Journal of Hellenic Studies 122 (2002) 70–90

HERODOTUS AND AN EGYPTIAN MIRAGE: THE GENEALOGIES OF THE THEBAN PRIESTS*

Abstract: This article re-evaluates the significance attributed to Hecataeus' encounter with the Theban priests described by Herodotus (2.143) by setting it against the evidence of Late Period Egyptian representations of the past. In the first part a critique is offered of various approaches Classicists have taken to this episode and its impact on Greek historiography. Classicists have generally imagined this as an encounter in which the young, dynamic and creative Greeks construct an image of the static, ossified and incredibly old culture of the Egyptians, a move which reveals deeper assumptions in the scholarly discourse on Greeks and 'other' cultures in the Mediterranean world. But the civilization that Herodotus confronted in his long excursus on Egypt was not an abstract, eternal Egypt. Rather, it was the Egypt of his own day, at a specific historical moment – a culture with a particular understanding of its own long history. The second part presents evidence of lengthy Late Period priestly genealogies, and more general archaizing tendencies. Remarkable examples survive of the sort of visual genealogy which would have impressed upon the travelling Greek historians the long continuum of the Egyptian past. These include statues with genealogical inscriptions and relief sculptures representing generations of priests succeeding to their fathers' office. These priestly evocations of a present firmly anchored in the Egyptian past are part of a wider pattern of cultivating links with the historical past in the Late Period of Egyptian history. Thus, it is not simply the marvel of a massive expanse of time which Herodotus encountered in Egypt, but a mediated cultural awareness of that time. The third part of the essay argues that Herodotus used this long human past presented by the Egyptian priests in order to criticize genealogical and mythical representations of the past and develop the notion of an historical past. On the basis of this example, the article concludes by urging a reconsideration of the scholarly paradigm for imagining the encounter between Greeks and 'others' in ethnographic discourse in order to recognize the agency of the Egyptian priests, and other non-Greek 'informants'.

AT some time near the end of the sixth century BC, Hecataeus of Miletus paid a visit to Egypt in the course of his extensive travels around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. There, as Herodotus reports, the logographer and genealogist had a celebrated encounter with certain Theban priests. When Hecataeus recited his genealogy and traced his descent back to a god in the sixteenth generation, the Egyptian priests refuted the Greek's assertion of such recent divine ancestry by showing him 345 wooden statues, each set up by a high priest in his lifetime. The images represented an unbroken lineage of sons succeeding to their fathers' office, each of whom was a man not a god. Herodotus, too, claims he was shown these same images, though he had wisely refrained from reciting his genealogy.[1]

This anecdote vividly conveys the Greek sense of the infancy of their civilization in the face of Egypt's great antiquity.[2] The 345 generations Herodotus cites exceed traditional Greek chronologies twenty times over, distilling for his audience an astounding experience of Egypt's age. Herodotus' description of this historical confrontation has left an impression on scholars in the last century. Some have seen it as a decisive moment in the intellectual biographies of the early Greek historians, others an attractive and useful fiction. The way in which Classicists have

* I owe thanks to a number of people and communities: James Redfield, who has read and heard multiple versions of this paper and offered his observations and encouragement; Chris Faraone, Paul Cartledge, Dorothy Thompson and Robert Ritner, each of whom gave improving suggestions at various stages; seminars in Chicago, Reading and Cambridge, for stimulating discussion; finally, the anonymous *JHS* referees for their helpful comments. Responsibility for all opinions and any remaining errors, of course, remains my own.

[1] Hdt. 2.143. Questions of the 'reality' of the Greek historians' visits to Egypt and their citations of Egyptian priests have long been debated. For a brief discussion, see below. I believe it is probable, but not provable with absolute certainty, that both Hecataeus and Herodotus went to Egypt, though this is not essential to the argument that follows. Far more important, as I shall demonstrate, is the fact that one or both of them had reliable information concerning Late Period Egyptian priests' understanding of their genealogical past whether through their own researches or someone else's.

[2] A theme also taken up in Pl. *Ti.* 21e-23d. Plato, however, reverses the historians' trope by having the Egyptian priest inform Solon of facts that the Athenians have forgotten, namely that Athens is a thousand years older than the priest's own city of Saïs.

imagined this encounter between Greek intellectuals and Egyptian priests in some cases reveals deeper assumptions in the scholarly discourse on Greeks and 'barbarian' cultures in the Mediterranean world. The scene has generally been construed as a confrontation in which the young, dynamic and creative Greeks construct an image of the static, ossified and incredibly old culture of the Egyptians. But the civilization that Herodotus confronted both physically while travelling and intellectually in his long excursus on Egypt was not an abstract, eternal Egypt. Rather, it was the Egypt of his own day, at a specific historical moment, and a culture with a particular understanding of its own long history. F. Hartog has suggested that Herodotus' ethnographic accounts of 'the other' are imagined – mirages constructed by Classical Greeks intent on defining their own special culture against an exotic background. In the essay that follows, however, I shall argue that Herodotus presents in his second book a peculiar Egyptian mirage constructed by Egyptians for their own needs in the Late Period of their history. In the first section, I shall in very broad terms review the place of Herodotus' anecdote in scholarship on early Greek ethnography and historiography, and the limited role of Egyptian culture in previous assessments of its significance. The second part lays out evidence for the archaizing culture of Late Period Egypt as it relates to Herodotus' account of this episode, with particular attention to priestly genealogies. Finally, I shall show how Herodotus uses the Late Period Egyptian consciousness of the past in order to critique Greek mythical and genealogical notions, and develop a basis for Greek identity in the human, historical past.

I. APPROACHING THE MIRAGE

In studies of early Greek historiography, this brief passage has had special significance for reconstructing the relationship of Hecataeus and Herodotus to one another, and to their sources on the Egyptian past. Some have seen in this episode a relatively unproblematic instance of the mind-broadening effects of travel, and a salutary step forward in the development of Greek historiography. Bury, for example, saw Hecataeus' Egyptian voyage as a stimulus to his scepticism about Greek traditions of the past.[3] Jacoby, likewise, saw Hecataeus' meeting with the Egyptian priests as a 'psychological impetus' to a systematic revision of the Greek historical tradition, but put limits on the impact of barbarian traditions on Greek intellectual history. The impulse was only psychological after all, and its effects were ultimately limited to theology, rather than true historical thought.[4] For Herodotus' intellectual development, Jacoby granted even less influence

[3] Bury (1909) 13-14: 'We shall then see that his skepticism in regard to the ancient history of the Greeks had been stimulated by the acquaintance he made in Egypt with the historical traditions of the Egyptians. There he made the discovery that in days when the gods were supposed to be walking abroad on the hills and in the vales of Hellas, Egypt at the distance of a few days' voyage was managed exclusively by mere human beings.' See also Bury in *CAH* 4[1], p. 520. Earlier, Wiedemann (1890) 21-2 had also commented on the impression Egypt's antiquity would have made upon a Greek. Miller (1965) 109-10 described the confrontation of Greek and Egyptian notions of the past as a spur to the invention of Greek chronography. Vidal-Naquet (1986) 45 noted the 'immense perspective' granted by the encounter. Froidefond (1971) 137, 146, 169 associated the anecdote with the 'discovery of historical time', though he was more concerned with the development of the 'Egyptian mirage' (see further below). Lateiner (1989) 150 has also remarked sensibly on Herodotus' perception of the Egyptian past: 'The temporal and cultural perspective that Herodotus gained from the Egyptians allows him to criticize more limited views... ' West (1991) 146, 152, grudgingly admits the power of this encounter for the imagination, even if it never really happened. See below for further discussion of her views.

[4] Jacoby, *RE* 14, *s.v.* Hekataios, col. 2740-1: 'Es ist unverkennbar, daß eine Szene wie die von Herod. II.143 geschilderte auf H. einen ungeheuren Eindruck machen mußte, daß sie vielleicht sogar erst den psychologischen Anstoß gegeben hat zu einer systematischen Bearbeitung der ‚historischen' Überlieferung der Griechen.' Jacoby then goes on to argue that the only real effect of this confrontation is the idea that the Greek gods came from Egypt, that Heracles was a man, and so forth, summing up his assessment of 'Eastern influence' in this episode: 'Die barbarische Tradition hat hier nichts qualitativ geändert, weil sie, wie wir wissen, wie H. nicht wußte, ja von der hellenischen nicht unabhängig, sondern nur eine Zurechtmachung jener *in maiorem Orientis gloriam* war.'

to the long human past of the Egyptians. Only Athens was a sufficient crucible for the extraordinary transformation of Herodotus from mere ethnographer to the historian (or at least *Erzähler*) of the Persian wars.[5] In this analysis, the ethnographical enquiries and the results of Herodotus' own confrontation with the Egyptian priests are subordinate to, if not quite separate from, the true historical narrative of the later books. Ethnography is only a prelude to history, and the traditions of other cultures regarding the past have a limited effect on Greek historiographical thought. This conventional limit put on the impact of the Egyptian past on Hecataeus and Herodotus and Greek historiographical thought in general is summed up in the *Cambridge Ancient History*: 'The knowledge that they were a young people, faced with a land whose civilization went back thousands of years, gave the Greeks a sense of proportion. Egyptian wisdom had nothing better to give.'[6]

There has, of course, been much discussion over whether Herodotus or Hecataeus (or both or neither) ever really went to Egypt to acquire this sense of proportion. Heidel argued that the story of the priests and their statues was a convenient fiction told in a witty, ironical manner by Hecataeus, but then believed and twisted to Hecataeus' discredit by a Herodotus who was not only gullible but malicious.[7] More recent critics of Herodotus' sources and credibility have argued that the later historian was the one who invented the story. Far from an inspirational moment in Greek historiography, Fehling has made the story of the Theban priests one of Herodotus' 'demonstrably false source-citations'.[8] By holding the ancient Greek historian to anachronistic standards of accuracy and punctilious citation, Fehling renders Herodotus' story a complete fabrication.[9] West deploys the same arguments to dispute the truth of the tale, considering it no more historical than the meeting between Solon and Croesus – another 'year abroad' in the traditional biography of a Greek wise man.[10] Since they never went there, Hecataeus and Herodotus were certainly never affected in any way by the Egyptian view of the past.[11] These arguments, to be fair, are not really aimed at addressing this point. Rather, they come in the context of explorations of source citation in Greek 'scientific' discourse and the rhetoric of authority deployed by the narrator. Such arguments over the authenticity of Herodotus' autopsy, however, have been criticized as 'futile and infertile',[12] since they depend on verifying the accuracy

[5] Jacoby, *RE Suppl.* 2, *s.v.* Herodotos, col. 355: 'Im Mutterlande vollzog sich in H. eine innere Wandlung... Das ethnographische Interesse trat zurück, das rein historische in den Vordergrund. Aus dem Reisenden wurde der Historiker des Perserkrieges oder zunächst der Erzähler vom Perserkriege. Daß dann unser Werk entstehen konnte, daß H. nun alles, was er besaß, in einen großen Kontext brachte, dazu war noch ein Faktor nötig – Athen.' This is the reverse of the position taken earlier by Bauer (1878) 46-8, who argued that the second book was written later, after Herodotus had acquired a more rational and enlightened view of Greek tradition through his travels in Egypt. For recent criticism of the Athenocentrism of Jacoby and others, see Thomas (2000) 10-16.

[6] Braun (1982) 55.

