Reading Herodotus *Histories* 7.185

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In chapter 7.185 of his *Histories*, Herodotus catalogues the Greek and non-Greek *ethne* included in the recruitment of the Persian army.1 The text, according to Nigel Wilson’s new edition:2

1 τὸ δὲ δὴ ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἀγόμενον στράτευμα ἔτι προσλογιστέα τούτῳ παντὶ τῷ ἐξηριθμημένῳ· δόκησιν δὲ δὴ λέγειν. νέας μὲν οὐ ἀπὸ Θρηκίας Ἐλλήνες καὶ ἐκ τῶν νήσων τῶν ἐπικειμένων τῇ Θρηκίᾳ παρείχοντο εἴκοσι καὶ ἕκατόν. ἥν, ἐκ τῶν τετρακισχίλιων καὶ δισμύριων γίνονται. [2] Πζευδεὶς δὲ τὸν Ἐλλήνας παρείχοντο καὶ Παίονες καὶ Ἑσαύδια καὶ Θρηκίας καὶ Πηρσείδες καὶ Μάκιδες καὶ Ἐνείδες καὶ Δόλοντες καὶ Δάμνας καὶ Αχαιοὶ καὶ ὅσοι τῆς Θρηκίας καὶ Ἀθηναίων τῆς Ἀθηναίων παρείχοντο εἴκοσι καὶ ἕκατόν. τούτων τῶν ἐθνῶν τριήκοντα μηριάδες δοκεῖ γενέσθαι.

3 αὕται ὦν αἱ μυριάδες ἐκείνης προσθεῖσαι τῇσι ἐκ τῆς Ασίας γίνονται αἱ πᾶσαι ἀνδρῶν αἱ μάχιμοι μυριάδες...

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Then there was the army brought from Europe: its number must still be added to this total, but only an estimate is possible. The Greeks from Thrace and the islands off Thrace provided a hundred and twenty ships, with 24,000 men on board. [2] Then 300,000 would be my guess as to the number of men whom Thracians, Paonians, Eordi, Bottiaeans, the people of Chalcidice, Bryges, Pierians, Macedonians, Perrhaebi, Enienes, Dolopians, Magnesians, Achaeans, and the communities inhabiting the †Thracian† coast recruited into the land army.

[3] When all these tens of thousands are added to the figures from Asia, the total number of fighting men comes to 2,641,610.

Wilson’s *cruces* at 7.185.2 are at present necessary, since further reference to Thracians is undoubtedly redundant (given 7.185.2 πεζοῦ δὲ τὸν Θρήικες παρείχοντο; his note in *apparatu* “Thessalorum etiam mentio desideratur” is explained:3

There are two serious difficulties here. The first was pointed out by Pingel (1874), 25. The contribution of the Thessalians to the Persian war effort must have been one of the most important. Can H. have really forgotten it or has it fallen out of the text? Secondly, the repetition of Thrace at the end of the list is unwanted. Le Grand thought of reading instead Ὀἰταῖς, a region which included Herakleia in Trachis and Anticyra.

The “Thessalorum mentio” would be justified on the grounds of 7.130.3, ταῦτα δὲ ἔχοντα ἔλεγε ἐς τοὺς Ἀλευεω παιδας, ὅτι πρῶτοι Ἑλλήνων ἐδοσαν ἑυτοὺς βασιλέας, διὸ καὶ ὁ Ξέρξης ἀπὸ παντὸς σφεας τοῦ ἔθνεος ἐπαγγέλλεται φιλίην (“He was referring to the fact that the

Aleuadae of Thessaly had been the first Greeks to surrender to him, a move which Xerxes took to be an offer of friendship from the whole country") and 132.1 τῶν δὲ δόντων ταύτα ἐγένοντο οίδε, Θεσσαλοὶ κτλ. ("The following Greek peoples gave the king these things: the Thessalians etc."). The mention seems, though, even more fitting after the events of 7.172–174: (172.1) Θεσσαλοὶ δὲ ὑπὸ ἀναγκαίης τὸ πρῶτον ἐμήδισαν, ὡς διέδεξαν ὅτι οὐ σφί ἔσαι τὰ οἱ Αλευάδαι εἰμηχανώντο ("The Thessalians originally collaborated with the Persians only because they had no choice in the matter. They made it plain that they did not like what the Aleuadae were up to"), but, having asked the Greeks gathered at the Isthmus for help, (174) ἐρημωθέντες συμμάχων οὕτω δὴ ἐμήδισαν προθύμως οὐδ᾽ ἔτι ἐνδοιαστῶς, ὡστε ἐν τούτῳ πρήγματι ἐφαίνετο βασιλεῖ ἄνδρες ἐόντες χρησιμώτατοι ("Abandoned by their allies, the Thessalians did collaborate with the Persians—so wholeheartedly in fact, and with so little trace of their former hesitancy, that they turned out to be more useful to Xerxes in the war than anyone else ").

