

## HERODOTEIA

In the course of the last one and a half decades classical philology and historical research-work has, more than once dealt with Herodotus' Persian stories.<sup>1</sup> Special importance is attached to Reinhardt's essay — published in 1940 — in which he attempted to demonstrate, by purely literary and historical analysis, the „Eastern” origin of several of Herodotus' Persian stories. According to our opinion the great importance of this essay lies in the fact that it serves as an example of how the source of a narrative from ancient times may be ascertained by simply analysing the traditional story. Reinhardt by this method succeeded in establishing that a considerable part of the Herodotian Persian stories cannot be of Greek origin. The ideology reflected by these stories is not that of the Greeks of Herodotus' period, it is the ideology of some ancient „Eastern” community. Thus Herodotus, or the source he had drawn from, must have received these stories ready-made from the „East” and although they were handed down to us in Greek, they are not Greek, but genuine Eastern stories.

Reinhardt's essay is very instructive for the philologist; it draws attention to many important phenomena which even the most careful commentators will overlook without comment. Moreover, Reinhardt, in the preponderant majority of cases, very successfully and convincingly distinguishes the Greek elements from Eastern ones in the Herodotian stories. Nevertheless, this very remarkable essay is the work of a philologist whose chief concern was to point out the non-Greek, the Eastern components of the Herodotian stories. The question of how far the Ancient Persian ideology is reflected in Herodotus' stories, seems to have been of much less interest to Reinhardt.

In his essay published in 1950, Altheim deals, following on Reinhardt's traces with these very same stories.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See e. g.: *M. Pohlenz*: Herodot, der erste Geschichtsschreiber des Abendlandes 1937; *F. W. König*: Der falsche Bardija, 1938. *K. Reinhardt*: Herodots Persergeschichten, Geistige Überlieferung, ein Jahrbuch, Berlin, 1940; *A. Szabó*: The oldest Persian-Greek short stories, Debreceni Szemle 1941 (in Hungarian); *A. Szabó*: Ancient Persian stories, Budapest 1948 (in Hungarian); and finally: *Fr. Altheim*: Persische Geschichten des Herodot (Literatur und Gesellschaft im ausgehenden Altertum II 1950).

<sup>2</sup> *Fr. Altheim*: Literatur und Gesellschaft II. 159—177.

Although Altheim very sharply contradicts some of Reinhardt's statements, his basic idea is identical with that of Reinhardt: the ideology reflected in some of the Herodotian stories is not Greek. But while Reinhardt in most cases contented himself with pointing out the Eastern kernel of some of the narratives, Altheim endeavours to demonstrate to what extent these stories reflect expressly the Ancient Persian ideology. According to his opinion the Herodotian stories are following the „Achaemenian legitimist tradition”.<sup>3</sup> This is why Herodotus does not mention Zarathustra's name, although, according to Altheim, one of Herodotus' sources, the Lydian Xanthos, had already known of Zarathustra.<sup>4</sup> But Herodotus, says Altheim, avoids mentioning the prophet's name just as did the adversary of the first magus: King Darius himself. Altheim nevertheless points out that the principles of Zarathustrian religion are recognizable in the Herodotian stories.

Without trying to expatiate on the Zarathustra-problem brought up again by Altheim, and on the Xanthos-fragment<sup>5</sup> as dubious as before, as well as on the questions closely connected with it — we present below an interpretation of a part of a Herodotian story which may complete Reinhardt's, or rather Altheim's, train of thought.

## 1

The story of Prexaspes  
(Her. III. 30,61—75)

Reinhardt has also pointed out that an Eastern ideology was reflected in the story of Prexaspes. On the command of King Cambyses jealous of his brother Smerdis, Prexaspes, his confidant („grand vizir“) kills him secretly. As a consequence of carrying out the king's command, Prexaspes gets into great trouble. The death of Smerdis offers opportunity to one of two brothers — magicians — to assume Smerdis' name and stir up a revolt against Cambyses. When the latter learns of the revolt, he at first suspects Prexaspes, thinking that he did not execute his order. Cambyses soon finds that he was mistaken. But his unexpected death involves Prexaspes in further complications: on his death-bed the king reveals the fratricide, and calls upon his followers to avenge them-

<sup>3</sup> The last sentence of his essay: Es zeigt, wie stark Herodot in achaimenidisch-legitimistischer Überlieferung stand, und das war es, was hier gezeigt werden sollte.

<sup>4</sup> Same: p. 177.

<sup>5</sup> As for the Xanthos fragment see Diogenes Laertios Prooem. 2. comp. with *Bidez-Cumont: Les mages hellénisés* 2, 7 B a; *A. D. Nock: Amer. Journ. Arch.* 53.276. *J. Marquart* in *Philol. Suppl.* 6, 531 doubted the authenticity of the fragment. Altheim's opinion on this see on p. 162—165.

selves on the Pseudo-Smerdis. But by thus revealing the murder, the king at the same time exposes his loyal confidant, Prexaspes. It was he, Prexaspes who, at his master's command had killed the real Smerdis. And now, for his very loyalty to the king, he is to be severely punished.