[7] Heidel (1935) *passim* portrays Hecataeus as a sophisticated wit, and Herodotus as a malicious dullard who is pinching his references from the earlier historian whenever he mentions priests. Hecataeus, in turn, was using the Egyptian priests as fictive spokesmen in order to deflect any criticism from his views on Greek mythical traditions. See especially pp. 59-60, 63, 66, 69, 77, 83, 93-4, 113, 117, 119, 129, 132, 134.

[8] Fehling (1989) 77-84.

[9] Fehling (1989) 80 insists that Herodotus has falsified the story, because 'the statement about the long succession of arch-priests cannot be other than objectively false'. His logic fails him utterly when he also insists that Hecataeus and Herodotus cannot be reporting a long-standing local tradition because if it were such, it would have to be true. He also argues (p. 81) that Herodotus cannot have got the story from Hecataeus, because he does not cite the author's written work in the same way he does at 6.137.1. Other specific arguments are discussed below.

[10] West (1991) 152-4; Pritchett (1993) 187-90 addresses only one aspect of West's argument, i.e. that Herodotus could not have got the story of Hecataeus from the Theban priests because they could not have remembered it. This argument was raised previously by Brown (1965) 67 n.36. For discussion of other specific arguments, see below.

[11] West (1991) 146 n.12 shows some hostility to the idea: 'The sobriety of Greek legend compared with Egyptian renders somewhat ironic the picture of Hecataeus inspired to demythologization as he sat musing among the departed glories of Karnak.'

[12] Cartledge (1993) 57-8. *Cf.* the recent criticisms by Thomas (2000) esp. 8-9, who seeks to situate Herodotus in his cultural and intellectual milieu, and assess his arguments and methods on that basis.

of his claims on the basis of external evidence. Thus posed, the question of Herodotus' methods and their place in the development of Western historiography boils down to whether or not Herodotus got this or that detail about Egypt (or another land or culture) correct.[13]

Some scholars have rejected such externally oriented approaches and chosen to focus on the internal coherence of Herodotus' ethnography within the context of his audience's cultural expectations, considering the way in which Herodotus constructs 'the other' according to Greek categories of thought and modes of representation. F. Hartog's *Le miroir d'Hérodote* has been most influential in formulating this mode of reading.[14] In the case of Egypt, however, Hartog was anticipated to a certain degree by C. Froidefond, who devoted a chapter to analysing Herodotus' part in constructing *le mirage égyptien*.[15] Froidefond argued that Herodotus' account of the confrontation with extensive Theban genealogies, and with the vast extent of the Egyptian past more generally, contributed essential qualities to the 'Egyptian mirage' in Greek literature: the great antiquity of the land and its civilization, the static endurance of its customs. In Egypt, according to Froidefond, Ionian thought found 'un reflet de la jeunesse du monde', a temporal terrain in which to conduct its various speculations, whether in natural sciences, chronology or ethnography.[16] In the last case, Froidefond seems to understand Herodotus as an early modern ethnographer, bringing intellectual order and systematization to the cultural phenomena of a 'primitive' society.[17]

Hartog is more explicit and also more critical in his application of the ethnographical analogy to Herodotus' work of 'othering' in the *Histories*. In *Le miroir d'Hérodote*, Hartog draws an analogy between Herodotus' ethnography (especially of Scythia) and the Brazilian travel writings of de Léry in order to clarify Herodotus' methods of representing otherness. He argues that the historian's lengthy ethnographic descriptions tell us more about Greek self-definition than about the cultures he describes, since he presents their customs through a rhetoric of alterity and a grid of oppositional definitions determined by Greek social, political and cultural concerns. Other cultures, viewed in the mirror of Herodotus, are used to work out a reflexive discourse on Greekness. Though he does not directly examine the episode of the Theban priests in *Le miroir d'Hérodote*, he does remark elsewhere, in terms similar to Froidefond's, on the privileged position of Egypt in Greek thought: 'Voyager en Égypte signifiera pour un intellectuel grec remonter le temps et entrevoir les commencements, pouvoir recueiller un récit ou tenir un discours vraisemblable sur les débuts de la vie civilisée en général ou de telle ou telle pratique culturelle.'[18] Egyptian civilization is frozen in time, like the 'primitive societies' of early modern ethnography, and excellent material with which to think. But does this approach to Herodotus' ethnography hold up as well in the case of Egypt as it seems to in Hartog's treatment of the Scythian material in Book 4?[19] Does the Greek encounter with Egyptian antiquity, so vividly depicted in the anecdote of Hecataeus and the Theban priests, result in such a self-confident

[13] Hartog (1988) 3-6 argues against an externally oriented approach, which poses questions such as 'is Herodotus a trustworthy and complete source of information about the Scythians?'

[14] Hartog (1980), (1988).

[15] Froidefond (1971) 115-207; note especially 123-36, in which F. discusses inversion, abstraction, and systematization in Herodotus' account of Egypt.

[16] Froidefond (1971) 145.

[17] This is especially so when Froidefond discusses Herodotus' treatment of Egyptian religion. Froidefond (1971) 193, 200-1.

[18] Hartog (1996) 55; see also Hartog (1986). In a work that came to my attention just as I was preparing the final draft of this article, Vasunia (2001) adopts a similar approach to Herodotus' construction of Egyptian temporality. Vasunia's argument (2001) 115-16 that Herodotus' narrative 'consistently archaizes Egypt and denies it coevality' denies the agency of Egyptian priests in representing their own historical traditions. Vasunia (2001) 129-31 acknowledges aspects of Egyptian historical awareness, but stops short of attributing elements of Herodotus' discourse to the cultural motivations of his informants, the Egyptian priests. My arguments against this approach follow below.

[19] The idea of Herodotus' Scythians as solely a product of the historian's ethnographical methods has also been criticized by scholars who would like the relationship between Herodotus and the material he handles to be seen in more dialectical terms. See, e.g., Lincoln (1987).

ordering and classification of the cultural raw material provided by 'the other'? Is the 'Egyptian mirage' solely a product of Herodotus' grid of Greek categories?

By analysing the text of Herodotus to elucidate the cultural poetics at work in translating 'the other' into comprehensible categories, some scholars have indeed brilliantly illuminated aspects of Greek thought and self-definition, but the way in which they historicize Herodotus' text privileges the Greek mind as the only producer of significant meaning, rendering 'the other' a passive object, a static screen for Greek projections.[20] In order to respond to this imbalance in agency in the encounter between Herodotus and other cultures as it is represented by the model of Hartog, I propose a revision of the ethnographical analogy employed in interpreting Herodotus. Agency in the analysis of cultural contact has been similarly at issue in a recent dispute between the anthropologists Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere over the events surrounding the apparent deification and subsequent death of the explorer Captain Cook at the hands of Hawaiians in 1779. Obeyesekere has charged that Sahlins' ethnographical account of the Hawaiian reaction to Captain Cook continues a Western imperialist myth about 'natives' that portrays them as unable to distinguish between white men and gods ('they', unlike 'us', are irrational – so goes the myth). Marshall Sahlins, however, in a spirited defence of his work, entitled *How 'Natives' Think: About Captain Cook for Example*, has shown that such a critical position regarding the role of the ethnographer in creating myths about the culture and thought of 'natives' ironically suppresses the native discourse, and leads to misrepresentations of the historical nature of the contact between the two cultures. In this case, Sahlins shows that the deification of Captain Cook is not, in fact, a mere myth of Western superiority to the 'primitive' mentality of natives, but the outcome of an historical encounter determined by Cook's unknowing entanglement in indigenous mythic and calendrical structures. In other words, Captain Cook's apotheosis is not purely the product of a dominant Western discourse about the nature of supposedly irrational native thought, but an historical event shaped by Hawaiian culture and agency. Sahlins' overall intention in this defence of his methodology is 'to suggest that one cannot do good history, not even contemporary history, without regard for ideas, actions, and ontologies that are not and never were our own'.[21]

I would like to argue that one of the texts viewed as critical to the formation of both Western ethnography and historiography, Herodotus' *Histories*, should be understood in this light.[22] In the case of Herodotus' description of Egypt, the Greek encounter with another culture is not purely experimental – a mirage constructed for the free play of cultural ideas and the creation of oppositional self-definitions. Herodotus confronted not only the vastness of Egyptian antiquity, but also – through the mediation of the Egyptian priests – a particular Egyptian historical consciousness, or at least a formal consciousness of the past. The second book of the *Histories* engages this consciousness and from the rhetorical position which it affords critiques Greek mythical and genealogical notions in order to establish a new position in relation to the past, or

[20] This lop-sided division of intellectual labour mirrors a propensity among certain Classical historians and archaeologists for placing the agency in cultural interactions between Greeks and others squarely on the side of Hellenic culture. In archaeological studies of Greek colonization in the west, for example, non-Greek culture areas in which Greek pottery is found are said to have been *Hellenized*. On the other hand, Greeks found in possession of Near Eastern and Egyptian artistic motifs, or trade goods are said to be *Orientalizing*. These habits of thought perpetuate a dichotomy commonly encountered in Classical scholarship between dynamic Greeks and static barbarians. On this point, see Dietler (1989, 1998). Burkert (1992) 7 notes the scholarly strategy of focusing on the 'creative transformation' by Greeks of Near Eastern culture.

[21] Sahlins (1995) 14.

[22] The question of Egyptian-Greek interaction has been obscured at times by anxiety over issues of origin and influence, especially in the years following the publication of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* volumes. Suggestive though his general arguments regarding the history of Classical scholarship may have been, his reconstruction of the origins of Greek civilization is deeply flawed. On the other side, the reactionary response excited by Bernal's work (especially in the form of Lefkowitz's *Not Out of Africa*) has been equally unfortunate.

more correctly, a new form of past with which to connect the present. Inspired both by an encounter with the antiquity of Egyptian civilization and its particular awareness of the past, it is an historical discourse which at times verges on the metahistorical. Analyses of the Herodotean 'other' fail to grasp this contribution of Egyptian culture to Herodotus' attempt at formulating a new Greek historical consciousness because their approach to understanding the cultural representations at play is decidedly Hellenocentric. It is, therefore with the aim of decentring the ethnographical analogy used in reading Herodotus that I approach the anecdote of Hecataeus and the Theban priests reported in the second book of the *Histories*.[23]

II. THE *EGYPTIAN* MIRAGE

Priestly genealogies

Herodotus' account of the physical confrontation with Egypt's long chronology through images of Theban priests seems distorted by his penchant for hyperbole, especially in the vast number of consecutive generations the statues are held to represent. Perhaps this was nothing more than Herodotus' way of evoking θῶμα through a quantification of Egypt's vast temporal depth.[24] The number 345, it has been argued, was simply invented in order to tally with the 341 Egyptian kings he had just mentioned who ruled from the time of Min to the dodecarchy (with the addition of a few rulers for the period from Psammetichus onward),[25] and with the list of 330 kings' names he claimed Egyptian priests had read to him.[26] All these numbers seem like gross exaggerations, especially since Herodotus reckons the span of Egyptian history as stretching 11,340 years on this basis. Nevertheless, the number of generations, at least, is not at all implausible as a record of what Egyptian priests might have said about their own history. King-lists were certainly kept in various forms throughout Egyptian history.[27] Monumental versions of such lists would have made them readily accessible to Greek travellers. The Abydos king-lists of Sety I and Ramesses II display the cartouches of 76 kings in what later became known to Greeks as the Memnonion. The concentration of early Greek (as well as Phoenician and Aramaic) graffiti in the area of the king-lists suggests that it was a popular site for tourism or pilgrimage in the Late Period.[28] An example of a king-list recorded on papyrus, such as the one from which Herodotus claims the priests read to him, was found in the Theban necropolis in 1822. The Turin Canon, which dates to the reign of Ramesses II, gives a list of kings' names arranged in groups with headings and summations giving the total number of kings in a group and their total number of regnal years. In its incomplete state, an exact number of kings cannot be ascertained, and in any case the list would only include kings up to the reign of Ramesses II, some eight centuries before

[23] Claude Calame (1998) has recently made a salutary contribution to decentring the ethnographical analogy around which 'other'-studies in Classics are built. We are familiar with the other sort of ethnographical analogy which compares Greeks to other culture groups at least since the time of Lafitau's comparisons between the Algonquin and the Greeks, but there is something novel in Calame's comparison. Calame sets the integration of an indigenous Papua-New Guinea chronology (or *temporalité*) with Western chronology in the writings of Michael Somare (the first indigenous prime minister of Papua-New Guinea), alongside the work of '*historiopoiesis*' which Herodotus carries out in his second book as he grapples with the relationship between Greek mythical notions of the past and Egyptian chronology. This strategy usefully inverts the normal structures of the ethnographical analogy described by Hartog, in which we run the risk of too easily seeing ourselves, or at least our ethnographic traditions, in the *Mirror of Herodotus*. An eloquent and lucid comparison of Herodotean and modern ethnography is the well-known article by Redfield (1985).