For these reasons, the "Thessalorum mentio" is welcome indeed; nevertheless, one wonders why should Herodotus use an expression like ὅσοι τῆς Θρῆκής τὴν παραλίην νέονται, since Thessaly does not contain a παραλίη at all, as its description at 7.129.1 shows:

τὰ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς πρὸς τὴν ἥω ἔχοντα τὸ τε Πήλιον ὥρος καὶ ἡ Ὄσσα ἀποκληίει συμμίσχον τὰς ὑπορείας ἀλλήλοισι, τὰ δὲ πρὸς βορέω ἀνέμου Ὁλυμπος, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἐπίτερην Πῖνδος, τὰ δὲ πρὸς μεσαμβρίην τε καὶ ἄνων νότον ἡ Ὄθρυς· τὸ μέσον δὲ τούτων τῶν λεχθέντων ὅρην ἡ Θεσσαλίη ἐστὶ ἐνδύσα κοίλη.

To the east Mount Pelium and Mount Ossa form a barrier because their foothills merge; the barrier to the north is Olympus, to the west Pindus, and to the south Othrys. Thessaly consists of a basin in the middle of these mountains.

See also 7.130.1, ὅρεα γὰρ περιστεράνωται πᾶσα Θεσσαλίη ("Thessaly is entirely surrounded by mountains"). Even though we could explain the phrase through an inclusive meaning of "Thessaly proper + the perioikoi dwelling in the neighbouring

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areas,” one would still be surprised by the difficult circumlocution. Also relevant here is 9.31.5, where Herodotus relates Mardonius’ plans for the battle of Plataea:

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\text{ἐταξε ἀντία Αθηναίων τε καὶ Πλαταιέων καὶ Μεγαρέων Βοι-
\text{oτούς τε καὶ Λοκροὺς καὶ Μηλιέας τε καὶ Θεσσαλούς καὶ}
\text{Φωκέων τοὺς χιλίους ... ἔταξε δὲ καὶ Μακεδόνας τε καὶ τους}
\text{περὶ Θεσσαλίην οἰκημένους κατὰ τοὺς Αθηναίους.}
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and facing the Athenians, Plataeans, and Megarians, he posted the Boeotians, Locrians, Malians, Thessalians, and Phocians ... Mardonius also positioned opposite to the Athenians the Macedonians and those who lived around Thessaly.

In his military line-up, the Persian general deploys both Θεσ-
\text{σαλοί (become Persian allies after the facts of Tempe: see}
\text{7.172–174) and their neighbouring peoples (τοὺς περὶ Θεσ-
\text{σαλίην οἰκημένους). The reader already knows who these are}
\text{from 7.132.1: τῶν δὲ δόντων ταῦτα ἐγένοντο οἴδε, Θεσσαλοὶ}
\text{Δόλοπες Ἐνιῆνες Περραιβοὶ Λοκροὶ Μάγνες Μηλιές Ἀχαῖοι}
\text{οἱ Φθιῶται καὶ Θηβαῖοι καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι Βοιωτοὶ πλὴν Θεσπιέων}
\text{τε καὶ Πιλαταίων (“The following Greek peoples gave the king}
\text{these things: the Thessalians, Dolopians, Enienians, Pherae-
\text{bians, Locrians, Magnesians, Malians, Achaeans from Phthi-
\text{otis, and, led by the Thebans, the rest of the Boeotians except}
\text{the Thespian and Plataean”)}; hence, a mention of Thessali-
\text{ans in 7.185 should not—I believe—include the periōkoi.}

Given these considerations, I suppose that, if one wishes to
include a “Thessalorum mentionem” in 7.185, one must posit
a wider lacuna or emend the sentence more broadly. The
notion of Thessaly’s παραλίη is unpersuasive since the relevant
coastal area, Magnesia, has already been catalogued among
the Persian allies. I shall return to this ‘Thessalian question’ in
conclusion, after examining the following data.