The story of Prexaspes, according to Reinhardt, belongs to a certain type of Eastern narratives dealing with the relation between the king and his loyal, or disloyal grand vizir.

Before continuing this, let it be added to Reinhardt's statement that this type of narratives about loyal, or disloyal grand vizirs may be found not only in the social conditions prevailing in the ancient East, but in every country under despotic rule. Surprisingly similar to the Herodotian situations in the story of Prexaspes and Pseudo-Smerdis are those in a narrative of Tacitus'. Tiberius, immediately after his accession to the throne has Agrippa Postumus<sup>6</sup> killed. He is just as afraid of his victim as was Cambyses of Smerdis. Cambyses has Prexaspes perform the murder, while Tiberius, in the very same manner, has it done by Sallustius Crispus. Herodotus described Prexaspes' office as follows: ὃς ἦν οἱ ἀνὴρ Περσέων πιστότατος (III 30) and: τὸν ἔτιμα τε μάλιστα καὶ οἱ τὰς ἀγγελίας ἐσεφόρει οὗτος (III 34). In Tacitus, on the other hand, Sallustius Crispus is *res ribes* as *particeps secretorum* (*is ad tribunum miserat codicillos*).

To carry out the king's command is, of course, just as dangerous for Sallustius Crispus as it was for Prexaspes. As may be read in Tacitus, when the murder is reported to Tiberius he denies having given the order, and declares that the culprits will have to answer for their deed before the senate.<sup>7</sup> Sallustius Crispus thus left in the lurch, is forced to ask Livia, the empress-dowager, to intervene. He foresaw just as did Prexaspes: *iuxta periculo, ficta seu vera promeret* (Ann. I. 6).

It is interesting to note how even the continuation of this Tacitean story reminds one of the narrative about the Pseudo-Smerdis. Just as in the former story a villainous magician, taking a mean advantage of Smerdis' death, revolts against Cambyses, in the latter story a Pseudo-Agrippa, a slave of the name Clemens<sup>8</sup>, stirs up a revolt against Tiberius. Tiberius entrusts Sallustius Crispus with the task of suppressing the attempted rebellion. It is obvious that Tacitus considerably abridges his sources, to all of which he refers only in general.<sup>9</sup> This justifies to put up the interpretating question with which we are evidently tracing the

<sup>6</sup> Tacitus Ann. I 6.

<sup>7</sup> Tac. Ann. I 6: Nuntianti centurioni, ut mos militiae, factum esse, quod imperasset, neque imperasse sese et rationem facti reddendam apud senatum respondit.

<sup>8</sup> Tacitus, Ann. II 39-40.

<sup>9</sup> Ann. II 40: quidam . . . tradunt.

reserves of Tacitus: when the attempt at revolt was reported to Tiberius, how did he know that his former command had been performed and the real Agrippa had actually been killed? Should he not have suspected Sallustius Crispus just as Cambyses had suspected Prexaspes?<sup>10</sup> Or had Sallustius arrested Pseudo-Agrippa just to prove to Tiberius that the command had been faithfully carried out? It may be, furthermore, read in Tacitus that the Pseudo-Agrippa stole the real Agrippa's dead body. And in doing so, it must be remembered, he not only rendered it more difficult to disclose the deceit, but also hampered Sallustius' defense.

Reinhardt does not content himself with simply classifying the story of Prexaspes as one belonging to the genre of Eastern narratives about the grand vizir. He points out that it is a story of tragic character, in the Persian sense.

After Cambyses' death Prexaspes, on whose „veracity” Herodotus lays such particular stress, in order to save his own hide, tries to deny that it was he who had committed the murder. This lie is utilized by the magicians. They want to compel Prexaspes to address a speech from the top of a tower to the population and repeat his lies. Prexaspes pretends that he will comply with their wish, but when he reaches the top of the tower, he does not repeat the lie but reveals the truth which he then seals by committing suicide.<sup>11</sup>

Reinhardt is perfectly right when he says that this tragic conflict between „truth” and „untruth” decidedly reminds one of the basic ideas of the Zarathustrian religion.<sup>12</sup> This train of thought is carried on by Altheim when he proves with the phraseology of Herodotus' text that the whole story is really about the fight between „truth” and „falseness”. The result in his opinion: there could be no Prexaspes-tragedy without Zoroastrianism.<sup>13</sup>

We assume that the following interpretations are completing and carrying on these arguments of Reinhardt and Altheim.