[24] Hartog (1988) 230-7 has argued that quantification is used to cultivate θῶμα in Herodotus' rhetoric of otherness.

[25] Hdt. 2.142.

[26] Hdt. 2.100.1. Redford (1986) 215 n.49 has suggested that the number 330 results from a misreading of the plural strokes in an expression meaning 'hundreds and tens'.

[27] Redford's catalogue of known king-lists includes examples ranging from the 5th Dynasty to the Ptolemaic period. Redford (1986) 1-64.

[28] Rutherford (forthcoming). I would like to thank Ian Rutherford for drawing my attention to this evidence. For the graffiti, see Perdrizet and Lefèbvre (1919). See also Piankoff (1958-60).

the time of Herodotus. Nevertheless, the scale of the king-list – around 293 to 346 names – is of the same order as described by Herodotus.[29] The tradition represented by the king-list of the Egyptian priest and historian Manetho is also comparable. Compiled with the aid of Egyptian temple archives and monumental inscriptions, the *Aegyptiaca* included a total of 323 pharaohs up to the end of the 25th Dynasty.[30] The high number of monarchs in these lists is due to the inclusion of all kings known to have ruled, even those who reigned a very short time in periods of great turmoil, such as the First Intermediate Period, and all the kings who ruled when the country was divided and ruled by two different dynasties, as in the Second and Third Intermediate Periods.[31] Herodotus' error or exaggeration consists simply in assuming that each of the kings in the Egyptian chronology represented a full generation, and reckoning three generations per century.[32]

As for the statues which Herodotus claims to have seen, large numbers of statues of all kinds were erected in most Egyptian temples. These would have included human figures placed there as part of mortuary provisions so that those represented could partake of temple offerings in the afterlife. A cachette of around 800 statues was, in fact, discovered by Legrain in the forecourt of the seventh pylon of the temple of Amun at Karnak.[33] Many of these were statues of priests, including high priests. The latest of them date to the Ptolemaic period, at which time the sculptures were likely cleared from the cluttered temple of Amun and buried.[34] Most of the statues of the Karnak cachette, therefore, were present to be viewed by visiting Greek intellectuals in the sixth and fifth centuries.[35] Though Hecataeus and Herodotus certainly did not see statues representing 345 consecutive generations of high priests at Thebes, it is plausible enough that their Egyptian guides and interpreters showed them images representing extensive genealogies of priests succeeding to the offices of their forefathers. Remarkable examples do, in fact, survive of the sort of visual record of genealogy which would have impressed upon the travelling Greek historians the long continuum of the Egyptian past.

[29] Hemmerdinger (1996) makes too much of early readings of a fragment of the Turin Canon, in which certain scholars wanted to see the number 330. Nevertheless, the work of Ryholt (1997) 9-30, who has examined the fibres of the Turin Canon in order to improve on the arrangement of the fragments in the publication of Gardiner (1959), allows an estimate of the number of kings from Menes onward that would have been listed in the document. Since each pharaoh's entry occupies one line, and since Ryholt has reconstructed the number of lines for each column, a rough count of the number of kings can be achieved by adding up the number of lines, less the number of lines occupied by headings and summations. Thus, starting from Menes in 3/10 (= Gardiner II/10), the eleven columns of the Turin Canon would have included approximately 254 names. Ryholt also notes evidence that the end of the papyrus roll was cut off, and suggests that a 12th column with up to 30 more names could have been part of the Turin Canon (for a total of up to 284). That such king-lists varied in length is evident from the *wsf*-entries, which represent lacunae in the *Vorlage* carefully marked by the copyist of the Turin Canon. By including missing kings known from other sources that may have fallen in these lacunae, a further 23 kings could be added to the intact *Vorlage* (see Ryholt (1997) 10-12). In any case, the approximate number of kings in the tradition represented by the Turin Canon would be between 254 and 307 kings. At the longest, the list could include kings only up to the reign of Ramesses II. If one adds the 39 kings from Ramesses II to the end of the 25th Dynasty recorded in Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, which undoubtedly drew on similar traditions (see Redford (1986) 213-28), the scale of a king-list such as the one Herodotus reported could have ranged roughly from 293 to 346 names. Herodotus' figures are clearly in the ball-park.

[30] This is the point at which Herodotus pauses in his narrative in order to give his figures. See Lloyd (1988) 34. Redford (1986) 204-332 gives a detailed analysis of the composition of the *Aegyptiaca* (essentially a king-list with inserted narratives), and the probable sources on which Manetho relied.

[31] Listing contemporaneous rulers as though sequential is common in various traditions, including the Sumerian and Assyrian king-lists, and the Behistun inscription composed by Darius I. See Henige (1974) 42-6.

[32] In fact, Herodotus makes a further mathematical error which slightly reduces the total. The number of years should be 11,366. See Wiedemann (1890) 505; Miller (1965) 113.

[33] Legrain (1905, 1906-25); Lloyd (1975-88) 3.109; Assmann (1991) 304.

[34] For bibliography on the statues of the Karnak cachette, see Porter and Moss (1972) 136-67.

[35] Herodotus claims that he was led into the μέγαρον. Normally, the sanctuary of the temple was forbidden to all but Egyptian priests, but Herodotus may have been admitted to one of the many outer courtyards or halls to

A small seated figure of the priest Basa, in the collection of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, represents the kind of image Hecataeus and Herodotus may have seen in Thebes and elsewhere.[36] Basa was a member of a prominent family in the priestly hierarchy of Denderah in the late 22nd or early 23rd Dynasty (*c.* 850–775 BC). On the sides of the figure are inscribed an extensive biographical text and the names and titles of twenty-six generations of paternal ancestors. Though far from the 345 generations Herodotus claims he was shown by the priests at Thebes, this statuette nevertheless represents a concern on the part of a priestly family for carefully maintaining and representing a record of its connections to the past and its long association with the priesthood. An even more remarkable genealogy is found in a relief in white limestone now in Berlin, dating to the reign of Sheshonq V (22nd Dynasty, *c.* 767–730 BC).[37] Four registers each containing fifteen standing figures represent sixty generations of a single family of priests at Memphis, reaching back to the reign of Montuhotep I at the beginning of the 11th Dynasty (*c.* 2160 BC). This span of time – more than 1,300 years – covers an enormous part of Egyptian history, leaving out only the Old Kingdom and the early part of the First Intermediate Period. The hieratic figures advancing with panther skins over their shoulders and flails in their hands likely represent statues such as those described in Herodotus 2.143.[38] Like the images the travelling Greek historians claim to have seen, the figures in the Memphite genealogy purport to represent a continuous line of sons succeeding to their father's position, even when this is chronologically impossible. After fifteen generations, the genealogy begins to exhibit a telescoping effect. Between the contemporaries of the pharaohs Amonemnisu (21st Dynasty) and Ramesses II (19th Dynasty), only one priest intervenes in a period of around 150 years. Redford has suggested that priestly genealogists did not have reliable written records for periods earlier than the twelfth century BC, and after that point, they either relied on oral traditions or artificial reconstructions that extended their genealogies further back into the Egyptian past.[39] This Memphite genealogy is particularly suggestive, since the priests of Memphis are prominent among the chief informants Herodotus continually cites.[40]

The statues of the Karnak cachette itself have not produced genealogical texts as extensive as the Memphite example, but those preserved were sufficient for Legrain to reconstruct the lineages of a few Theban families whose members held important priesthoods over many generations.[41] The most extensive of these genealogical texts, on the back of a statue of the Fourth Prophet of Amun, Djedkhonsefankh, includes a list of fourteen generations of Djedkhonsefankh's ancestors.[42] This is not particularly impressive, even when compared to Hecataeus' brief Greek genealogy, but two formal elements of the text are significant. First, the genealogical information becomes compressed after about five generations. Instead of listing the various titles of each generation, the phrase 'like these' (*mi nn*) is inserted, giving an even greater

see the statues. Fehling (1989) 80 and West (1991) 148 object that Hecataeus and Herodotus claim to have seen wooden statues, when in fact most of the Karnak statues were made of stone. West sees this as a Herodotean touch, intended to lend an air of spurious antiquity to the anecdote, since wood was regarded by Greeks as the material of ancient statues. Wooden statues were, in fact, found among the objects in the Karnak cachette, though they deteriorated very rapidly once exposed to the air. Legrain (1905) 63.

[36] OIM 10729, published by Ritner (1994).

[37] Berlin 23673, published in Borchardt (1935) 96-112, and pls. 2-2a. I would like to thank Robert Ritner for drawing my attention to this remarkable document, and for sharing his forthcoming transcriptions and translations of the relief's inscriptions. As Ritner (forthcoming) points out, the relief in its complete form continued around the corner, and so probably included an even longer sequence of generations.

[38] Redford (1970) 9; (1986) 63-4.

[39] Redford (1970) 5-8; (1986) 63.

[40] E.g. Hdt. 2.28, 54, 99-102, 104, 106-7, 111-13, 116, 118-21, etc. D. Fehling's view that Herodotus simply invented sources at appropriate moments is untenable, since much that Herodotus reports, despite its errors, derives from genuine Egyptian traditions concerning the past. See Lloyd (1988) 22-31.

[41] See, e.g., Legrain (1905).

