasively that he defined their habits and rules for Western civilization. The Pythios anecdote provides autocratic cruelty as well as another example of dubious royal reward and certain punishment (cf. 8.118 fin.). Herodotos reports an eclipse visible in Sardis just when, in April 480, Xerxes’ forces headed west.³⁵ Pythios, almost “rich as Kroisos,” asks a favor in return for his lavish *xeniē* afforded to both the king and his army. He asked that Xerxes pity his age and allow his oldest son to remain behind the invasionary force to care for this Lydian’s vast estate. Xerxes “spared” Pythios and his other four sons, but cut in half that oldest one and had his army march through the halves (7.38). Another blank cheque promise, similar to oaths elsewhere, leads to personal disaster, literal but unintended fulfillment. Thomas, following Rollinger, Masson, Eitrem, Faraone, and other Orientalists, ponders

³⁴ On the other hand, more data about Persian ideology and administrative methods have emerged in recent decades; cf. the compact, useful bibliography in J. Hyland’s review of recent books on Marathon, *CPh* 106.3 (2011): 265-77.

³⁵ Five solar eclipses occurred in the period surrounding Xerxes’ invasion, but one visible at Susa in 481 fits his description better than the one visible at Sardis in 478. Popular tradition may have moved the moment of the eclipse to allow the story of Pythios’ anxiety and Xerxes’ characteristically (i.e., Herodoteanly) despotic response.

whether this sequence amounts to a misunderstood Hittite, then Persian, human sacrifice, purificatory ritual (wrongly connecting the eclipse to a propitiation). We know of such army practices, and comparable “passing through” sacrificial rituals in the Near East, so one must hesitate to regard the execution/sacrifice as merely a Greek, or even Herodotean ad hoc invention. Herodotos’ knowledge of Persian religion was weak (243), but his demonstrable insights outnumber his mistaken interpretations, and those far outnumber any alleged fabrications.

Deïokes’ seven concentric circles of colored palace walls³⁶ and the rules that he allegedly set for palace etiquette and justice lead Thomas to wonder whether we have a “founding father,” near-eastern charter myth or a pre-echo of the accession of (Greek) tyrants. The acclaimed ruler is cynical, rational, and armed with a coherent plan to maintain his power, once achieved. Thomas’ sensitive argument for a Medio-Persian substrate is richly supported and does not claim more than the evidence allows. Hellenic spin may have entered at various stages and the transmission may alter repeated tellings at every opportunity—as may also be true of the “Constitutional Debate,” about which too many Greeks then (3.80-2, esp. 80.1, cf. 6.43), and Western scholars now, have pontificated on its Persian impossibility.

PIETRO VANNICELLI, following up questions that Elias Bickerman raised (*CPh* 47 (1952): 65-81), pursues difficult questions of Hellenic historicity and mythicity (*origines gentium*) in accounts of Median and Persian foundation legends, from Io for the latter and Medea for the former (256-7 on *Hdt.* 7.61-2). The origins of all known peoples interested Hellenic geographers accounting for the races of man, and—oddly, naively, or ethnocentrically—they “discovered” alien genealogies conveniently anchored in their own small backyard (*interpretatio Graeca*). Even for Herodotos, before he dismisses their folderol, the Persian Wars arise from the Trojan War, and the Trojan War from the unpunished rape of Medea (1.2.3-3.2; also treated by Saïd). Further, his catalogue (7.61-99) of Xerxes’ forces includes *archaiologiai* for many ethnicities—their eponyms, migrations, and colonizations (258). In passages usually overlooked (by me at least), such tenuous ancient and mythic connections are invoked for alliance and subjection (7.150.2, 7.220.4). Vannicelli closes by examining whether the Persian dynasty of the Perseids is coterminous with the Achaimenids (7.11, 3.75), or whether the former tradition is “purely” Greek, while the latter is at least somewhat Persian. A perplexed “Herodotos