An episode — hitherto neglected — of the Prexaspes-story deals also with this tragic conflict between „truth” and „untruth”. According to Herodotus<sup>14</sup>, king Cambyses asked once his confidant a question most difficult to answer. „Tell me, Prexaspes, what kind of a man the Persians think I am and what do they say about me?” Now, Prexaspes might

<sup>10</sup> Her. III 62.

<sup>11</sup> Her. III 75.

<sup>12</sup> Geistige Überlieferung I 162: „Um die Schwere des Konflikts noch über Herodot hinaus ganz zu ermessen, nehme man hinzu, als welche Sünde in der Zarathustrischen Adelsmoral die „Lüge” gilt, etc.

<sup>13</sup> Literatur und Gesellschaft II 167: „das bestätigt erneut, wie sehr diese Geschichten von Kambyses und Dareios zarathustrischem Glauben verhaftet sind”.

<sup>14</sup> Her. III 34.

have answered as did the artful courtier Croesus, of whom Herodotus tells the following anecdote<sup>15</sup>:

At an assembly of Persian lords, where Croesus, too, was present, Cambyses asked them what kind of a man the Persians thought he was as compared to his father. Those present answered that they considered Cambyses a greater man than his father had been, for he owned not only his father's realm but had conquered also Egypt and the sea. Thus spoke the Persians. But Croesus was not satisfied with their answer, and he said to the king: „Son of Cyrus, I think you are not so great a man as your father, because you have no such son as you were to your father”. Cambyses was greatly pleased with these words and praised Croesus for his answer”.

This anecdote, too, concerns the problem of „veracity”. It clearly shows how difficult it is — under certain conditions — to tell the truth, and how, on such occasions, compliant and clever courtiers find the right words. Truth may be worded so that offensive truth changes into a compliment. That is what Croesus does. But Prexaspes' way of telling the truth is different, he tells the truth clearly, unmistakably: „My lord, the Persians praise you very much in everything, their only objection is that you are too fond of wine”. The effect of this veracity was inevitable. Croesus was praised by the king for his clever answer, while Prexaspes had to pay the penalty for his sincerity.

Let us go on reading the story:

„This was what he (Prexaspes) said of the Persians, whereupon the king flew into a rage and cried: „So the Persians say of me that I am a drunkard and a fool and have lost my senses. But then what they said before, was not *true* either!<sup>16</sup> . . . Get evidence, whether the Persians are *telling the truth*, or if they are insane themselves to say such things! Look at your son standing at yonder door. If I hit him with my arrow in the middle of his heart then what the Persians say is mere idle babbling. But if I miss the mark, what they say is true: I have lost my senses.”

Similarly to the Prexaspes-tragedy commented on by Reinhardt and Altheim, this story, too, is about „truth” and „untruth”. Prexaspes has, as befits a worthy Persian, honestly told the truth, and for this very reason he was to pay the penalty. He loses his son because, unlike clever and mendacious courtiers, he will not give an untruthful answer. Not even to insane Cambyses. It is worth the while to observe the peculiar „truth-test” offered by Cambyses to Prexaspes. „If I hit the mark —

<sup>15</sup> Her. III 34.

<sup>16</sup> Here follows the above anecdote of Croesus and then the further part of Cambyses speech.

I have told the truth, if I miss it — I haven't". This is his train of thought. What was it Herodotus told about the teaching of Persian children? „The children were educated from their fifth to their twentieth year, but they were taught only three things: to ride, to *hit the mark with the arrow* and to *tell the truth*.”<sup>17</sup>

It is easy to understand that the Persian mind thought these two very different things belonged closely together. According to their way of thinking a „well educated man” who could „hit the mark” would be able to „hit” the truth as well.

And Cambyses *did* hit the boy, exactly in the middle of the heart. That meant that the test had been successful, and the king joyfully and triumphantly declared that it was he, not the Persians who *had told the truth*, so they were not right when they said he was insane.

But did this „test” really prove the truth of the king's words? Why, the fact alone that he chose such a gruesome test and sacrificed the son of his most loyal confidant, proved that he was insane. He may have hit the mark so well that none of the gods could have done it more accurately — still he was not right. The Persians, saying he was insane, were much nearer to the truth than he.

So the ancient Persian educational program does not seem very reassuring to us. Nothing can guarantee that he who can hit the mark with the arrow, can just as well tell the truth. According to the Ancient Persian creed and Zarathustra's religion — „truth” and „mendacity” were two diagonally opposed principia that excluded each other. It is an obsolete and naive belief that an honest, „well educated” warrior can hit the truth with his words just as he can hit the mark with his arrow. But is it possible that „veracity” should be as simple as this? Is „truth” not much more complicated? and is it to be so easily and simply distinguished from a lie?