[42] Cairo General Catalogue 42211, text k (Legrain (1906-25) 3.31-2) = Jansen-Wilken (1985) 1.88-9, 2.475; pl. 21. The cartouches of Osorkon III and Takeloth III date the statue to the middle of the eighth century. For other texts relating to this family, see Kitchen (1986) 576.

impression of the uniformity of titles and offices possessed by each generation than might strictly be the case.[43] Secondly, after the last generation is listed the generations of this priest's house are extended artificially into the dim reaches of the past by the phrase 'one being the son of the other in this house, from fathers to fathers, since the time of the earliest kings' (*i͗w wʿ sꜣ wʿ m pr pn m i͗t.w n i͗t.w ḏr rk ḏrty.w*).[44] The intent of this text was undoubtedly to give the impression of a family long associated with the Theban priesthoods, whose lineage was coterminous with the entire succession of Egyptian kings. As in the case of the Memphite genealogy, the written records of Djedkhonsefankh's ancestry probably do not go much further back than the end of the 20th Dynasty, at which point the genealogist had to resort to a generalized description of a lineage corresponding in length to the great king-lists. This statue, then, not only exemplifies a written representation of the past, but also provides evidence of an oral tradition of genealogies which covered the full extent of human time.[45]

Late Egyptian relations to the past

Several elements in Herodotus' representation of the meeting between the two Greek historians and the Theban priests do correlate with the evidence of Egyptian king-lists and genealogies. This case has been made previously, though in less detail, by several scholars. What is more significant, however, than the relative accuracy of these elements in Herodotus' narrative is the fact that they are themselves representations created by members of a particular society at a given historical moment, who have their own intentions and motivations. The drama of Herodotus' meeting with the Theban priests involves more than the Ionian's θῶμα at the expanses of Egyptian chronology – for it is the priests who are described as the agents in this encounter. Herodotus says they 'did to Hecataeus what they did to me', when they led him into the great hall of statues.[46] These genealogies were, in fact, part of a priestly self-representation particular to late Egyptian culture and continuing through the Persian period in which Herodotus made his enquiries.[47] Hereditary succession in the priesthood became well established relatively late in Egyptian history, in the Third Intermediate Period, and extended genealogies on non-royal stelae and statue inscriptions became common only at this time. At Thebes, in particular, the departure of the pharaonic household from its New Kingdom capital in the 20th Dynasty meant the diminished importance of royal patronage for securing and maintaining rank and office. Thus,

[43] There is some variation. Additional titles beyond what is implied by *mi͗ nn* are added to the ancestors in the tenth and fourteenth generations (Cairo Cat. 42211, text k, coll. 7-8); Brunner (1975) 16 notes that the use of the phrase *mi͗ nn* was a feature of Late Period genealogies.

[44] *Cf.* the translation of Jansen-Wilken (1985) 1.89, 'indem einer der Sohn des anderen in diesem Haus war, als Väter (wiederum) von Vätern seit der Zeit der Vorfahren', which improves on Legrain's translations (Legrain (1905) 76 and (1910) 104). For my rendering of *ḏrty.w*, *cf.* Redford (1986) 318, and Erman and Grapow (1926-63) 5.597-8, especially 598.1, where it is noted that the expression *ḏrty.w* is not used of the gods or with the divine determinative until the Ptolemaic period; note also the parallel in Sethe (1906) 344.

[45] A wealth of comparative evidence on the widespread tendency in various genealogical traditions to construct an extended father/son succession is presented by Henige (1974) 71-94; see also Thomas (2001). Wiedemann (1890) 509, Fehling (1989) 80 and others have criticized Herodotus' account, noting that the great temple of Amun at Karnak goes back only to the 12th Dynasty. West (1991) 148 charitably allows that local tradition may have exaggerated the age of the temple, and that 'we may reasonably surmise... a belief in the hereditary succession to the priesthood as immemorial custom'. There is no need merely to surmise, however, in light of the evidence from the genealogical text of Djedkhonsefankh.

[46] Hdt. 143.1: 'Previously, when the historian Hecataeus was in Thebes, the Egyptian priests... did to him what they also did to me...' (Πρότερον δὲ Ἑκαταίωι τῶι λογοποιῶι ἐν Θήβῃσι... ἐποίησαν οἱ ἱρέες τοῦ Διὸς οἷόν τι καὶ ἐμοὶ...).

[47] That the practice of extended genealogical representations continued into the Persian period when Herodotus made his visit is shown by the inscription of Khnumibre, who traces an elaborate fictive genealogy back 24 generations. Khnumibre was a priest at Heliopolis and Memphis, as well as an overseer of works, who took care to link his genealogy with famous builders of the Nubian period and the New Kingdom. See Posener (1936) 98-105. Extensive genealogies are also found in the Ptolemaic period. Thompson (1988) 204 n.70 mentions a genealogy of masons in the Apis cult at Memphis which stretches back twelve generations.

tenure of priestly office probably came to depend more on tradition and inheritance.[48] With the rise to power of Soshenq I, inaugurating the 22nd Dynasty, there began a period of Libyan influence in the rule of Egypt. The importance of the segmentary lineage system in the Libyan chiefdoms influenced the Libyan dynasts' appointments to various offices, including the priesthoods. Since the traditional sources of wealth and social prestige for families of Egyptian descent were threatened by appointments based on Libyan hereditary kinship, lengthy and detailed genealogies became a means for élite Egyptian families to reassert their claims to positions in the priesthoods.[49] This emphasis on the hereditary principle in appointments to the priesthoods eventually led to the system of inheritance observed by Herodotus at 2.37.5. The cultural practice that lies behind Herodotus' account of the 345 generations of Theban priests is, therefore, conditioned by particular historical circumstances, and is one element in changing relations with the past that the Egyptians themselves experienced in the later periods of their history.

Herodotus likely toured Egypt during the latter part of the reign of Artaxerxes I in the relative tranquillity following the defeat of Inarus' rebellion, after a long period of incursions and foreign rule at the hands of Libyan and Nubian dynasts, the Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipal, and finally – after a revival of native pharaohs in the Saïte dynasty – the Persian king Cambyses. Persian rule, initially benevolent, had later been marked by revolts and severe repression.[50] Concurrent with this period of turmoil, Egyptian cultural awareness of its own past underwent profound changes. In the case of the extensive priestly genealogies discussed earlier, the turn to the past was a response to specific political and social disruptions occasioned by the decline of the 20th Dynasty and the conditions of Libyan rule. In a variety of forms of cultural expression, however, a more general archaizing tendency is detectable in the Late Period, especially in the Saïte dynasty.[51] Pharaohs such as Apries, Psammetichus II and Amasis began to use versions of royal titulature based on models from the Old Kingdom.[52] Biographical texts and funerary inscriptions included epithets which had not been used since the Middle and Old Kingdoms, as well as official titles that had been revived after a lapse of a thousand years.[53] Hieroglyphic inscriptions recalled archaic orthography, and verb forms from Middle Egyptian reappeared in inscriptions based on ancient models.[54] The turn toward the past was evident in the revival of older funerary formulae and the imitation of the Pyramid Texts in tomb inscriptions. Art of this period also showed a great concern for the imitation of styles and forms from earlier periods.[55]

The social and political causes for this self-conscious reorientation toward the distant past were undoubtedly complex and changed with the historical circumstances. Nevertheless, a gen-

[48] See Redford (1970) 5-6; (1986) 318-19.

[49] Ritner (1994) 219; Ritner (forthcoming); in general, see Lloyd (1975-88) 2.171, 3.109; Grimal (1992) 319-31. Libyan Period (and also Saïte) genealogies often trace ancestry back to a royal name, and then stop or shift to a collateral branch, having asserted a connection to the royal family. See Redford (1986) 62. Note also the relatively frequent connections to the royal house in the genealogies discussed by Legrain (1905) 72-82.

[50] On this period, see Lloyd (1983); Grimal (1992) 319-71; the classic study of the Saïte and Persian periods is Kienetz (1953), esp. 5-66. For the probable date of Herodotus' visit, see Jacoby (1912b) 265-7; How and Wells (1912) 411; Wells (1923) 177-82, influenced by Bauer (1878), argued contrary to Jacoby that Herodotus visited Egypt between 425 and 415, and that the second book was written later than the rest. For more recent discussions of the dating, see Sansone (1985) and Evans (1987).

[51] On this phenomenon, see Nagy (1973) and Brunner (1970).

[52] Lloyd (1983) 288.

[53] Among the most frequent of these archaizing titles was *ḫrp ḥw.t-nt* ('Governor of the Mansion of the Red Crown'), which was common in the Old Kingdom, declined in the Middle Kingdom, and then disappeared until the Saïte period. See Nagy (1973) 53-9; Brunner (1970) 152-4.

[54] These included the *sḏm·f, sḏm·n·f, sḏm pw ỉr·n·f* forms and the negation *nfr·n*; see the references in Nagy (1973) 60, nn. 85-7; see also Brunner (1970) 154-5 who notes that the use of single consonant signs in Nectanebo's Naucratis Stele of 377 BC, though previously interpreted as a sign of Greek influence, is actually due to conscious archaism based on Old Kingdom orthographic models. For a more recent study of these linguistic archaisms, see Manuelian (1994), reviewed by Ray (1996).

[55] Nagy (1973) 60-3. Bianchi (1982) 947 argues that Late Period artistic tendencies continue into the Persian period.

eral pattern of cultivating links between the present and Egypt's past clearly emerged, whether as cultural resistance to political misfortune in response to repeated foreign incursions, or – in the case of the Saïte dynasty – as the self-assertion of a newly reunified Egypt looking to its past to recover the purest expressions of its cultural traditions.[56] The distant past which acted as the guarantor of present legitimacy need no longer be situated only in the 'first time' (*sp tpy*) of mythical origins. As Helmut Brunner has argued, the fundamental significance of archaizing in the Late Period was the anchoring of Egyptian identity in individuals and cultural forms of the historical past: 'It was believed that the well-being founded on the *sp tpy* could now be grasped in the historical past.'[57] The mythical *Urzeit* did not, of course, cease to be relevant, but a *human* past of great kings, and wise sages could now provide a counterbalance to more recent misfortunes which had disrupted the integrity of the pharaoh as divine representative, and the sanctity and unity of the Two Lands.[58]

This fundamental and novel orientation to the human historical past described by Brunner is clearly documented later, in inscriptions dating from the period after the Persians had been driven from Egypt a second time and replaced by Macedonian rulers. Ptolemy I, in the Satrap Stele, was careful to align his benefices to the priesthood with an Egyptian view of the past. His grant of estate lands to the divinities of Buto was portrayed as a restoration of a previous grant which had been overturned by the hated Persian king Xerxes.[59] Likewise, the great Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu, built between 237 and 142 BC, was founded not only on the precedent of divine creation, as was conventional, but also with reference to previous temples established on the site. The inscriptions indicate that the new temple was built on the site of a predecessor from the time of Khufu (*c.* 2650 BC), which had been rebuilt under Tuthmosis III (*c.* 1450). In earlier periods, the site of the temple's innermost sanctuary was identified with the *benben* mound which first arose from the primordial flood waters in the creation of the world.[60] In the later periods of Egyptian history, however, it was necessary to connect the temple with both mythical and historical time.[61] The past, moreover, served a propagandistic function in an age of foreign domination by recalling the glories of Egypt's native kings. The Bentresh stele, discovered near

[56] On the various interpretations of the 'Saïte renaissance' and archaizing tendencies in the Late Period, see Brunner (1970) 155-7. Assmann, (1991) 305, in general, associates the turn to the past in the Late Period with the experience of foreign rule. Lloyd (1983) 289 sees Saïte archaizing as a propagandistic effort to restore or at least recall the glories of Egypt's past.

[57] Brunner (1970) 160: 'Das in dem *sp tpy* begründete Heil glaubt man nun in der historischen Vergangenheit fassen zu können'; see also his succinct summation at 161: ' ...die eigentliche Wurzel des Archaismus aber ist die Verwechslung der mythischen Urzeit mit der historischen Vergangenheit'.

