

4. Cross-Area Workshop (Research Groups B-IV/C-I-3)

Nomos und Kosmos bei Herodot

1./2. April 2011, TOPOI Building Mitte/ Hannoversche Straße 6

Final report (Geus/Poiss)

The main aim of this workshop, organised by Klaus Geus (B-IV) and Thomas Poiss (C-I-3), was to resume and advance issues and discussions raised in the previous three Herodotean workshops in which speakers and participants explored the perception and description of space, not excluding it as it functions within time, on the one hand, and the techniques and features of narrative, on the other, by the Greek historian and geographer Herodotus (c. 484–424 B. C.). The workshop was entirely successful on all fronts. Marco Dorati applied further his narratological model to transcend such traditional oppositions, dominating the study of Herodotus, as those of fiction versus truth and hearsay versus autopsy. Elizabeth Irwin demonstrated in another case study the intertextual references and allusions that point to a Herodotus highly engaged with the political world of his own day, and above all a subtle critic of Athenian imperialism. In addition to Dorati and Irwin, once again young scholars from Germany and experienced scholars from abroad were invited to broaden the discussion and scope with aspects crucial to the research groups B-IV and C-I-3.

The well-attended workshop was, fittingly to the April's Fool Day, led off by **Wolfgang Will** (Universität Bonn) who talked about *Gelächter von Außen: Komik bei Herodot*. When the protagonists in Herodot's works are laughing, the critics tell us, it's never funny. Laughter almost always heralds catastrophe. Yet there are scenes that shot through with situation comedy seemed designed to amuse the reader (6.125, 6.126–130). These can be found not only in asides in the main

historical narrative, but also within the main *logoi*, as in the climax of the description of the Battle of Salamis. The story of Artemisia, which probably originated in Halikarnassos in the fifth century BC and in which the heroine saves herself and her ship from their Athenian pursuers by ramming and scuttling one of her own Persian vessels, depicts a 'Schelmenstreich' (roguish prank) which gave rise to laughter at least outside Athens. At the same time, the Artemisia episode is one of Herodotus' 'geheimen Abrechnungen' ('private settling of accounts') with Athens. The historian satirizes his most important newsmongers, the 'Augenzeugen' ('eyewitnesses'), since the story only 'works' because those involved, on both the Athenian and the Persian side, believe that they have seen precisely the opposite to what they have actually seen.

Die Funktion des theos phthonesas in Herodots Geschichtsdeutung by **Raban von Haehling** (Universität Aachen) focused on an unresolved tension residing in the fact that Herodotus himself often infringed upon the principle of a rational explanation and interpretation of history: on the one hand he sets out to find *aitia*, on the other he proposes reasons and motive which defy human analysis and reasoning. Such tension between human and supernatural spheres, as von Haehling pointed out, has parallels in the Old Testament and in the works of Aeschylus. He argued that Herodotus' *Histories* are a product of a theological world view which was still deeply rooted in archaic thinking.

Gian Franco Chiai (BBAW Berlin) reappraised this very topic in his paper *Die Allmächtigkeit des Göttlichen bei Herodot* from another perspective: In Herodotus' work, the figure of an anonymous and omnipotent god is present, superior to the gods of the traditional religion, who rules over human existence and defends the *kosmos* ('the order of the world'). The idea of the existence of an almighty divinity can be found in other authors (Xenophanes, Aeschylus), too, and makes it possible to reconstruct a tendency to monotheism (or henotheism) in the Greek thought about the religion of this time. The aim of this talk was to explore and to reconstruct the role of the figure of this almighty anonymous divinity in the narrative context of Herodotus.

Xerxes und Agamemnon by **Fabian Schulz** (Universität Tübingen) compared Xerxes' decision to invade Greece to similar characters and situations from the *Iliad*: on the one hand Agamemnon, who has to choose between reconciling Achilles or withdrawal, and Hector, who

decides to push the battle to the walls and the ships of the Greek encampment. The king's ability to listen to his councilors and the favour of the gods ensure victory. Herodotus, Schulz argued, evokes Homer in order to draw parallels between the Trojan and Persian Wars.

Alexandra von Lieven (Lichtenberg-Kolleg Göttingen) filled in for Volker Fadinger on short notice with a talk on *Who was "King" (S)asychis?* Herodotus 2.136 lists among several kings a certain Asychis, who evidently is the same as the Sasychis mentioned by the later historian Diodorus Siculus (1.94) as a lawgiver. Since, on the one hand, the information given is conflicting in itself, and, on the other hand, the name does not readily correspond to any known king, many different proposals for identification have been proposed in the past. Scholars have attempted to solve the riddle of this figure's identity since not only is the information given by Diodorus and Herodotus conflicting in itself, but neither name corresponds to any known king in the Egyptian tradition. Starting from the fact that not Sasychis, but rather Asychis is the correct form of the name, this paper demonstrates that the classical accounts are not based on a king at all, but on two private individuals, who have been conflated by later tradition. The speaker discussed in detail the surprisingly rich Egyptian evidence for these two people.

Virtual Scenarios, Counterfactual Thought, and Non-Thought in Herodotus' Histories von **Marco Dorati** (Università di Urbino). The mental world of historical characters is always an important, even if elusive and by and large fictive, part of historical representation. Herodotus, as any other historian, is not only concerned with those thoughts that were historically produced by the characters and translated into action, but also with other 'negative' aspects of thought: either non-thoughts (thoughts that were never formulated by the characters), or virtual scenarios (thoughts that were formulated by the characters in the past, but projected courses of events that did not concretize), or else counterfactual scenarios (real alternatives that did not actualize, now called back into life by the narrator, in order to speculate on what could have happened under some set of circumstances). These different forms of 'negative' thought cannot be a simple re-writing of a visible, historical reality in terms of wishes, purposes or plans, from the final outcome, back to the underlying intentions, through a process of retrodiction (Paul Veyne), but need a more intrusive narratorial intervention.