If παραλίη is genuine, how should it be interpreted? To
which παραλίη did Herodotus refer? Pieria, between the rivers

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4 See Hdt. 7.222 for the Thebans’ and Thespian’s different behavior at Thermopylae.
Haliacmon and Peneus, is the first area to come to mind. This region—the coastal strip running along the Thermaic Gulf (an important landing place for Xerxes’ fleet: see Hdt. 7.121–124) including Mount Olympus and the cities of Dion, Methone, and Pydna⁵—was under king Alexander the Philhellene’s control (see Thuc. 2.99.3) and doubtless philopersian, as is clear from 7.131.1:

ό μὲν δὴ περὶ Πιερίην διέτριβε ἕμερας συχνάς· τὸ γὰρ δὴ ὄρος τὸ Μακεδονικὸν ἔκειρε τῆς στρατηγῆς τριτημορίας, ἵνα ταύτη διεξή ἄπασα ἡ στρατιὰ ἐς Περραιβοῦς.

He [Xerxes] stayed in Pieria for quite a few days, because a third of his men were engaged in cutting through the Macedonian mountains to enable the whole army to pass through them and reach Perrhaebia.

Reading ὅσοι τῆς Πιερίης τὴν παραλίην νέμονται, “the communities inhabiting the coastal strip of Pieria,” is probably an overly hasty solution, since the phrase would introduce a difficult juxtaposition between Macedonia and Pieria, which was inhabited by Macedonians (see Thuc. 2.99.3 and 101.5 and Hdt. 7.112). It is thus better to exclude Pieria from Herodotus’ catalogue.

By combining 7.132 and 185, the Greek allies of the Persians result as: Thracians, Paeonians, Oordi, Bottiaeans, Chalcidians, Bryges, Pierians, Macedonians, [Thessalians], Perrhaebi, Enienes, Dolopes, Magnesians, Achaeans [of Phthiotis, Thebans, and Boeotians except Thespiaeans and Plataeans, Locrians, and Malians] + the inhabitants of an undetermined coastal area.

Clearly, ὅσοι … νέμονται must imply the entire coast occupied by Achaea Phthiotis, Malis, Opuntian and Epicnemidian Locris, and Boeotia. Phthiotic Achaea was, alongside Perrhaebia and Magnesia, one of the Thessalian periokai: the expression ὅσοι … νέμονται is appropriately suited to include also the minor neighbouring areas of Malis, Locris, and

⁵ See Hammond, History of Macedonia I 123–139.
Boeotia.⁶

Thus, the Herodotean passage—which recalls the more restricted version of τοὺς περὶ Θεσσαλίην οἰκημένους in 9.31.5—ought to be read as follows:

καὶ ὅσοι (τῆς Θρηίκης) τὴν παραλίην νέμονται.

and all the peoples inhabiting the coast.

Perhaps a scholarly gloss erroneously commenting on the vague and unintelligible expression has intruded into the text. The removal of τῆς Θρηίκης is probably preferable to any form of emendation: it remains unclear whether it is appropriate to insert the Thessalians in 7.185 (for example, καὶ Θεσσαλοὶ … καὶ ὅσοι τὴν παραλίην νέμονται?) or whether the absence of Thessaly in the etnon katalogos is simply a genuine Herodotean omission. Whatever the case, I suggest that the ὅσοι-sentence should remain unaltered, apart from the deletion, in so far as it describes a specific geographical area.

In 7.185 Herodotus explains the results of Xerxes’ expedition in Greece (see 7.121–131), summarizing the peoples who eventually joined the Persian army. The ὅσοι-sentence comes at the end of a geographically disordered list of ethe encompassing—aside from the inner regions north of Macedonia—the entire shoreline from Thrace to Thessaly (see Hdt. 7.128, 173, for the city of Gonnoi) and its perioikoi, moving through the Pierikos kolpos (Thuc. 2.99.3), Chalcidice, Bottice, Mygdonia (including Therma where Xerxes quartered his army: Hdt. 7.127), Macedonia with Pieria (see Hdt. 7.131), and finally the southern regions on the coast of the Malian and Euboic Gulf.

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