[58] Jan Assmann (1991) 312 traces critical elements in the formation of this Egyptian *Vergangenheitsbewußtsein* to an even earlier period, when Egypt was at the height of its political power and influence in the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean. Under the Ramessides, Assmann (1991) 305-6 argues, the first steps were taken towards a comprehensive codification and canonization of the Egyptian past. From this period date the monumental king-lists of Karnak, Abydos and Saqqara, and the practice of honouring Menes, Montuhotep and Ahmose as the founders of the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms. A new interest in ancient monuments is attested through the many inscriptions of Egyptian visitors, and the restorations of prince Khamwas, the fourth son of Ramesses the Great, who appears to be the heroic priestly figure behind the Sethos story (Hdt. 2.141). An inscription commemorating Khamwas' restoration work is still partly visible on the south side of the pyramid of Unas. This was also the age in which Middle Egyptian was first used as a classical, literary dialect in contrast to the Late Egyptian of the New Kingdom, used for a 'modern' Ramesside literature. A wisdom text on the verso of *P.Chester Beatty* establishes a canon of eight ancient wisdom writers (Hardedef, Imhotep, Neferti, Khety, Ptah-emdjehuty, Khakheperresonb, Ptahhotep and Kaires), and contrasts their greatness with the present age, stating that no such sage now exists. The presence of the past in this literary context does not show unbroken continuity, but opens up an historical gap between the present and a valorized past. Assmann (1991) 306-7.

[59] See Goedicke (1985).

[60] Assmann (1991) 305 and (1992) 9-10, 24-5; the temple of Edfu did, nevertheless, include traditional architectural references to the creation (see Finnestad (1997) 204-12), but the double reference to both mythical and human or historical time in the inscription shows the concern with anchoring the temple in a traditional human past as well as *illud tempus* (explored by Eliade (1954)).

Karnak, purports to be a monument of Ramesses II, though its portrayal of Egypt at the height of its power and influence in the Near East was in fact produced in the Persian or Ptolemaic period.[62]

This propagandistic use of the past in Late Egyptian self-representation is also apparent in Herodotus' account of pharaonic history before the dodecarchy and the rise of Psammetichus. Herodotus clearly identifies the Egyptians, and especially priests as his primary source for the entire period from the first king Min to the reign of the priest Sethos.[63] It is not surprising, therefore, that Herodotus' material includes anecdotes and legends glorifying the achievements of Egypt's great kings which were undoubtedly current among his informants.[64] In Herodotus' account of early pharaonic history, the Egyptian glorification of the past focuses on the figure of Sesostris, an historical reminiscence of two exceedingly energetic and capable kings of the same name, along with an admixture of elements from other reigns, folklore and propagandistic exaggeration.[65] In addition to numerous building projects and administrative innovations, Sesostris is credited with victorious expeditions to the Arabian Gulf, Asia, Scythia, Thrace and Colchis. Egyptian territory and political influence were, in fact, extended in the reigns of Sesostris I and Sesostris III, but their military expeditions went no further than Nubia and Syro-Palestine.[66] Naturally, the exploits of Sesostris as related to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests were not faithful records of a particular king's activities. Rather, they were part of Egyptian efforts to construct a discursive identity in the past to rival the accomplishments of those who afflicted them in the present. As A.B. Lloyd has shown, the emphasis on Sesostris as a representative of Egypt's past is intended to provide an example of an Egyptian king whose successful campaigns extended Egyptian territory as far as the Second Cataract and far surpassed Cambyses' disastrous attempt to invade Nubia.[67] The Egyptian attempt to palliate present defeat through the past triumphs of Sesostris is made explicit in the tale of Darius' thwarted desire to place images of himself before those of Sesostris at the temple of Hephaestus at Memphis:

[61] Another variety of this Late Egyptian use of the past is found in the so-called 'Famine Stele'. An inscription, which is probably pseudepigraphical, purports to date from the time of Djoser, and tells the tale of a famine which was averted by the miraculous intervention of the god Khnum. The stele, dating to the Ptolemaic period, was likely formulated by the priests of Khnum, who were anxious to protect their revenues and privileges in a time of competition with the temple of Isis at Philae. For English translations, see Lichtheim (1980) 94-100.

[62] The narrative opens with Ramesses receiving tribute in Mitanni on the Upper Euphrates, and taking a princess of Bakhtan as a royal wife. Later, the younger sister of the king's new wife falls ill, and the ruler of Bakhtan sends to Ramesses for help. The Egyptian king sends his royal scribe Thothemheb to diagnose the malady, and the princess Bentresh is ultimately healed. This narrative serves multiple functions. It extols the miraculous power of the god Khons, the benevolence of Ramesses II, and the medical knowledge of Egyptian scribes. For translation, notes and additional references, see Lichtheim (1980) 90-4. Other texts also exhibit the Late Period Egyptian concern with the past, e.g. the Shabaka stone which purports to record the Memphite theology from an ancient crumbling papyrus. For an English translation, see Lichtheim (1973) 51-8, though note Junge (1973), who disputes the dating of the 'ancient' text.

[63] Herodotus makes a clear distinction between his sources for the period from Min to Sethos, and those for the dodecarchy and the Saïte dynasty: 'Up to this point in the account, the Egyptians and the priests spoke, pointing out that 341 human generations have been born from the first king to this last priest of Hephaistos... ' (2.142.1); 'These things the Egyptians themselves say, but what other people say and what the Egyptians in agreement with others say happened in this land, I shall now relate – with a bit added from my own observation' (2.147.1).

[64] *Cf.* Froidefond (1971) 161-2; on the Egyptian popular tradition in Herodotus more generally, see Spiegelberg (1927) 18-37; Froidefond (1971) 181-7; Weeks (1977); Evans (1991) 134-40.

[65] Sesostris (Senwosret) was the name of three kings of the 12th Dynasty (*c.* 1991–1785 BC). Sesostris I and Sesostris III were the most active of these, conquering Nubia and strengthening Egyptian influence in the Near East, as well as presiding over extensive building programmes within Egypt. See Lloyd (1975-88) 3.16-37; on the historical activities of these kings, see Grimal (1992) 161-70.

[66] Material evidence of Egyptian influence in the 12th Dynasty extends as far as Megiddo, Ras-Shamra and the region of modern Ankara. Grimal (1992) 165.

[67] Hdt. 3.17-26. See Lloyd (1975-88) 3.36; see also Ray (1988) 264. Obsomer (1989) argues against this interpretation with an elaborate reconstruction of the transmission and distortion of information from particular stelae of Sesostris III, but his case is unconvincing.

τῶν δὴ ὁ ἱρεὺς τοῦ Ἡφαίστου χρόνωι μετέπειτα πολλῶι Δαρεῖον τὸν Πέρσην οὐ περιεῖδε ἱστάντα ἔμπροσθε ἀνδριάντα, φὰς οὔ οἱ πεποιῆσθαι ἔργα οἷά περ Σεσώστρι τῶι Αἰγυπτίωι. Σέσωστριν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τε καταστρέψασθαι ἔθνεα οὐκ ἐλάσσω ἐκείνου καὶ δὴ καὶ Σκύθας, Δαρεῖον δὲ οὐ δυνασθῆναι Σκύθας ἑλεῖν. οὐκ ὦν δίκαιον εἶναι ἱστάναι ἔμπροσθε τῶν ἐκείνου ἀναθημάτων μὴ οὐκ ὑπερβαλόμενον τοῖσι ἔργοισι. Δαρεῖον μέν νυν λέγουσι πρὸς ταῦτα συγγνώμην ποιήσασθαι.

Long afterwards, the priest of Hephaestus would not permit Darius the Persian to set up a statue in front of these, saying that he had not accomplished deeds as great as those of Sesostris the Egyptian. For Sesostris had subdued nations no less than he, and also the Scythians, while Darius was not able to conquer the Scythians. Thus it was not right that he should erect a statue in front of those of one whose accomplishments he had not surpassed. Darius, they say, agreed to this.[68]

In the stories of Sesostris, it becomes clear that Egyptian awareness of the past in the Persian period was cultivated as a focus for representations of resistance to a hated foreign ruler.[69]

Thus, it is not simply the marvel of a massive expanse of time which Herodotus encounters in Egypt, but a mediated cultural awareness of that time. To put it another way, Herodotus does not confront the *archaic* civilization of ancient Egypt, but rather the *archaizing* civilization of his own era. Though earlier periods had seen the formulation of a canonical Egyptian culture based on models from a bygone era,[70] the Egyptian consciousness of the past changed and intensified under the historical conditions of the Late Period. The human past became not only a paradigm of cultural perfection, but also a discursive means of constructing identity and legitimacy. What Herodotus encountered in Egypt, therefore, was not a static archaic society, but one actively engaged in creating and representing a relationship to the human historical past.

III. HERODOTUS' USE OF THE EGYPTIAN MIRAGE

In Herodotus' account, the Theban priests emphasize an Egyptian word in the demonstration of their country's long chronology, focusing attention on the most important characteristic of the past with which Herodotus' informants presented him. The Egyptians contest Hecataeus' genealogy, in which he traces his ancestry back to a god after only sixteen generations, by showing him 345 statues of human priests:

Ἑκαταίωι δὲ γενεηλογήσαντι ἑωυτὸν καὶ ἀναδήσαντι ἐς ἑκκαιδέκατον θεὸν ἀντεγενεηλόγησαν ἐπὶ τῆι ἀριθμήσι, οὐ δεκόμενοι παρ' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ θεοῦ γενέσθαι ἄνθρωπον· ἀντεγενεηλόγησαν δὲ ὧδε, φάμενοι ἕκαστον τῶν κολοσσῶν πίρωμιν ἐκ πιρώμιος γεγονέναι, ἐς ὃ τοὺς πέντε καὶ τεσσεράκοντα καὶ τριηκοσίους ἀπέδεξαν κολοσσούς, καὶ οὔτε ἐς θεὸν οὔτε ἐς ἥρωα ἀνέδησαν αὐτούς. πίρωμις δέ ἐστι κατ' Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν καλὸς κἀγαθός. ἤδη ὦν τῶν αἱ εἰκόνες ἦσαν, τοιούτους ἀπεδείκνυσάν σφεας πάντας ἐόντας, θεῶν δὲ πολλὸν ἀπαλλαγμένους.

When Hecataeus recited his genealogy, and traced it back to a god in the sixteenth generation, they disputed his genealogy with regard to the number, denying his claim that a man could be born of a god. They disputed his genealogy thus, saying that each of the statues was a *piromis* born from a *piromis*, until they had gone through the 345 statues, and made no connection either with god or hero. *Piromis* in the Greek language means 'gentleman'. And so they directly showed that those whom the images represented were far from being gods.[71]

[68] Hdt. 2.110.2-3.

[69] Lloyd (1975-88) 3.18-19 notes that this pattern was continued in later versions of the Sesostris legend, in which his conquests were considerably expanded, especially to the east, in order to rival those of Alexander the Great. Diodorus Siculus (1.53.5) relates that Sesostris was sent by his father to Arabia in order to subdue it, and (at 1.55.2) that his fleet subdued coastal peoples as far as India. *Cf.* Strabo 15.1.6, 16.4.4. The tradition received by Herodotus also seems to have suppressed the Assyrian domination of Egypt, and the fact that the Saïtes initially owed their position to the Assyrians. See Braun (1982) 36.

