

Choirilos of Samos

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CHOIRILOS THE SAMIAN deserves notice for two reasons: he is the earliest Greek poet known to have written a hexametric epic on a near-contemporary theme, the Persian wars, and the remaining fragments of his work are not so few as to conceal the originality of his manner. A conscious innovator, who attempted in epic the Panhellenic theme to which Phrynichos and Aeschylus had already addressed themselves in tragedy and which Herodotos had treated in his *Histories*, Choirilos was both praised and condemned by ancient critics. We do not have enough of his work to form a secure estimate ourselves; nor can we be sure how much he owed to Herodotos; but the remnants do show that the poet was well aware of his revolutionary task, and hence of his self-exposure to criticism. So his poetry is a tenuous, but, as I aim to show, not a tedious, topic.

According to a chronologically inconsistent article in the *Suda* (*s.v.* *Χοιρίλος*) Choirilos lived in the time of Panyassis, was young at the time of the Persian wars and was *junior* to Herodotos. The amatory gossip in the *Suda* linking Herodotos and Choirilos rests on no more than the similar themes chosen by historian and poet, but it was made to look plausible by the fact of Herodotos' residence in Samos (*παιδικά* here in the *Suda* means rather more than 'favourite pupil' simply, because the comeliness of Choirilos has just been mentioned). Though Choirilos may have overlapped Panyassis (who died about 450 B.C.) in time—some even asserted that he was, like Panyassis, a Halikarnassian (*Suda, loc.cit.*)—and could even have known Herodotos during the historian's exile in Samos, there is no sound evidence for any dealings between them. Choirilos indeed may not have begun to write poetry earlier than the publication of the *Histories*: the two datable events in his life occurred at the end of the fifth century. We learn from Plutarch (*Lysander* 18) that Choirilos accompanied Lysander after his victories in the Ionian war, when the Samians renamed their festival of Hera the Lysandreia; and it is stated both in the *Suda* (*s.v.* *Χοιρίλος*) and in the *Vita Marcellina* of Thucydides

(29) that the poet visited the court of Archelaos in Macedon. Archelaos died in 400/399, and according to the *Suda* Choirilos died in Macedon; Lysander was in Samos in 404; so the main activity of Choirilos belongs to the last decade of the century. The *Suda* assign him as a νεανίσκος to the 75th Olympiad (i.e. 480/477), which if true would entail that he was a very old man by the end of the century; the further statement in the *Suda* that Choirilos was a contemporary of Panyassis is almost certainly an error.¹

Plutarch (*Lys.* 18.7–8) states that Lysander kept Choirilos by him in order that the Samian might adorn his achievements in poetry. No verse in praise of Lysander by Choirilos is extant, and when Jacoby declared that Choirilos “began an epic poem” about the exploits of the Spartan conqueror, I suspect that that great scholar advanced beyond the evidence.² It was to Antilochos, Plutarch remarks, (not to Choirilos) that Lysander gave a cap full of silver in payment for lines in his honour; and Nikeratos of Herakleia was adjudged by the triumphant Spartan the victor in a poetical contest with Antimachos of Kolophon. So we cannot be quite certain that Choirilos competed, or even performed, at the Lysandreia, though Lysander evidently hoped for something from him, not necessarily an epic. (Another poet eager to praise Lysander in that dismal epoch was Ion, the author of some ungainly elegiacs inscribed at Delphi; he too was a Samian.³ What Plutarch means when he states that Antimachos as a result of his defeat by Nikeratos ἀχθεσθεὶς ἠφάνισε τὸ ποίημα “in anger caused his poem to disappear,” is not obvious; did the disappointed Kolophonian tear it up, or simply refuse to publish? Or did he rub out his wax tablet?)