Reinhold **Bichler**'s (Innsbruck) contribution (*Die analogen Strukturen in der Abstufung des Wissens über die Dimensionen von Raum und Zeit in Herodots Historien*) gives a comparative analysis of Herodotus' strategies to differentiate the degrees of reliability concerning his accounts of the events of the past and his descriptions of the far regions of the world. There are striking analogies in the use of exact numbers and calculations, of different types of source-references, of vague estimations and of declared speculations concerning chronological aspects of the histories as well as geographical ones. Once more, Herodotus' work is revealed as being a highly wrought and unified narrative.

To whom does Solon speak? Contemporary allusions in Herodotus' Croesus logos or happiness and ending life well in the later fifth century by **Elizabeth Irwin** (Columbia University, NY) continued the project of situating Herodotus' ostensible history of the Persian Wars in the time and space of late fifth-century. Turning her attention to what is perhaps the most famous of Herodotus' *logoi*, that of Solon and Croesus, she demonstrated how Solon's replies to the Lydian king constitute Herodotus' oblique but sustained criticism of the values and ideology of Periclean Athens. Using various pieces of evidence, she demonstrated how the Athens of Pericles no less than the Croesus of Herodotus' *logos* was eager to put the wealth of its *archê* ('empire') on display, a wealth derived just as Croesus' was, from the *phoros* ('tribute') collected from Asiatic Greeks, and how overly confident they were in the outcomes of their calculations of the future (*elpis*) to the extent both of forgetting a central theme of Herodotus ventriloquized through Solon, the changeability and fragility of human good fortune (*eudaimoniê*), and of pursuing a policy of unrestrained expansion. More specifically, she identified in Croesus' narrow definition of *eudaimoniê* as 'wealth' allusion to a distinct usage of the word by Athenians for the wealth they obtained from their *archê*. She concluded by demonstrating how polemically Solon's criteria for 'happiness' engages with the 'happiness' Athenians were far from experiencing in the early years of the Atheno-Peloponnesian war with the attendant outbreak of the plague, but suggested that in Solon's injunction to 'look to the end of all things', Herodotus may well be alluding to Athenians' final downfall, the consequence of the expectation (*elpis*) of success engendered by their great *eudaimoniê*, but also a fundamental failure to learn the lessons of their own genre of tragedy.

Exploring Responsibility: Historical Aetiology in Herodotus' Libyan logos by **Emily Baragwanath** (University of North Carolina). Modern scholarship has underscored the assignment of praise and blame as fundamental to the ancient historian's task—a task that presupposes judgments regarding personal responsibility. Herodotus' text teems with claims of 'who started it', 'who began the war', with subsequent actions viewed in terms of *counter* actions—negative reciprocity—and this fact has prompted scholars to emphasize the primary importance of vengeance as explanation, since ideas of vengeance surface readily in contexts where blame is attached to action. Through an examination of Herodotus' Libyan *logos* (4.145–205), this paper illustrates how explanation and the assigning of responsibility can however be quite separate matters in the historian's inquiry. Herodotus at times investigates cause in a way that avoids simple accusations of moral or legal responsibility, and so presses his readers to grapple with historical explanation in all its complexity.



Vierter Cross-Area Workshop (Research Groups B-IV/C-I-3)

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01.–02. April 2011, TOPOI Building Mitte, Hannoversche Straße 6

Programm (korrigiert)

01. 04. 2011 (Moderation: Klaus Geus)

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| 10:30–10:45 | Begrüßung |
| 10:45–11:45 | Wolfgang Will (Bonn): Gelächter von Außen: Komik bei Herodot |
| 11:45–12:00 | Kaffeepause |
| 12:00–13:00 | Raban von Haehling (Aachen): Die Funktion des <i>theos phthonesas</i> in Herodots Geschichtsdeutung |
| 13:00–15:00 | Mittagspause |
| 15:00–16:00 | Gian Franco Chiai (Berlin): Die Allmächtigkeit des Göttlichen bei Herodot |
| 16:00–17:00 | Fabian Schulz (Tübingen): Xerxes und Agamemnon |
| 17:15–17:30 | Kaffeepause |
| 17:30–18:30 | Alexandra von Lieven (Göttingen/Berlin): „Who was “King” (S)asychis?“ |
| 18:30 | Gemeinsames Abendessen |

02. 04. 2011 (Moderation: Thomas Poiss)

- 09:30–10:30 Marco Dorati (Urbino): Virtual Scenarios, Counterfactual Thought, and Non-Thought in Herodotus' *Histories*
- 10:30–11:30 Reinhold Bichler (Innsbruck): Die analogen Strukturen in der Abstufung des Wissens über die Dimensionen von Raum und Zeit in Herodots *Historien*
- 11:30–12:00 Kaffeepause
- 12:00–13:00 Elizabeth Irwin (New York): To whom does Solon speak? Contemporary allusions in Herodotus' Croesus *logos* or happiness and ending life well in the later fifth century
- 13:00–15:00 Mittagspause
- 15:00–16:00 Emily Baragwanath (Chapel Hill): Exploring Responsibility: Historical Aetiology in Herodotus' Libyan *logos*
- 16:00 Abschlussdiskussion

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