The author of the episode in question — himself of Persian culture — was undoubtedly intrigued by these problems, and the ironic character of the story shows us that he did not believe in the Persian system of education. This is a striking difference between him and Herodotus who speaks of Persian culture and also of Persian education in a tone of obvious and unmistakable approval.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Her. I 136: παιδεύουσι δὲ τοὺς παῖδας ἀπὸ πενταέτεος ἀρξάμενοι μέχρι εἰκοσαέτεος τρία μῦθνα, ἵππεύειν καὶ τοξεύειν καὶ ἀληθίζεσθαι.

<sup>18</sup> Her. I 137: αἰνέω μὲν νῦν τόνδε τὸν νόμον, αἰνέω δὲ καὶ τόνδε κτλ. Compare with „Ancient-Persian short stories 87 foll.

## The Ancient Persian dream-psychology

In his essay<sup>19</sup> Reinhardt very thoroughly analyses Herodotus' stories of Xerxes. He establishes that a very uniform characterization of Xerxes is built up out of them for the public. In them Xerxes figures as a „vacillating“, irresolute man whose boastful royal gestures from time to time are mere efforts to conceal his very irresoluteness. Reinhardt completes this interpretation with a very convincing analyse of the origin of the Xerxes-stories. He demonstrates from case to case which of the basic elements of the stories are of Greek respectively Persian origin. On the whole we accept his conclusions but there is just one point where we should like to rectify his argumentation, or rather to continue the work he began.

Herodotus relates us<sup>20</sup> that before going to war against the Greeks, Xerxes convoked the Persian dignitaries to a council-meeting. On this occasion the king delivered a bellicose, exciting oration in which he evolved his plans. Mardonius thereafter spoke in favour of war, and finally Artabanus tried to dissuade the king from waging war. But Xerxes who, just a short time before, had concluded his speech with the words: „all who wish to express their opinions may do so“,<sup>21</sup> now furiously shouts at Artabanus in answer to his speech.<sup>22</sup> It is only his being a relative of the king's that saves him from getting very severe punishment. A less severe but exceedingly humiliating punishment is inflicted on him: he is not allowed to march with the king and the army against Greece, he has to remain at home with the womenfolk. Hereafter the king proudly enumerates all his nine royal ancestors, up to Achaemenes, and solemnly declares: „I could not be their worthy successor if I did not march against the Athenians“. Let us, for the time being, disregard Xerxes' arguments by which he sought to prove the inevitability of the war, we shall deal with this part of the speech in some other connection.

When Xerxes had thundered down the suggestion of Artabanus, the meeting was dissolved. Night falls. Before falling asleep the king gets very uneasy about Artabanus' proposal. Thinking it over and over again, he makes up his mind that, after all, he will not start a war against Hellas. So he has evidently again changed his plans! At first

<sup>19</sup> Geistige Überlieferung I 172—183.

<sup>20</sup> VII 8—18.

<sup>21</sup> VII 8 δ.

<sup>22</sup> VII 11; Compare with „Ancient-Persian short stories 173 foll.

he did not want war,<sup>23</sup> then, at the urging of his environment he decides that there will be war, and this he declares to the meeting so firmly and bombastically that his „all who wish to express their opinion may do so“ seems practically superfluous. When, encouraged by these words, Artabanus *does* express his opinion, the king indignantly remonstrates, rejects the suggestion; but no sooner is he left alone than he accepts the proposal that shortly before he branded as cowardly. Well, this, too, supports Reinhardt's interpretation: *Xerxes always vacillates!* When Xerxes changed his mind and decided not to wage war against the Greeks, he fell asleep and had a dream. A tall, stately man appeared before him and reproached him for having changed his plan: he reminded him having issued the order for the assemblage of the troops. It was wrong to change the plan! He'd better do as he had decided to and proceed on the chosen path.

When awaking in the morning Xerxes does not recollect the dream. he again convokes the Persians and imparts to them his change of plan as decided upon before his dream. Just as if he were not a powerful despot, he begs his lords' pardon for changing their decision of the previous day. He apologizes for his youthful hot-temper, for having offended Artabanus who is much older than he. But now he made up his mind: he accepts Artabanus' suggestion after all, he wont march against Greece.

The Persians, who a day before were grimly silent, now approve of the change of plan with clamourous enthusiasm.

But night comes again, the dream-messenger reappears and presses the king even more emphatically to withdraw the change of the plan. Xerxes must open war against the Greeks, or else the consequences will be terrible: „just as quickly as he became great and powerful he will be reduced to nothing“.