[70] See above n.58.

[71] Hdt. 2.143.4-144.1.

The word πίρωμις is a Greek phonetic rendering of the Egyptian noun *rmṯ* ('man') and the definite article *pꜣ*, which becomes ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ in Coptic (ⲫⲣⲱⲙⲓ in the Bohairic dialect). The translation καλὸς κἀγαθός suggests, moreover, that πίρωμις may alternatively have transcribed the Egyptian phrase *pꜣ rmṯ ꜥꜣ*, an expression which becomes the standard term for a 'man of importance' in Late Egyptian, though *pꜣ rmṯ* may also have this meaning.[72] What is most important to the anecdote's narrative, and the refutation of Hecataeus' claims, however, is the fact that the Egyptians claim to have recorded 345 generations of a *human* past, without once resorting to any connection with a divinity or hero. This emphasis on the human past echoes Herodotus' previous summation of the pharaonic chronology presented to him by the Egyptian priests: according to Herodotus' (misguided) calculations, the Egyptian priests have records of a past stretching back more than eleven millennia without a single instance of a god assuming human form.[73] While it is true that according to the Egyptians the gods did at one time rule on earth, this age is pushed much farther back in time than could be imagined by the Greeks.[74] The Egyptian division between *hoc tempus* and *illud tempus* does not exist a mere sixteen generations in the past, but is placed far earlier than the earliest Greek accounts of interactions between gods and men. What Herodotus represents for the reader, therefore, is an encounter which reorients the Greek imagination toward its own mythical past.

Herodotus adopts the perspective offered by this Late Egyptian awareness of the human past in order to critique those whom he sees as his Greek predecessors and rivals. The criticism is two-fold, focusing on Greek genealogical accounts of human relations to the gods, and on Greek mythologizing accounts of the past generally. In the first case, his rhetorical target is obviously the Ionian logographer Hecataeus, whom he portrays as the ignorant Greek in the tale of the priests' statues. Herodotus disavows Hecataeus' profession, saying explicitly that he refrained from 'genealogizing' though he too was shown the statues in Thebes. Hecataeus himself, of course, adopted a critical position with regard to Greek tales in the proem to his *Genealogies* (also known as *Histories* or *Heroologia*), declaring that he writes down those which seem to him true, since the λόγοι of the Greeks are many and foolish.[75] As F. Hartog has pointed out, however, the critical distance which separates Hecataeus from his material is minimal.[76] When there is evidence of Hecataeus' method, he seems to rely on the principle of 'common sense' (δοκεῖν) announced in the opening statement of his work.[77] His most significant contribution to the development of Greek historical thought was the construction of 'complete genealogies' bridging the gap between present historical time and the mythical-genealogical past, a move perhaps itself inspired by Hecataeus' experience of Late Egyptian constructions of the past.[78] Herodotus, how-

[72] Crum (1939) 294b-295a (ⲣⲱⲙⲉ); 296a (ⲣⲙⲙⲁⲟ); see also Vycichl (1983) 172-3; for *pꜣ rmṯ* in the sense of 'man of importance', see Erman and Grapow (1926-63) 2.422.10; discussion of πίρωμις in Spiegelberg (1927) 9; Lloyd (1975-88) 3.110; Wiedemann (1890) 510 noted that the personal name Πίρωμις is mentioned in an inscription from Halicarnassus (*SIG*³ 49.19, 32), suggesting that Herodotus may have learned this word there. The resemblance to the word is probably coincidental. See Zgusta (1964) 432.

[73] Hdt. 2.142.3: οὕτως ἐν μυρίοισί τε ἔτεσι καὶ χιλίοισι καὶ πρὸς τριηκοσίοισί τε καὶ τεσσεράκοντα ἔλεγον θεὸν ἀνθρωποειδέα οὐδένα γενέσθαι· οὐ μὲν οὐδὲ πρότερον οὐδὲ ὕστερον ἐν τοῖσι ὑπολοίποισι Αἰγύπτου βασιλεῦσι γενομένοισι ἔλεγον οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον. On Herodotus' miscalculations, see above, n.32. In an earlier mention of the Egyptian king-list, Herodotus qualifies the generations of kings as human (2.100.1): μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον κατέλεγον οἱ ἱρέες ἐκ βύβλου ἄλλων βασιλέων τριηκοσίων τε καὶ τριήκοντα οὐνόματα. ἐν τοσαύτῃσι δὲ γενεῇσι ἀνθρώπων ὀκτωκαίδεκα μὲν Αἰθίοπες ἦσαν, μία δὲ γυνὴ ἐπιχωρίη, οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι ἄνδρες Αἰγύπτιοι.

[74] Hdt. 2.144.1.

[75] *FGrHist* 1 F1.

[76] Following an anthropological distinction between *exegesis*, a commentary on tradition from within a culture, and *interpretation*, an external discourse which demands a certain critical distance, he notes that 'avec Hécatée l'interprétation, si interprétation il y a, est toute proche encore de l'exégèse'. Hartog (1989) 125, citing M. Detienne, *L'invention de la mythologie* (Paris 1981) 13.

[77] Hartog (1989) 126.

[78] Bertelli (1998) has suggested that this resulted in the 'desacralization' of mythical time, a crucial step in the development of a critical approach to traditions concerning the past.

ever, takes a more critical position with regard to Greek myth and genealogy by adopting the humanized Late Egyptian view of the past, at least for his own rhetorical purposes. Several centuries later this perspective earned him Plutarch's accusation of 'philobarbarism'.[79] Nevertheless, the Egyptian *logos* established a space in which Herodotus could conduct a self-reflexive critique of Greek relations to *illud tempus* which contributed to a changing Greek historical consciousness.

While Herodotus represents Hecataeus as a key rival to his own historiographical project in genealogy, mythological traditions of the Greek past are implicitly embodied in Homer and the poets of the epic cycle.[80] Indeed, Herodotus' introductory account of the origins of enmity between Greece and the Eastern barbarians offers rationalizing Persian and Phoenician versions of the causes of the Trojan war, ordinarily the purview of epic.[81] In the Egyptian *logos*, Herodotus takes up the story of Helen's abduction once again, and Homeric myth is euhemerized within the framework of an Egyptian chronology of human kings. The mantic sea-god Proteus whom Menelaus encounters off the coast of Egypt on the island of Pharos becomes an Egyptian pharaoh.[82] Thon, the husband of Polydamna, the Egyptian woman who gave Helen the miraculous νηπενθής drug, becomes Proteus' coastal warden Thonis, who reports Paris' crime when he is forced onto Egyptian shores.[83] Herodotus relates a version of the story that Helen never went to Troy at all,[84] in which Proteus acts as the just king, safeguarding Helen and the property stolen from Menelaus, and sending Paris on his way back to Troy. Homer's references to Helen's visit with Thon and Polydamna and to Menelaus' sojourn in Egypt, Herodotus claims, show that he was also aware of this version of the story of Helen's abduction, though he chose to reject it as unsuitable for epic poetry.[85] Herodotus here distinguishes the mythical material of Homer from that of his own narrative, and thereby offers an implicit definition of the mode in which he is writing about the past. Aligning himself with the long human chronology then current in Late Period Egypt, he sets the legendary figures of Homeric poetry in a temporal landscape where the principle of τὸ εἰκός operates. This is the principle on which he accepts this version of Helen's abduction and the Trojan war (which he claims the Egyptian priests gave him),[86] arguing that Priam would not have been so foolish as to endure years of war and the

[79] The epithet φιλοβάρβαρος is introduced when Plutarch (*Moralia* 857a) discusses Herodotus' rationalization of Greek myth on the basis of the Egyptian temporal perspective.

[80] On one of only two occasions Herodotus uses the word μῦθος, he links it to Homer and other early poets. In rejecting explanations of the flooding of the Nile linked to the river Ocean, Herodotus (2.23) writes: ὁ δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ λέξας ἐς ἀφανὲς τὸν μῦθον ἀνενείκας οὐκ ἔχει ἔλεγχον· οὐ γάρ τινα ἔγωγε οἶδα ποταμὸν Ὠκεανὸν ἐόντα, Ὅμηρον δὲ ἤ τινα τῶν πρότερον γενομένων ποιητέων δοκέω τοὔνομα εὑρόντα ἐς ποίησιν ἐσενείκασθαι. The other use of the μῦθος also occurs in the second book, and is discussed below.

[81] Hdt. 1.1-5.

[82] Hom. *Od.* 4.351-570; Hdt. 2.112-19; Herodotus does not mention any Egyptian name with which this king is to be identified, stating explicitly that Proteus is his Greek name: ἄνδρα Μεμφίτην, τῶι κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλήνων γλῶσσαν οὔνομα Πρωτέα εἶναι (2.112.1). Lloyd (1975-88) 3.43-4 has refuted earlier attempts to derive the name Proteus from the Egyptian *Pꜣ-rwty*. In Euripides' *Helen*, produced in 412, Proteus was also depicted as a benevolent king in contrast to his son Theoclymenus, though in this version Helen was spirited away to Egypt by Hermes and an image of her went to Troy.

[83] Hom. *Od.* 4.227-32; Hdt. 2.113-15.

[84] The story that Helen remained in Egypt is first found in Stesichorus' palinode on Helen (*PMG* 192 = Pl. *Phdr.* 243a; see also *PMG* 193 = *POxy* 2506, *fr.* 26, col. i). The tale may have appeared earlier in Hesiod, if the report is reliable that he mentioned Helen's phantom travelling to Troy in her place (*fr.* 358, Merkelbach and West).

[85] Hdt. 2.116.1: δοκέει δέ μοι καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν λόγον τοῦτον πυθέσθαι· ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐς τὴν ἐποποιίην εὐπρεπὴς ἦν τῶι ἑτέρωι τῶι περ ἐχρήσατο, [ἐς ὃ] μετῆκε αὐτόν, δηλώσας ὡς καὶ τοῦτον ἐπίσταιτο τὸν λόγον.