³⁶ 1.99: ἕτερον ἑτέρῳ κύκλῳ; cf. the analogously concentric gradations of respect for, and honor to, subjects of the Persians (more regard to the nearer, least to the farthest, 137: ἤκιστα ... ἑκαστάτῳ ἐν τιμῇ).

creates a precarious equilibrium” (267). At 1.125.3, Herodotos alleges that the Perseid kings derived from the Achaimenid *phrêtrê* (*hapax* in Herodotos; clan?), itself a subset of the Pasargadai *genos* (tribe?). Herodotos lists ten such clans, Xenophon lists twelve *phylai*, Strabo’s ethnography “is altogether different” (Asheri again).³⁷ Vannicelli generously concludes that this minor “digression” on distant Persian and Median origins attests the complexity of the genealogical material that the Ionian had excavated from sources difficult to sort or verify (268).

ANGUS BOWIE, editor of the Cambridge “Green and Yellow” edition of Book VIII, has intimate knowledge for delving into “Mythology and the Expedition of Xerxes.” His thesis is that the narrator Herodotos more than accidentally or occasionally cites mythological precedent, and those citations are relevant for more than simply the geographical advance of the Persian juggernaut. Furthermore, speakers in the narrative are fond of citing mythological precedent, although, as Bowie notes, not always to their advantage. Since Greek diplomats were not generally stupid, these *faux pas* need further attention. As recently studied by Baragwanath and Grethlein,³⁸ in the Tegean-Athenian and Plataian-Theban antilogies at Plataia offered in *oratio recta* by Herodotos and Thucydides, the two historians implicitly criticize the use and abuse of mythological antecedents, when to use them and what they can prove.³⁹ Both the earlier and the later historian allow speakers to make the point that “past performance is no guarantee of future returns,” as American stock-brokers and their glossy “literature” must always advise before one makes a killing, or gets killed, in the equities or futures markets. That is to say, the mythical *exempla* are made to appear pointless posturing, vapid rhetoric, both to [some] speakers, some audiences, and to later historians. Thus, the question arises (282-4): are these “arguments” included merely because *topoi* were historical ingredients of fluffy bloviation for the (m)asses that Thucydides’ Athenian “realists” at Melos and Sparta chose to wipe off the table (5.85, cf. 1.73), or because these appeals were delivered, did and do carry weight, *logoi* spoken as it seemed they ought or had to be (Thuc. 1.22)? Bowie

³⁷ Asheri (*Comm.* 2007) ad loc. notes that this information reverses common Greek usage, in which a *genos* is a subdivision of a *phrêtrê*.

³⁸ See J. Grethlein and C. B. Krebs, eds., *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography*, 2012, 35-56, 57-75.

³⁹ P. Stadter examines the latter historian’s attention to his predecessor’s picture of Plataia, in “Thucydides as ‘Reader’ of Herodotus,” in E. Foster and D. Lateiner, edd., *Thucydides & Herodotus*, 2012, 48-52.

himself inclines to explain the length of the earlier episode by ubiquitous, internecine *polis* disputes that encouraged Xerxes to attack Hellas in the first place.