The *Vita Marcellina* states that Thucydides was a contemporary of the comic poet Plato, Agathon the tragedian, Nikeratos the epic poet (whom we have already met in Samos), Choirilos and Melanippides. Its authority for these names is the work *On History* of Praxiphanes of Mytilene, a scholar who flourished about 275 B.C.; his views on literature were criticised in a treatise *Πρὸς Πραξιφάνην* by Kallimachos (fr.460 Pf.).⁴ The writers here named in the *Vita* may all have appeared

¹ See H. F. Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici* II (Oxford 1834) 35.

² *FGrHist* III B Suppl. I Text, p.20. Similarly K. Ziegler, *Das hellenistische Epos*² (Leipzig 1966) 16 and 25, ascribes Lysander epics, *Λυσάνδρεια*, to Choirilos, Antimachos and Nikeratos without good reason.

³ Diehl, *Anth.Lyr.Graec.* I³, p.87.

⁴ See K. O. Brink, *CQ* 40 (1946) 22–24, and R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 95 n.4.

in the work of Praxiphanes, which discussed the nature of historical writing and was, it seems, presented in the form of a dialogue at the court of Archelaos. The inclusion of Choirilos as an interlocutor in a work on historiography is significant. He was perhaps regarded by Praxiphanes as an exponent of a branch of writing which became a battleground of Hellenistic literary criticism, the heroic (or heroic-historical) epic. The battle later centred on Choirilos: thus Istros the Kallimachean (*FGrHist* 334 F 61) asserted that Choirilos was paid four minas a day by Archelaos and spent them all on playing the gourmet (*ὀψοφαγία*); this piece of gossip is part of the scholarly counterattack upon the book of Praxiphanes, who, as we learn from the *Diegesis* to the *Aitia*, had settled in Rhodes, thus becoming one of the Telchines whom Kallimachos so forcefully criticised.⁵ It seems that Kallimachos and the Kallimacheans regarded the hexametric *Persika* of Choirilos, no less than the elegiac *Lyde* of Antimachos, as *παχὺ καὶ οὐ τορόν* (Kallimachos fr.398 Pf.).

The principal poem of Choirilos seems not to have been given a title by its author. It is variously cited as *The Victory of the Athenians over Xerxes*,⁶ a *Perseis*⁷ and a *Persika*.⁸ If the poet emphasised the Athenian contribution to victory, following the example of Herodotos, then Choirilos may well have composed it, or at least the part of it on the battle of Salamis, before the collapse of Athenian naval power and the coming of Lysander to Samos. (The *Suda* do in fact mention special public readings or recitations of the epic, together with Homer, at Athens). Writings by Choirilos are also noted in a papyrus⁹ as follows: *Χοιρίλου ποιήματα Βαρβαρικά· Μηδικά· Περσ[ικά]*. Koerte proposed to add a stop after *ποιήματα*. The papyrus would then be ascribing to Choirilos three poems (or one poem on three subjects), not two poems on barbarian subjects, namely the *Medika* and the *Persika*. For a poem restricted to the period of Persian wars against Hellas a distinction between Medes and Persians would be hardly necessary; so there is a possibility that the interests of Choirilos extended into the early histories of both Media and Persia separately; but if so there are no matching fragments. Alternatively the *Persika*, for so we may call it, may have contained much background matter, just as Herodotos's

⁵ *Callimachus*, ed. R. Pfeiffer, I (Oxford 1949) p.3 and fr.460.

⁶ *Suda* s.v. *Χοιρίλος Σάμιος*.

⁷ *Stob. Flor.* 27.1 (Choirilos fr.7 Kinkel).

⁸ *Hdn. Περὶ μου. λέξεως* 2.919 Lentz (fr.2 Kinkel).

⁹ *POxy.* 1399 (*FGrHist* 696 F 33d).