Xerxes rouses in alarm from his dream and immediately sends for his wise, prudent uncle, Artabanus. However much he would like to follow his advice — first accepted and later rejected — he cannot do so. Obviously it is a god who wants him to wage war with the Greeks. „An apparition haunts him in his dream, who greatly disapproves of his attitude. He visited him a few moments ago and even menaced him“. Xerxes suggests that this mysterious apparition should be put to the test: Artabanus is to put on the king's robes, sit on the throne and then lie into the king's bed just to see whether the apparition visits him too. But Artabanus is reluctant; no, he will not put on the king's robes, nor sit on his throne. And besides it would be foolish to think that dreams are sent by gods. We hardly believe our ears when Xerxes'

<sup>23</sup> VII 5: ὁ τοῖνον Ξέρξης ἐπὶ μὲν τὴν Ἑλλάδα οὐδαμῶς πρόθυμος ἦν κατ' ἀρχὰς στρατεύεσθαι κτλ.



uncle — in the VI - V. century B. C. — speaks like a modern psychologist : „*In our dreams we mostly see things that occupy our minds during the day*“.<sup>24</sup>

But even if this dream were of divine origin, would the youth be so stupid as to let himself be taken in? Would he, judging by the king's clothes, mistake Artabanus for the king? Whether, or not the vision appears to Artabanus also, does not depend on whether, or not he puts on the king's robes and lies in his bed. This argumentation is so clear and logical — also in the modern sense! — that the reader of to-day will doubtlessly accept it.

But the king keeps on pressing his uncle until he finally consents to the change. He sits on the throne and the next night he takes the king's place in the royal bed. And as soon as he falls asleep, lo! the vision appears to him. „So it is you who tries to dissuade Xerxes from the war against Greece! Of course you will, for you are so anxious about his welfare. But you will not get away with that so easily, neither now, nor later! You will be punished because you wanted to prevent that which must be. As for Xerxes, he had been told what would happen to him if he did not obey!“

Thus spoke the dream-messenger and Artabanus sees that he is about to burn out his eyes with a red-hot iron. Panicstricken, Artabanus starts up and, apologizing to Xerxes for his former advice, he admits that now he, too, is convinced that the dream was sent by the gods. Up to then, he said, he examined things with human eyes, and after reconsidering the question, deemed it right that Xerxes should not start war against Greece. But now it seems to him that in that case „the gods will destroy the Hellenes“, so he withdraws his former proposal and even encourages Xerxes to begin the war. Xerxes, accordingly, makes preparations for the war and then actually begins it.

Now, the question may be raised: what is the meaning of the whole story? of this dream that returned three times and which finally is, even by prudent Artabanus, looked upon as „of divine origin?“

First of all, let us admit that those philologists who considered this dream a „false dream“ were not quite wrong. In Book II of the Iliad Agamemnon has a „false“ dream which ripens his decision; Xerxes' decision, too, is brought about by a dream. On these grounds we may, if we like, compare Herodotus with Homer, as does Pohlenz.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> VII 16: ἐνόπνια γὰρ τὰ ἐς ἀνθρώπους πεπλανημένα τοιαυτὰ ἐστὶ σιά σὲ ἐγὼ διδάσω ἔτεσι σέυ πολλοῖσι πρεσβύτερος ἐὼν· πεπλανῆσθαι αὐταί μάλιστα ἐώθασιν αἱ ὄψεις τῶν ὀνειράτων, τὰ τις ἡμέρης φροντίζει κτλ.

<sup>25</sup> l. c. 126: „Und wenn der trügerische Traum Xerxes in den Kampf treibt, ist die Anregung nur durch den οὔλος\*ὄνειρος, der in der Ilias Agamemnon verblendet, unverkennbar (?). Auch wenn Xerxes mit Artabanos die Göttlichkeit der Erscheinung prüft, ist die Keimzelle in den Worten gegeben, mit denen Nestor die Träume nach ihrer Glaubwürdigkeit unterscheidet (B 80 foll).

The trouble is that after having compared them, neither Herodotus, nor Homer is understood better than before. It would be more to the purpose if this time we did not try to find Herodotus' inspirator in Homer, but rather believe what he himself says: that he heard this story of dreams from the Persians<sup>26</sup>.

Reinhardt, in our opinion, was right in fully accepting Herodotus' above statement<sup>27</sup>. But when he speaks of „miracle“ in connection with this dream, he is mistaken<sup>28</sup>.

As Reinhardt's interpretation of this detail is, anyway, somewhat sketchy, it will be worth our while to deal more thoroughly with the question.

To begin with: Artabanus' remarkable psychology of dreams reminding one so much of the modern explanation: „we mostly see things in our dreams that occupy our minds during the day“ — does *not* represent the Greek way of thinking. The prophetic dreams in Herodotus' *Greek* (!) stories *are* of superhuman, demonic origin. When for instance king Croesus dreams that his son, Atys is to be fatally wounded by an iron spear<sup>29</sup>, or when Polycrates' daughter foresees in her dream that her father will be crucified<sup>30</sup> — it was, according to Greek thinking, indeed a daimon who showed them their future. Artabanus' dream-psychology is *not* applicable to these dreams. But we know *Persian* stories recorded by Herodotus which may be explained also psychologically, in the same sense in which Artabanus had spoken of the nature of dreams. Such is, first of all, Xerxes' dream that returned three times.