[86] As Lloyd (1975-88) 3.46 notes, Herodotus, if he got the tale from the priests at all, probably extracted it with a series of leading questions. The tradition most likely existed previously. In the Graeco-Roman period, there is evidence for Egyptian familiarity with the Homeric poems in the *Petubastis Cycle*, but it is difficult to determine how far back it can be traced.

deaths of so many of his children and fellow Trojans, simply to allow Paris and Helen to continue living together.[87]

An even more direct critique of Greek myth occurs earlier in the second book of the *Histories*, as Herodotus considers the tale of Heracles' visit to Egypt and his near death as a human sacrifice. Aside from a previous reference to the river Ocean as a μῦθος, also in the second book, this is the only time Herodotus uses the word to describe Greek mythical notions.[88] The negative sense in which he uses μῦθος is clear from the manner in which he introduces the story: 'The Greeks tell many other tales uncritically. One of the foolish ones is this *muthos* they tell about Herakles... '[89] The story is that the Egyptians garlanded Heracles and led him off to be sacrificed to Zeus. At first he remained calm, but then as they approached the altar, he exerted his strength and killed all those present. Herodotus refutes this myth with an argument κατὰ τὸ εἰκός. Anyone who knows anything about the nature and customs of the Egyptians, he argues, knows it would be impossible for them to perform human sacrifice, since they are permitted to sacrifice only rams, sheep and cattle that have been inspected for purity, along with geese. The story told by the Greeks could not have taken place, since it is contrary to both the φύσις and νόμοι of the Egyptians. Herodotus, therefore, establishes the importance of understanding Egyptian customs, as well as his own expert position in regard to other Greeks. The second argument he offers for why the tale is unlikely is the φύσις of Heracles: he is a man. He is not physically capable of killing tens of thousands of people, as the myth says he did.[90]

This human figure of Heracles, bound by present-day constraints of what a human being can reasonably be expected to do, is central to Herodotus' reconciliation of Greek and Egyptian chronologies, and his renegotiation of the boundary between *illud tempus* and *hoc tempus* in the Greek consciousness of the past.[91] Just prior to his refutation of the myth of Heracles' visit to Egypt, Herodotus explores various traditions on the age of Heracles. The Egyptian Heracles, he learned from the priests, is one of the most ancient of the Egyptian gods, being one of the twelve who formed a second generation of gods after an original eight some 17,000 years before the time of Amasis. Of the Greek Heracles, Herodotus says he could find nothing at all in Egypt. Nevertheless, the Greeks derived the name Heracles from the Egyptians and used this name for the son of Amphitryon and Alcmene. By travelling to sanctuaries in Tyre and on Thasos, Herodotus confirmed that the worship of Heracles was very ancient – more ancient than the usual Greek reckonings, which were undoubtedly based on genealogies stretching back to the legendary and mythical past. The correct solution to this dilemma, Herodotus suggests, lies in the practice of those who have founded double temples to Heracles.[92] In one they sacrifice to him as an immortal with the epithet 'Olympian', and in the other they sacrifice to him as a hero. Herodotus is not proposing that the hero and the Olympian Heracles are two aspects of the same

[87] In discussing the foundations of the oracles at Siwa and Dodona, Herodotus (2.55-8) likewise attributes the rationalizing argument to the Egyptian priests, and the mythical version to the Greeks, reconciling the two by offering rationalizations of the Greek account on the basis of the Egyptian.

[88] See n.80 above.

[89] Hdt. 2.45.1: λέγουσι δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνεπισκέπτως οἱ Ἕλληνες· εὐήθης δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὅδε ὁ μῦθός ἐστι τὸν περὶ Ἡρακλέος λέγουσι...

[90] Hdt. 2.45.2-3.

[91] Heracles is also critical to the argument set forth by Vannicelli (2001) that although Herodotus uses the long Egyptian chronology to support his scheme of human history, the periodization imposed on his account of Egypt's past is essentially Greek. Vannicelli (2001) 224-7 points out the chronological problem that results from an implied synchronism of Moeris and Sesostris with Heracles (900 years from Herodotus' day) and the insufficient number of Egyptian kings listed in his account (if one reckons three generations per century). One reason for this discrepancy is suggested by the total number of individual kings discussed in the Egyptian λόγος. From Sesostris to Amasis, Herodotus gives accounts of sixteen kings, suggesting that his reconstructed Egyptian king-list, as much as it related to Heraclid periodization, is also connected with his polemic against Hecataeus and his sixteen-generation 'complete genealogy'. Herodotus' intention is perhaps to expose the temporal brevity created by the 'floating gap' in Hecataeus' attempt at genealogical chronology. On the 'floating gap', see Thomas (2001).

[92] Hdt. 2.44.5.

divinity, but rather that they are two distinct figures. The latter is the ancient and divine Heracles, known to the Egyptians and others, while the former is the human son of Alcmene and Amphitryon honoured as a hero, who is much more recent and whose name is derived from the ancient divinity.

The implications of this move become clear later, when Herodotus returns to the question of the relative antiquity of Greek and Egyptian gods following the anecdote of Hecataeus and the Theban priests. In the time prior to the 345 human generations of high priests and kings, the gods did, in fact, rule Egypt, but whereas the Egyptians consider Heracles, Dionysus and Pan among the oldest of the Egyptian pantheon, these same divinities are the youngest of the Greek gods. Dionysus is supposed by the Greeks to have lived 1,600 years before Herodotus' day, Heracles 900 years, and Pan a mere 800 years. Though the notion of a double Heracles solves one chronological problem, the Greek traditions regarding the other two gods require Herodotus ultimately to settle on a different solution:

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ φανεροί τε ἐγένοντο καὶ κατεγήρασαν καὶ οὗτοι ἐν τῆι Ἑλλάδι, κατά περ Ἡρακλέης ὁ ἐξ Ἀμφιτρύωνος γενόμενος καὶ δὴ καὶ Διόνυσος ὁ ἐκ Σεμέλης καὶ Πὰν ὁ ἐκ Πηνελόπης γενόμενος, ἔφη ἄν τις καὶ τούτους ἄλλους γενομένους ἄνδρας ἔχειν τὰ ἐκείνων οὐνόματα τῶν προγεγονότων θεῶν· νῦν δὲ Διόνυσόν τε λέγουσι οἱ Ἕλληνες ὡς αὐτίκα γενόμενον ἐς τὸν μηρὸν ἐνερράψατο Ζεὺς καὶ ἤνεικε ἐς Νύσαν τὴν ὑπὲρ Αἰγύπτου ἐοῦσαν ἐν τῆι Αἰθιοπίηι, καὶ Πανός γε πέρι οὐκ ἔχουσι εἰπεῖν ὅκηι ἐτράπετο γενόμενος. δῆλα ὦν μοι γέγονε ὅτι ὕστερον ἐπύθοντο οἱ Ἕλληνες τούτων τὰ οὐνόματα ἢ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν. ἀπ' οὗ δὲ ἐπύθοντο χρόνου, ἀπὸ τούτου γενεηλογέουσι αὐτῶν τὴν γένεσιν.

> For if these gods too were known and grew old in Greece, like Heracles the son of Amphitryon, and especially Dionysus the son of Semele, and Pan the son of Penelope, one could say that these last two were men who had the names of those earlier gods. But as it happens, the Greeks say that as soon as Dionysus was born, Zeus sewed him up in his thigh and brought him to Nysa, which is in Ethiopia above Egypt, and concerning Pan they cannot say what happened to him after he was born. It is clear to me, therefore, that the Greeks learned the names of these later than the other gods. And it is from the time that they learned of them that they trace their genealogy.[93]

Though the same solution cannot work in the cases of Pan and Dionysus as in the case of Heracles, the principle is similar. Herodotus finds a human historical point through which the Greeks relate chronologically to the past: the point in time at which the Greeks discovered the names of these particular gods. The gods themselves, he argues, are much older than has been imagined by the Greeks, and the genealogical chronologies, such as those of Hecataeus, which relate contemporary generations to the gods are mythical representations of the founding of cults in the Greek world. As with the double Heracles, Herodotus creates a double past: one to which human chronology relates, and another which is the time of divine origins and exists far away in the distant past.

The effect is an extension of human time back to an earlier point, and the re-evaluation of a mythical time of human-divine interactions in more human terms. This does not necessarily diminish the significance of the gods, but it does attempt to replace an Eliadean *Urzeit* on which customs and identity are built with a semi-historical, human past. By humanizing the legendary age of human divine interactions, Herodotus also extends into the past the scope of his ἱστορίη. Mythical tales of the Greeks are susceptible to analysis through an emerging method of gathering pieces of evidence and versions of events, and considering them according to the principle of τὸ εἰκός. Greek μῦθοι, for which Herodotus claims there can be no ἔλεγχος – no critical

[93] Hdt. 2.146.1-2.

examination or refutation,[94] are transformed into semi-historical accounts of human actions in the past which can be assessed by standards applicable in the present. This metahistorical re-evaluation of approaches to the past is carried out within Herodotus' long digression on the history and customs of Egypt, for it is apparent that his experience of the Late Period Egyptian representation of the past had given Herodotus a field in which to carry out a comparison not only of traditions about particular events and cultural practices, but of approaches and relations to the past.[95] In a sense, the Egyptian temporal perspective was a framework within which Herodotus could historicize aspects of Greek collective memory. When Greek myths are retold in the manner of Herodotus, their significance is resituated in a human chronology, and the emphasis in human relations to the past is shifted from *illud tempus* to *hoc tempus*. The confrontation, therefore, of the Ionian historians with the statues of the Theban priests signifies an important intersection of Greek and Egyptian notions of the past, and a reorientation of Greek historical awareness. If Hecataeus' method consisted of comparing and writing down accounts of genealogical connections with a mythical age, Herodotus attempted to formulate a new historical consciousness, which is critical to the existence of history. Jan Assmann, following Weber and Jaspers, sets the terms for his discussion of Egyptian history as follows: 'History does not belong to the people that has left behind a written record of its existence, but to the one that has become conscious of history as a meaningful dimension of its existence.'[96] When Herodotus uses Egyptian historical consciousness in order to humanize the mythical past upon which Greek identity rested, he is ultimately laying the groundwork for the valorization of a nearer historical past, and a new focus for Pan-Hellenic identity in the events of the Persian War.

CONCLUSION

The idea that Herodotus used the long human past of the Egyptians in order to think out a Greek historical consciousness is not, of course, unfamiliar to us. Sally Humphreys once observed that modern Western society has a threefold inheritance from the ancient world: the monotheism of Judaism, the territorial imperialism of the Romans, and the intellectual imperialism of the Greeks, 'who used other societies as material for thought'.[97] Scholars have analysed the way in which Herodotus contributes to a discourse on Greek identity by translating other cultures into categories comprehensible to his audience, and they have revealed an aspect of this intellectual appropriation. There is, however, a cost in this form of analysis as it is conventionally practised, since it historicizes texts according to the cultural workings of the Greek mind as the only producer of significant meaning, rendering 'the other' a passive object of intellectual imperialism, without regard for the cultural self-representations of the supposed object. The intellectual imperialism of the Greeks, in which all the cultures surrounding Hellas are merely *bonnes à penser*, is thereby replicated on the level of scholarship. The alternative, as I have tried to show through this limited example, is to reconstruct (as well as one is able) the cultural agency of those peoples who fall under the category of 'other' in Herodotean and scholarly discourse. The manner in which Herodotus cites his sources all the way through the second book, especially the ubiquitous Egyptian priests, may well be part of a rhetoric intended to create authority for his narrative, but it does also represent his awareness of a specific and pressing late Egyptian idea of human history. The researches of many scholars, most notably Lloyd in his extensive commentary, have turned up sound confirmation, not of some Rankean truth behind Herodotus' state-

[94] See n.80 above.

[95] *Cf.* Froidefond (1971) 152-3, who sees only 'l'utilisation "logique" de la chronologie' as the most significant feature of Herodotus' second book.

[96] 'Geschichte hat nicht das Volk, das schriftliche Quellen seiner Existenz hinterlassen hat, sondern jenes, das sich der Geschichte als einer Sinndimension seines Daseins bewußt geworden ist.' Assmann (1991) 288, citing K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Munich 1949).

[97] Humphreys (1983) 54.

ments in the Egyptian *logos*, but of plausible Egyptian cultural representations that Herodotus may have gathered from Egyptian priests. We must, therefore, modify the recent popular image of Herodotus the ethnographer, who does not discover, but rather creates through oppositional categories or 'grids' βάρβαροι useful to his overall project, in order to recognize the agency of the Egyptian priests and other non-Greek 'informants'. If we, then, view the scene of Hecataeus and the Theban priests in this light, we can understand it as a truly dialectical moment in which Herodotus' encounter with the culture of another civilization results in one of the earliest discourses on the nature of history and historical time in the Western tradition.