Histories did. Epic treatments of remote barbarian regions are singled out for attack by Kallimachos in the *Aitia* (fr.1.13–16 Pf.): “Let others,” he declares, “tell of the crane who (?) delights in Pygmy blood, flying to the Thracians, or of Massagetai shooting their arrows from afar at the Mede. Judge not skill with the Persian land-measure.” The emphasis on size, Medes, Persians and remote barbarians is worthy of remark; indeed, may not Choirilos, the butt of Istros the Kallimachean, be one of the poets whom Kallimachos himself attacks here?¹⁰

Two fragments come from the beginning of the *Persika* of Choirilos. One is not ascribed to Choirilos by name, but Aristotle, who preserves it in his *Rhetoric*,¹¹ has just mentioned the poet, and Naeke¹² was surely right, long ago, to claim the two verses for the prooimion of the *Persika*.

ἤγεό μοι λόγον ἄλλον, ὅπως Ἰσίας ἀπὸ γαίης
ἦλθεν εἰς Εὐρώπην πόλεμος μέγας.

The Muse is invoked to tell how war came from Asia to Europe. From these words alone we cannot assume that Choirilos treated only the campaign of Xerxes. The Marathon episode, the Ionian revolt, and even the Skythian campaign of Dareios could all have found a place in a *Persika* widely defined as the coming of war to Europe. ἄλλον may mean a new poem on a new subject.¹³ But it could also signify a completely new subject for epic—that is to say, a recent historical event. The latter interpretation accords well with the fragment mentioned immediately before by Aristotle, who contrasts the Homeric directness of the invocation to the Muse with the apologetic and forensic pleading, addressed to the hearer, which follows it. Five lines are given by commentators on this passage in the *Rhetoric*:¹⁴

ἃ μάκαρ, ὅστις ἔην κείνον χρόνον Ἰδρις αἰοιδῆς,
Μουσάων θεράπων, ὅτ' ἀκήρατος ἦν ἔτι λειμών.

¹⁰ In his article “Mimnermo e Filita, Antimaco e Cherilo nel Proemio degli *Aitia* di Callimaco,” *Hermes* 84 (1956) 162–82, A. Barigazzi answers this question affirmatively (179), and thinks that Choirilos in particular is meant. Choirilos could well have described the campaign of Kyros against the Massagetai (Hdt. 1.204–16) and an exotic war between cranes and Pygmies. Barigazzi notes (p.179 and n.3) the Pygmies of the Skythian town Geraneia, who were put to flight by cranes (Pliny, *NH* 4.11.4, whom Solinus 10.11 follows).

¹¹ 3.14 p.1415a 1ff and 1415a 11ff (*FGrHist* 696 F 33f [d]).

¹² A. F. Naeke, *Choerili Samii quae supersunt* (Diss. Leipzig 1817) 111ff. (See G. Kinkel, *EGF* I, p.267).

¹³ Cf. Barigazzi, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10) 178.

¹⁴ Schol. Anon. et Steph. in Arist. *Rhet.* 3.14 (fr.1 Kinkel and *FGrHist* 696 F 34a). Cf. Arist. *Top.* 8.1 (153a 14).

νῦν δ' ὅτε πάντα δέδασται, ἔχουσι δὲ πείρατα τέχνη,
 ὕστατοι ὥστε δρόμου καταλειπόμεθ', οὐδέ πῆ ἔστι
 πάντη παπταίνοντα νεοζυγὲς ἄρμα πελάσσαι.

The servant of the Muses may well be Homer, who had all heroic legend from which to choose; but, complains the poet, his own misfortune is to be born late in time when all the subjects had been portioned off.¹⁵ He gazes from side to side, uncertain whither to drive his newly yoked car, or indeed if he can move at all. There must have followed an apology for taking a new, but wide, road—a historical epic about the vast subject of τὰ Μηδικά. In the *Aitia* (fr.1.27–28) Kallimachos implicitly attacks the decision of Choirilos and his successors in the genre: “urge not your car along the flat open road,” Apollo the Lycian bade him, “but follow the untrodden ways, even if you drive along a narrower course.” Kallimachos objects not to the new subject, but to the ponderous and massive treatment of it entailed by the vehicle of hexameter epic. “This too I command, that you travel not in the tracks of others but where the waggons tread not,” says Apollo (fr.1.25–26): so the ἄμαξα of epic, which would be as heavy as the νεοζυγὲς ἄρμα, the war chariot, of Choirilos, is neatly contrasted with the lighter carriage of Kallimachos himself, his δίφρος. It is impossible to be sure which of the two fragments from the poem came first, but at least one line before ἦγγεό μοι would seem to be missing in the invocation to the Muse. Kleio would be an appropriate object of the prayer.