But was Artabanus really right when he applied this psychology to Xerxes' dreams? Did Xerxes really dream of what his mind had been occupied with previously, during the day?

In his speech Artabanus refers only in general to this question: „These last days we were busy planning the war. It took up all our thoughts“<sup>31</sup>. From this statement follows only: no wonder that Xerxes dreamt of the war. But why did he dream that he would *have to* make war, why not the contrary? Why, both thoughts had kept his mind equally busy during the day! We may get the answer to this question if we bear in mind what the man-in-the-dream said to Xerxes. „Unless

<sup>26</sup> VII 12: καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ εἶδε ὄψιν τοιήνδε, ὃς λέγειται ἐνὶ Περσέων.

<sup>27</sup> l. c. 180.

<sup>28</sup> l. c. 181: „Schwerlich würde Herodot dem Wunder — übrigens für ihn als Traum, kein solches Wunder wie für uns, obwohl er die Verantwortung dafür doch lieber seinen Persern überlässt — er würde schwerlich doch dem Wunder Einfluss in sein Werk gegeben haben, etc.

<sup>29</sup> Her. I 34.

<sup>30</sup> Her. III 124.

<sup>31</sup> VII 16 β.

you immediately begin war, you will, just as quickly as you became great and mighty, be reduced to nothing!"<sup>32</sup>

This thought, in this form, indeed gives the impression of a command given to the king by a superhuman being. And yet the day before the king himself had expressed the same thought in other words: „I know very well that even in the case we remain peaceful, our enemies will attack us . . . Neither of us can withdraw anymore, we must either act, or suffer, this is the only alternative (= ἀνάγκη)! For either Asia will be dominated by the Greeks, or Europe by the Persians. For there is no middle-way in war."<sup>33</sup>

We need not ask now whether this reasoning is right, or wrong. It is sufficient to remark that we may clearly see from the king's words that, although he vacillates, keeps giving orders and withdrawing them the next moment — still, so the story tells us, he recognized, or, at least he thought he recognized, that he had to act under compulsion. And from this recognition it followed that no other alternative but war was left to him, for otherwise his own realm would be menaced by destruction. But this is exactly what the man-in-the-dream had said! So Artabanus was right, Xerxes dreamt of what — consciously, or half-consciously — his mind had been occupied with.

But in this case how is it possible that the vision appeared not only in Xerxes' but also in Artabanus' dream? Artabanus did not vacillate at all, he did not share with the king the „obsession“ that this war was inevitable. Why then did the man-in-the-dream bid him do the same as Xerxes? His mind had not been occupied by this thought during the day but just on the contrary! May the till then really admirable Persian dream-psychology have failed at this point? To obtain a satisfactory answer to this question we must analyse Xerxes' suggestion more thoroughly.

Xerxes advises his uncle<sup>34</sup> to put on the royal robes, sit on the throne, and lie down in the royal bed, to ascertain whether, or not the dream was of divine origin. It seems to be needless to point out how exceedingly characteristic of Eastern thinking this proposal is<sup>35</sup>. According to the Oriental mind, the royal garment, the throne and everything belonging to the king is not merely the insignia of his royal power; taking possession of these things is *the symbol*, more than that: the substance of becoming a king. When Xerxes asks his uncle to change clothes with him, it would, in our language, sound like this: „Artabanus, be the king

<sup>32</sup> VII 14.

<sup>33</sup> VII 11.

<sup>34</sup> VII 15.

<sup>35</sup> Reinhardt: l. c. 180.

of the Persians in my stead and we shall see what your opinion will be *then!*"

The enlightened Artabanus who knows so much about the true nature of dreams, probably does not either believe in this naïv symbolism. He very clearly explains to the king that a change of clothes is not a change of *persons*, he remains being Artabanus even if he puts on the king's robes. And even if the man-in-the-dream was of divine origin, surely he is not so stupid as to mistake the change of clothes for a change of persons! This reasoning proves how enlightened was not only Artabanus, but also the man from whom Herodotus had heard this story. For let us remember: Herodotus at the beginning of the story remarks: „The Persians have said so!“<sup>36</sup>

But in that case what did this unprejudiced author mean by saying that the vision later appeared to Artabanus also? However fervently our enlightened Artabanus maintained that the change of clothes was not a change of persons -- by the symbolical act of putting on the king's clothes and sitting on the throne, he in fact lived the life of the king for a day: during the day he was busy being a king, like Xerxes and consequently, according to his own psychology of dreams, in the night he dreamt the same dream as the king. This, besides, means that the „compulsion“ which Xerxes recognized for what it was when, during the day he had pointed out that war was inevitable, and which in his dream had assumed the form of a „God's command“ was a consequence of the constraint of the Persian king. That is why the vision appears also in Artabanus' dream when he plays the king's role. But Artabanus is right after all: the change of clothes is not a change of personalities and he, even in the king's robes remains Artabanus. And therefore his dream is not identical with that of Xerxes, it only partly resembles it, just as Artabanus' assumed kingship resembles that of Xerxes.