EMILY BARAGWANATH rings this volume with a return to Troy narratives (less of a feature in Herodotos' text than this volume's division of attention suggests). She reminds (290 on 9.73) those who forgot, that Herodotos includes a consequential anecdote featuring the local Attic Herakles, Theseus, in a *logos* sure to prove provocative to loyal Athenians. His criminal abduction of *la belle Hélène* and the Dekeleians' revelation of this Paris-cloning wickedness to the counter-attacking Peloponnesian Tyndarid boys could have led to a Peloponnesian War prequel. Another Trojan War (without Trojans, however) is prevented, when the Attic demesman Titakos of Dekeleia snitches on his countrymen and leads the furious Peloponnesian soldiers to their quarry. One villager's good deed saves Attica, then and later, from devastation.⁴⁰ The averted "implied counterfactual" (292), mythic war between Athenians and Peloponnesians testifies to both Herodotos' concern for contingencies in history (esp. 7.139) and his usually subterranean analogy with Athenian post-war imperial conquests and the Peloponnesian War that he was once expecting and then lived through—at least its first years. The historian slyly pokes fun at the latest version of Theseus, good to think with, defender of the oppressed in Periklean reliefs and on the Attic stage below the Acropolis. Baragwanath turns next to Mardonios' "mythic" self-presentation in Herodotos' text, a Mardonios trapped—albeit unknowingly—in Hellenic "mythicizing patterns" (298). He was killed in kledonic retribution by the Spartan hoplite Arimnestos.⁴¹ Baragwanath observes that this is a pattern [understandably] "beyond his comprehension" (298, cf. 304). I would rephrase the observation, stating that this pattern of retributive legends, freshly reinforced by Aiskhylos' Homericizing intertext, was perceived and appropriated by an enterprising writer creating a new genre and mode of explanation. Herodotos, however, was intent on attracting an audience more predisposed to rationalist, sometimes sophistic arguments.

⁴⁰ The editor, here and throughout, generously and intelligently cross-references other essays in the volume.

⁴¹ An analeptically Leonidean, heroic figure. Leonidas is also mentioned here because of his blood relationship with Pausanias: 9.63-4 with 8.114. Mardonios astride his white horse was a conspicuous target for retribution.

A list of references, a necessary *Index Locorum* and a General Index complete this challenging and provocative collection of essays exploring Herodotus' explicit and implicit myth-flavored narratives.⁴² Only a tiny proportion of Herodotus' massive text here receives extended attention. Authors analyze stories that mention legendary figures—like Kyros, Helen, Proteus, Melampous, Minos, Deïokes, ancestors of the Medes and Persians—more than they anatomize references to mythical Zeus or Poseidon. Other possibilities are scanted, e.g., Herodotus' demolitionary examination of divine Herakles, or his intermittent attention to the Pelasgians.⁴³ Little or nothing is said of Herodotus' treatment of non- or hemi-Hellenic and barbarian myths, such as the Egyptian goddess Isis (2.122-3), or the fascinating northern cluster of the bilocating Prokonnesian shaman Aristeas, Skythian Anakharsis and Skyles (4.13-15, 4.76-7, 4.78-80), and the Getic *daimon* Salmoxis (4.94-6). No contributor wonders why Herodotus inquired or reports so little about myths of the European gods or North African heroes. I am aware that many current conferences produce collections that are dependent of necessity on their participants' uncoordinated interests, so we cannot hold editors entirely liable for the gaps or coincidental overlaps that inevitably emerge. This volume, nevertheless, offers many valuable insights into the mythic narratives that enrich the first historian's dominant purpose.

Looking back on Herodotus' attitudes toward, and presentations of, myth, truth, and narrative, some readers will deem this triad of concepts a bulky, inappropriate *ménage à trois*. While truth is opposed to untruth, truthier truths are sometimes reserved for philosophy or fiction. Ancient Hellenes usually encountered these beliefs in myths of epic and tragedy. Humans have always held dear certain privileged revelatory myths (narratives of Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, King Alfred, Pocahontas, for instance), narratives inherently more enduring than topographical trivia or zoological factoids. Myth and truth, for

⁴² This reviewer, solicited to evaluate a volume that focuses on myth in this early Greek historian, admits that *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (1989) considers the role of the mythic gods and heroes to be generally *hors d'oeuvres* for a savvy, critical historian's evolved historical thinking about recent events. I have learned much from this collection, despite some doubts about the topic's suitability for a book.