Like the *Iliad*, the *Persika* had a catalogue of forces, to list which Choirilos had only to turn to the account of Xerxes' army in Herodotos,¹⁶ though other accounts may have been available to him, for example in the *Persika* of Hellanikos, which treated events as late as 480 B.C. (*FGrHist* 4 F 183). One fragment of two-and-a-half lines quoted by Strabo (303) describes the Sakai, who are called Skythians in it, just as they are in the Herodotean catalogue (7.64.2):

μηλονόμοι τε Σάκαι, γενεᾷ Σκύθαι, αὐτὰρ ἔναιον

¹⁵ Kallimachos perhaps had the words νῦν δ' ὅτε πάντα δέδασται in mind in the *Hekale* (fr.275 Pf.), but, as Barigazzi (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.10] 169 n.1) points out, the expression appears already in the *Odyssey* (15.412). The ἀκήρατος λειμών is reminiscent of Eur. *Hipp.* 73–74 and Soph. *Trach.* 200. Choirilos surely does not wish to imply that Homer violated the taboo on the Muses' *temenos*; the great poet gathered for them a garland there; similarly the reverent Hippolytos gathers a garland for Artemis herself in her precinct without infringement of the taboo—see W. S. Barrett on Eur. *Hipp.* *in loco*.

¹⁶ 7.61–80 (footsoldiers), 84ff (horse), 89ff (fleet).

Ἄσιδα πυροφόρον νομάδων γε μὲν ἦσαν ἄποικοι
ἀνθρώπων νομίμων.

γενεᾶ seems to be an Atticism: that is a significant detail in view of what the *Suda* has to say about the recitation of Choirilos' work in Athens, but it may be due to Attic transmission of the text, not to the author's pen. Ἄσιδα πυροφόρον may be contrasted with Ἀσίας ἀπό γαίης in the invocation to the Muse. πυροφόρον deliberately opposes the settled agricultural life of Asia to the wandering livelihood of the Steppe, from which, Choirilos notes, the Skythians had migrated. Here too Herodotos may have been his informant.¹⁷ Strabo takes the quotation from Ephoros (*FGrHist* 70 F 42) and says that the verses come from a description of forces crossing the raft which *Dareios* constructed. The mention of *Dareios* could be an error, perhaps by Ephoros, not by Strabo, for *Xerxes*¹⁸; but not necessarily so, because the raft of *Dareios* on which his troops crossed the Bosphoros could well be meant. Since the pontoon was constructed by *Mandrokles* the Samian military engineer, it would have been of interest to Choirilos, who, like Herodotos (4.88), would have studied the painting of it in the Samian Heraion. Besides, we have no reason to believe that his *Persika* was confined to the events of 480 B.C. So there is no compulsion to change or delete the words ἦν ἔξευξε Δαρείος in the text of Strabo. It is true, however, that Herodotos does not mention Skythian Sakai from Asia with *Dareios* on his Skythian campaign.¹⁹ Ephoros quoted the verses because they allude to the innate justice and goodness of certain nomads, a Rousseauesque idea which goes back as far as Homer (*Iliad* 13.6) and found fullest expression in the *Anacharsis* legend. So Choirilos may have had *Anacharsis* in mind here; this was a topic much favoured by Ephoros, who seems to have found the *Persika* relevant to his enquiries.²⁰

Somewhere in his catalogue Choirilos named as part of *Xerxes*' army troops who spoke a Phoenician tongue, wore outlandish dress, and dwelt amongst the *Solyman* mountains beside a broad lake.