„So you are the man who wants to dissuade Xerxes from the war against Greece! Of course you will, for you are so anxious about his welfare! But you will not get away with that so easily, neither now, nor later! You will be punished because you wanted to prevent that which must be!“<sup>37</sup>

These were the words with which the dream-messenger addressed Artabanus — and all this does not contradict Artabanus' previous propositions. Indeed, this mysterious messenger seems from some points of view even to approve of Artabanus' attitude against war. „... for you are so anxious about his welfare“. As for the essence of the question:

<sup>36</sup> VII 12.

<sup>37</sup> VII 17.

Artabanus is dreaming of what he was thinking during the day and what he had put forward in the council in the shape of a proposition.<sup>38</sup> The only difference: in the meantime he had imagined for a day that he was the actual king, he put on Xerxes' clothes, sat on the throne, so he, too, began to feel the *compulsion* of which Xerxes had spoken, and he began to think he was too weak to „prevent what must be“. He had the impression of losing his clear-sightedness in this constraint. That is why he dreamt that the vision had threatened to burn out his eyes with a red-hot iron<sup>39</sup>.

As we can see, Artabanus' dream might psychologically be explained just as well as that of Xerxes. And the clue to it was supplied by Artabanus himself when he explained to Xerxes the nature of dreams. The „divine“ origin of the dream — which Artabanus, on waking up, was „obliged to admit“ — is, according to the story, out of the question. Let us observe how cleverly the author makes use of the symbolic element in Artabanus' psychologically explainable dream: Artabanus dreamt that the vision had threatened *to burn out his eyes with a red-hot iron*.

According to the psychological explanation, this alarming dream is simply the projection of Artabanus' anxiety who, having got into the king's position, is afraid that he, too, will lose his clear-sightedness. And behold! by the time he awakes he *had* lost his clear-sightedness! He had assumed the king's position in consequence of what his eyes were burnt out with a hot iron . . . The author refers to the *loss of clear-sightedness* in Artabanus' unmistakable words: „Oh my lord, I have looked at things with *human eyes* . . . but now I have to retrace my steps and to alter my opinion“.<sup>40</sup>

This highly developed dream-psychology is *not* of Greek origin. It would be in vain to look for anything like it in the contemporary Greek literature, or even in Herodotus' works — except in his stories of Persian origin. We must, consequently, suppose that Herodotus is perfectly right when, in connection with this dream-story, he refers to Persian narrators. We can, by the way, find traces of the same psychology of dreams in another narrative of Herodotus', likewise of Persian theme.

According to Herodotus, King Cambyses had his brother — Smerdis — killed because „he dreamt that a messenger had arrived from Persia and said: „Smerdis sits on the throne and his head reaches to the

<sup>38</sup> VII 10.

<sup>39</sup> VII 18.

<sup>40</sup> VII 18: Ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, οἷα ἄνθρωπος ἰδὼν.... ἐπεὶ δὲ ... καὶ αὐτὸς τράπομαι καὶ τὴν γνώμην μετατίθεμαι κτλ.

sky“<sup>41</sup>. The superficial onlooker would consider this dream the same kind of irrational prophetic dream as may be found in Greek stories, like for instance Croesus' dream of Atys. (Her. I 34.) However, this dream later on comes true. It is indeed a messenger from whom Cambyses learns that the Pseudo-Smerdis had occupied his throne<sup>42</sup>. Both Cambyses' and Croesus' dream came true. But Cambyses' dream is explainable also psychologically, while that of Croesus is not! Let us read how Herodotus introduces Cambyses' dream:

„Cambyses sent his brother Smerdis from Egypt back to Persia because he was jealous of him, Smerdis being the only Persian who could draw at almost two fingerlength the huge bow sent to him by special messengers from the king of the Aithiops. No one else among the Persians was able to accomplish this but Smerdis“<sup>43</sup>.

So Cambyses had already been jealous of his brother, before he decided to have him murdered. Smerdis proved to be superior to all the other Persians. No one, except Smerdis could draw that powerful bow. When Cambyses saw this, he became jealous and sent his brother back to Persia. He must not remain near, or else people would have ample opportunity to compare the two brothers and there was not the slightest doubt in whose favour. This, according to Herodotus, was the psychological explanation for sending Smerdis back to Persia. But to all appearances the king did not achieve his purpose. Scarcely had Smerdis gone, when Cambyses had a dream and in his dream jealousy tormented him even more than when he was awake. In his dream a messenger came and reported to him: "Smerdis sits on the throne and his head reaches to the sky".