⁴³ Herakles: 2.43-5 with introduction and concluding wish for divine good will, εὐμένεια, *hapax*. Pelasgians: 1.56-8, 2.50-2, 6.136-40, etc. One might have explored the "Lydian" Gyges and Adrastus stories (both seriously Hellenized). Herodotus uses the M-word but twice (origins of Herakles and Okeanos), both occasions rejections of their "wondrousness," as the editors note when discussing "parameters of myth" (10-19). Aristophanes' Bdelukleon (*Vesp.* 1174-80) objects to entertaining fables that are questionably appropriate even for symposiastic exchange.

some rationalists, in any case, stand in different categories; they are not merely binary evaluative terms. Meanwhile, narrative encompasses these categories and other multitudes of critical terms, as it organizes events of any character in chronological order, imbricates them, or jumps about in analeptic and proleptic ways. This volume's shopping basket contains apples, oranges, and hand-grenades.

King Christian X of Denmark during World War II, we have heard in childhood and read in books, wore a Yellow Star in public to protest the Nazi occupation's humiliation of his fellow Jewish citizens before the Germans contemplated harming the king himself. A lovely thought, good to think with, for specific audiences such as Danish-Americans in World War II, post-war Danes, and Jews searching for the elusive Righteous Gentiles, even for forgetful readers who imbibed Leon Uris' mythic stirring narrative of Jewish survival and migration, *Exodus* (1958). It is a patriotic and ethnic myth; it supplies a hero to a small nation or two in need of heroes after national capitulation, exploitation, religious persecution, involuntary transport, and state-organized mass murder of them. The pointed story of mighty villains stymied and embarrassed is worth preserving and repeating, even keeping from oblivion—but it is not true, none of it, it is not history based on evidence.⁴⁴

Tim O'Brien ponders heroic "deeds" of war in his novel, *The Things They Carried* (1990).⁴⁵ Distancing participants and later audiences from inglorious and pointless suffering, one heard or hears about soldiers throwing themselves on an enemy's hand grenade (89) or on other unexploded ordinance. "... story-truth is truer sometimes than happening-truth" (203). "That's what fiction is

⁴⁴ According to Snopes.com, following the scholarly article cited below, not only did the King never wear a yellow badge, no Danes wore such a badge, no Danish Jews ever wore this badge (in Denmark), and—the Nazis never issued such a command in Denmark. Still an uplifting story, no? Snopes.com offers an incomplete reference to the Danish-American folklorist Jens Lund's obscure article, "The Legend of the King and the Star," *Indiana Journal of Folklore* 8 (1975): 1-37. The exchange between Lund and I. Deak in the *New York Review of Books*, 28 March 1989, and on the WWWeb is more accessible. Lund mentions three versions of the story, perhaps contemporaneously invented, one transmitted orally and by radio. Uris and Hannah Arendt certainly valued it; Lund states that Uris' Danish translation (*non vidi*) deleted the fabrication. This example of how quickly a good story can become rumor, popular literature, and then lifts off into (oral and written) history was the more credible in that the narrative concludes with the Germans rescinding the order within a day of its alleged promulgation. Complicated....

⁴⁵ I thank my sons, Ulysses and Abraham, for reminding me of these two excellent examples that explore, in different dimensions, what F. M. Cornford long ago neatly called *Mythistoria* in his pioneering (1907) critique of Thucydides' allegedly myth-free facts and historiographical structures (τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες ἀπὸ τῶν).

for. It's for getting at the truth when the truth isn't sufficient for the truth." "A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth" (89). Or, more challenging yet (76): "A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things men have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue. As a first rule of thumb, therefore, you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil."⁴⁶ Or, in the words of another frequent doubter of celebratory puffery, a private "investigator" who interviewed many veterans and "civilians" who survived occupation, robbery, executions and combat: "I tell the tales that I've been told, but I am not bound to believe it—this applies to my entire work" (Hdt. 7.152.3).

⁴⁶ Boedeker (*CLAnt* 7 (1988): 30-48) highlights dark implications for the future when, at the *Histories*' end, the triumphant, vengeful Athenians crucify and stone an allegedly sacrilegious Persian POW, the satrap Artayktes and his innocent son.