IAN S. MOYER
University of Chicago

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assmann, J. (1991) *Stein und Zeit: Mensch und Gesellschaft im alten Ägypten* (Munich)
– (1992) 'Der Tempel der ägyptischen Spätzeit als Kanonisierung kultureller Identität', in J. Osing and E.K. Nielsen (eds), *The Heritage of Ancient Egypt. Studies in Honour of Erik Iversen* (*Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications* 13, Copenhagen) 9-25
Bauer, A. (1878) *Die Entstehung des herodoteischen Geschichtswerkes* (Vienna)
Bertelli, L. (1998) 'Des généalogies mythiques à la naissance de l'histoire: le cas d'Hécatée', *Études de lettres* 2, 13-31
Bianchi, R. S. (1982) 'Perser in Ägypten', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* 4 (Wiesbaden)
Bloomer, W.M. (1993) 'The superlative *nomoi* of Herodotus' Histories', *CA* 12, 30-50
Borchardt, L. (1935) *Die Mittel zur zeitlichen Festlegung von Punkten der Ägyptischen Geschichte und ihre Anwendung* (Cairo)
Braun, T.F.R.G. (1982) 'The Greeks in Egypt', in *CAH* 3.3^2, ch. 36b
Brown, T.S. (1965) 'Herodotus speculates about Egypt', *AJP* 86, 60-76
Brunner, H. (1970) 'Zum Verständnis der archaisierenden Tendenzen in der ägyptischen Spätzeit', *Saeculum* 21, 150-61
– (1975) 'Abstammung', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* 1 (Wiesbaden)
Burkert, W. (1992) *The Orientalizing Revolution* (Cambridge, MA)
Bury, J.B. (1909) *The Ancient Greek Historians* (New York)
Calame, C. (1998) 'Mémoire collective et temporalités en contact: Somare et Hérodote', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 215, 341-67
Cartledge, P. (1993) *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (Cambridge)
Crum, W.E. (1939) *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford)
Dietler, M. (1989) 'Greeks, Etruscans, and thirsty barbarians: early Iron Age interactions in the Rhône basin of France', in T. Champion (ed.), *Centre and Periphery: Comparative Studies in Archaeology* (London) 127-41
– (1998) 'Consumption, agency, and cultural entanglement: theoretical implications of a Mediterranean colonial encounter', in J. Cusick (ed.), *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change and Archaeology* (Carbondale) 288-315
Drews, R. (1973) *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History* (Washington)
Edwards, I.E.S. (1982) 'Egypt from the 22nd to the 24th Dynasty', in *CAH* 3.1^2, ch. 13
Eliade, M. (1954) *The Myth of the Eternal Return or Cosmos and History*, tr. W.R. Trask (*Bollingen Series* 46, Princeton)
Erman, A. and H. Grapow (1926-63) *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (5 vols, Leipzig)
Evans, J.A.S. (1987) 'Herodotus 9.73.3 and the publication date of the Histories', *CP* 82, 226-8
– (1991) *Herodotus, Explorer of the Past* (Princeton)

Fehling, D. (1989) *Herodotus and his 'Sources': Citation, Invention and Narrative Art,* tr. J.G. Howie (Leeds)
Finnestad, R. B. (1997) 'Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods: ancient traditions in new contexts', in B.E. Schafer (ed.), *Temples of Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, NY) 185-237
Froidefond, C. (1971) *Le mirage égyptien dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Aristote* (Paris)
Gardiner, A.H. (1959) *The Royal Canon of Turin* (Oxford)
Goedicke, H. (1985) 'Comments on the Satrap Stele', *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 6, 33-54
Grimal, N. (1992) *A History of Ancient Egypt*, tr. I. Shaw (Oxford)
Hartog, F. (1980) *Le miroir d'Hérodote: Essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris)
– (1986) 'Les grecs égyptologues', *Annales* 41, 953-67
– (1988) *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History,* tr. J. Lloyd (Berkeley)
– (1989) 'Écritures, généalogies, archives, histoire en Grèce ancienne', in *Histoire et conscience historique dans les civilisations du Proche-Orient. Actes du Colloque de Cartigny 1986* (*Cahiers du Centre d'Étude du Proche-Orient Ancien* 5, Leuven)
– (1996) *Mémoire d'Ulysse: Récits sur la frontière en Grèce ancienne* (Paris)
Heidel, W.A. (1935) *Hecataeus and the Egyptian Priests in Herodotus, Book II* (*American Academy of Arts and Sciences Memoirs* 18.2, Boston)
Hemmerdinger, B. (1996) 'Hérodote 2.100.1 (et le papyrus hiératique de Turin)', *Bolletino dei classici*, 36
Henige, D.P. (1974) *The Chronology of Oral Tradition. Quest for a Chimera* (Oxford)
Hornung, E. (1982) 'Zum altägyptischen Geschichtsbewußtsein', *Archäologie und Geschichtsbewußtsein. Kolloquien zur allgemeinen und vergleichenden Archäologie* 3, 13-30
Humphreys, S.C. (1983) *The Family, Women and Death. Comparative Studies* (London)
Jacoby, F. (1912a) 'Hekataios', *RE* 14.2740-1
– (1912b) 'Herodotus', *RE Suppl.* 2.205-520
James, T.G.H. (1982) 'Egypt: the 25th and 26th Dynasties', in *CAH* 3.2², ch. 35
Jansen-Wilken, K. (1985) *Ägyptische Biographien der 22. und 23. Dynastie* (2 vols, *Ägypten und Altes Testament* 8, Wiesbaden)
Junge, F. (1973) 'Zur Fehldatierung des sog. Denkmals memphitischer Theologie oder Der Beitrag der ägyptischen Theologie zur Geistesgeschichte der Spätzeit', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Instituts für Ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo* 29, 195-204
Kienetz, F.K. (1953) *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert vor der Zeitwende* (Berlin)
Kitchen, K.A. (1986) *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 BC)* (2nd edn with supplement, Warminster)
Lateiner, D. (1989) *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto)
Legrain, G. (1905) 'Renseignements sur les dernières découvertes faites à Karnak', *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* 27, 61-82
– (1906-25) *Statues et statuettes de rois et de particulières* (4 vols, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire* 68-71, Cairo)
– (1910) 'Sur le roi Thotiemhat et la statue de Djaenhesrit', *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 10, 101-4
Lichtheim, M. (1973) *Ancient Egyptian Literature* 1: *The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley)
– (1976) *Ancient Egyptian Literature* 2: *The New Kingdom* (Berkeley)
– (1980) *Ancient Egyptian Literature* 3: *The Late Period* (Berkeley)
Lincoln, B. (1987) 'On the Scythian royal burials', in S. Skomal and E. Polomé (eds), *Proto-Indo-European: The Archaeology of a Linguistic Problem* (Washington) 267-85
Lloyd, A.B. (1975-88) *Herodotus Book II* (3 vols, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain* 43, Leiden)
– (1983) 'The Late Period', in B. Trigger *et al.* (eds), *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge) 279-348
– (1988) 'Herodotus' account of pharaonic history', *Historia* 37, 22-53
– (1994) 'Egypt, 404 – 332 B.C.', in *CAH* 6², ch. 8e

Manuelian, P. Der (1994) *Living in the Past. Studies in Archaism of the Egyptian Twenty-sixth Dynasty* (London)

Maspéro, G. (1898) 'Fragment d'un commentaire sur le 2e livre d'Hérodote', *Bibliothèque égyptologique* 7, 333-426

Miller, M. (1965) 'Herodotus as chronographer', *Klio* 46, 109-28

Myres, J.L. (1953) *Herodotus, Father of History* (Oxford)

Nagy, I. (1973) 'Remarques sur le souci d'archaïsme en Égypte à l'époque Saïte', *Acta Antiqua* 21, 53-64

Obsomer, C. (1989) *Les campagnes de Sésostris dans Hérodote: essai d'interprétation du texte grec à la lumière des réalités égyptiennes* (Brussels)

Perdrizet, P. and G. Lefèbvre (1919) *Inscriptiones Graecae Aegypti* 3 (Paris)

Piankoff, A. (1958-60) 'The Osireion of Seti I at Abydos during the Graeco-Roman period and the Christian occupation', *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 15, 125-49

Porter, B. and R. Moss (eds) (1972) *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings* 2 (2nd edn, Oxford)

Posener, G. (1936) *La première domination Perse en Égypte* (*Bibliothèque d'étude* 11, Cairo)

Pritchett, W.K. (1993) *The Liar School of Herodotus* (Amsterdam)

Ray, J.D. (1988) 'Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.', in *CAH* 4.1², ch. 3g

– (1996) Review of Manuelian (1994), *Discussions in Egyptology* 36, 137-43

Redfield, J. (1985) 'Herodotus the tourist', *CP* 80, 97-118

Redford, D.B. (1970) *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50)* (Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 20, Leiden)

– (1986) *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals, and Day-Books* (Mississauga, Ont.)

Ritner, R.K. (1994) 'Denderite temple hierarchy and the family of Nebwenenef', in D. Silverman (ed.), *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer* (*Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 55, Chicago) 205-26

– (forthcoming) *The Libyan Anarchy: Documents from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* (Society of Biblical Literature, *Writings from the Ancient World*)

Rutherford, I. (forthcoming) 'Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman Egypt: new perspectives on graffiti from the Memnonion at Abydos', in R. Matthews and C. Roemer (eds), *Encounters with Ancient Egypt* 5 (London)

Ryholt, K.S.B. (1997) *The Political Situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period c. 1800-1550 B.C.* (*Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications* 20, Copenhagen)

Sahlins, M. (1995) *How 'Natives' Think: About Captain Cook, For Example* (Chicago)

Sansone, D. (1985) 'The date of Herodotus' publication', *ICS* 10, 1-9

Sethe, K. (1906) *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums* 4: *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* (Leipzig)

Sourdille, C. (1910) *La durée et l'étendue du voyage d'Hérodote en Égypte* (Paris)

Spiegelberg, W. (1927) *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, tr. A.M. Blackman (Oxford)

Thomas, R. (2000) *Herodotus in Context. Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge)

– (2001) 'Herodotus' Histories and the floating gap', in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus* (Oxford) 198-210

Thompson, D. (2001) *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton)

Vannicelli, P. (2001) 'Herodotus' Egypt and the foundations of universal history', in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus* (Oxford) 211-40

Vasunia, P. (2001) *The Gift of the Nile. Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander* (Berkeley)

Vidal-Naquet, P. (1986) 'Divine time and human time', in *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World,* tr. A. Szegedy-Maszak (Baltimore) 39-60; originally published as 'Temps des dieux et temps des hommes', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (1960) 55-80

Vycichl, W. (1983) *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue Copte* (Leuven)

Weeks, N.K. (1977) 'Herodotus and Egypt: discerning the native tradition in Book II', *AncSoc* 7, 25-34

Wells, J. (1923) *Studies in Herodotus* (Oxford)

West, S. (1991) 'Herodotus' portrait of Hecataeus', *JHS* 111, 144-60

Wiedemann, A. (1890) *Herodots zweites Buch* (Leipzig)

Zgusta, L. (1964) *Kleinasiatische Personennamen* (Prague)