So it was useless to remove his brother from his environment, the difference between them so tormented Cambyses that he wanted to get him by all means out of sight; this torment, bad enough in day-time became unbearable at night. He had sent Smerdis away in order to prevent others from seeing this superiority. But in his dream it is not only he — Cambyses — who knows of it, it is known all over Persia whence a messenger came to relate the terrible news.

So this dream, just as that of Xerxes and Artabanus', is explainable. Cambyses, too, dreamt of things that occupy his mind during the day when he is awake. This dream-psychology is a characteristic feature of Herodotus' stories of Persian origin. A. Szabó.

<sup>41</sup> III 30: εἶδε ὄψιν ὁ Καμβύσης ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ τοιήνδε · ἐδόκέε οἱ ἄγγελον ἐλθόντα ἐκ Περσέων ἀγγέλλειν ὡς ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τῷ βασιλικῷ ἰζόμενος Σμερδισ τῆ κεφαλῇ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ψάσειε κτλ.

<sup>42</sup> III 62.

<sup>43</sup> III 30.

## HERODOTEA

(Резюме)

В некоторых исторических рассказах Геродота, относящихся к персидским событиям, сказывается идеология, которая является не греческой, а чисто восточной. Это было установлено К. Рейнгардом еще в 1940 году. В большинстве своих анализов названный ученый удовлетворялся только указаниями на различие греческой и восточной идеологий, и лишь местами и мимоходом подчеркивал, что могло быть древнеперсидским в этой восточной идеологии античного мира. Исходя от установленной Рейнгардом, Алтгейм также доказал древнеперсидский, зороастерский характер некоторых исторических рассказов Геродота. Автор настоящей статьи приводит новые данные, могущие служить к освещению проблем, поставленных Рейнгардом и Алтгеймом.

Рейнгардт приурочил историю Прекаспа (Her. III, 30, 61-75) к типично восточному циклу историй, трактующих о соотношении властителя и великого viziria. Рейнгардт безусловно прав, подчеркивая, что эта история не отражает идеологии, господствовавшей в греческих городах-государствах V века, но называть ее восточной является вряд ли обоснованным. Такая история была возможна в древности не только на востоке, но и везде, где проявились начатки деспотизма. Это подтверждается еще и тем, что фигуры, соответствующие Прекаспу и же-Смердису, находятся и у Тахита (Ann. I. 6 и II. 39-40: Sallustius Crispus и Clemens).

Другие черты „повеллы“ отражают уже более выраженную древнеперсидскую идеологию. Трагедия „правдивого Прекаспа“ приводится не только в той части рассказа, которая была проанализована Рейнгардом и Алтгеймом, но и в другом рассказе Геродота (III. 34). Здесь, среди древнеперсидских „придворных анекдотов“, Геродот рассказывает о трагическом последствии правдивости Прекаспа.

Этот другой, до сих пор обойденный вниманием рассказ о трагедии Прекаспа освещает и смысл древнеперсидской педагогической программы: стрелять по мишеням и говорить каждому правду без прикрас (ср. Her. I. 136). Древние персы были, повидному, убеждены, что ловкому стрелку, умеющему попадать стрелой в точку, легче открыть правду и на словах. В противоположность этому в греческом рассказе о Камбизе (Her. III. 35) чувствуется уже сомнение в правильности вышеназванной программы: умалишенный Камбиз тоже умеет попадать стрелой в точку, но в его словах нет и следа правды.

Вторая, более объемистая часть работы автора посвящена повелле Геродота о сне Ксеркса (VII. 8-18). Рейнгардт совершенно правильно заметил, что в исторических рассказах Геродота Ксеркс выявляется нерешительным, несамостоятельным царем. Эта нерешительность сказывается и в его часто повторяющихся снах. Сущность дела сводится к вопросу: как же надо понимать слова Артабана, что „ночью нам снится о вещах, с которыми мы имеем дело днем“ (Her. VII. 16 b). Разве продолжение рассказа о том, что странный сон Ксеркса приснился и Артабану, опровергает прежде рациональное объяснение сна? Автор находит, что это невозможно. Не только сон Ксеркса, но и сон Артабана могут быть объяснены по принципу, что сны отражают только мысли, возникшие наяву. Поэтому в рассказе о снах Ксеркса нельзя рассматривать их, как примитивные сны гадательного характера, какими бывают сны в рассказах, отражающих греческую идеологию Геродота. Впрочем следы древнеперсидской сонной психологии проявляются и в других персидских исторических рассказах названного историка.

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