¹⁷ 1.73.3: Naeke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 124.

¹⁸ See Jacoby on Ephoros, *FGrHist* 70 F 42 with *app.crit.*

¹⁹ Hdt. 4.88. 'Amyrgian Saka' were captured by *Dareios* soon after 520 in an eastern campaign beyond the Caspian (A. R. Burn, *Persia and the Greeks* [London 1962] 103–04); so Sakai could well have formed part of the imperial army in the Skythian campaign ca. 513. Sakai by 490 were prominent in the army, and distinguished themselves at Marathon (Hdt. 6.113).

²⁰ *FGrHist* 70 F 42 with F 158 and 182.

Josephus,²¹ who quotes the five hexameters about them, claimed that they were his own people, the Jews, but his view rests on little support—the fortuitous similarity of Solymoi to *Ἱεροσόλυμα*, Jerusalem, and the alleged ‘Phoenician’ speech. There is no reason to accept the broad lake as the Asphaltitis, with which Josephus insists on identifying it. If there were Hebrews in the army of Xerxes, they paraded with the Syrians of Palestine and the fleet (Hdt. 7.89), but these Syrians would include Canaanites and Philistines also. Josephus claims that the circumcised Syrians of Palestine were his countrymen and quotes Herodotos’s remarks (2.104) on them just before he turns to Choirilos; but the verses of Choirilos are clearly concerned with footsoldiers crossing the bridge, not with sailors in the fleet.

τῶν δ’ ὄπιθεν διέβαινε γένος θαυμαστὸν ιδέσθαι,
 γλῶσσαν μὲν Φοίνισσαν ἀπὸ στομάτων ἀφιέντες,
 ᾤκεον δ’ ἐν Σολύμοις ὄρεσι πλατέη παρὰ λίμνη,
 αὐχμαλέοι κορυφάς, τροχοκουράδες, αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεν
 ἵππων δαρτὰ πρόσωπ’ ἐφόρουν ἐσκληρότα καπνῶ.

ἐφόρουν is here further evidence of Attic influence in the text of Choirilos. Of the contingents described by Herodotos none has precisely the outlandish gear given to them by the Samian poet—“squalid their topknots, shaved around in a circle were they, and above they wore the flayed faces of horses that had been hardened with smoke.” But the Milyans are said by Herodotos (7.77) to have helmets made of hide; they were once called Solymoi (1.173); and they dwelt in the lakeland on the borders of Pisidian territory in Asia Minor. Strabo (631) states that the Kabaleis of southwestern Asia Minor were considered Solymoi, and Stephanos of Byzantion (*s.v.* *Πισιδία*) declares that the Pisidians were formerly Solymoi; hence Choirilos may even have called these inhabitants of the Solyman mountains Pisidians or Kabaleis. One possible explanation of these verses, then, is that they refer to Pisidians. Pisidians are nowhere mentioned in the Herodotean catalogue; but their name may well have fallen out in the lacuna at the beginning of 7.76.²² If Choirilos called the Pisidian and Milyan troops simply Solymoi from the Solyman mountains, Josephus could the more easily insist on the identification with Jerusalem, or Hierosolyma.

²¹ *C.Ap.* 1.172 (Euseb. *Praep.Evang.* 9.9).

²² See Stein and Macan *in loco*.

Strabo (631) places a mount Solymos near Termessos in Pisidia. If Choirilos has the same mountain in mind, then the broad lake he mentions would be the open water to the north of Termessos, in the Milyas south of Sagalassos. Strabo distinguished the speech of the Solymoi from that of the Pisidians and Lydians of the district, but as to why Choirilos could have thought that the men from the Solyman mountains spoke a specifically Phoenician tongue we can only guess. It is true that Phoenician or Aramaic may have been spoken in parts of southern Asia Minor in the fifth century, for already in the eighth Phoenician was known in Cilicia, as the great inscription from Karatepe attests, and there were then Aramaic speakers in those parts.²³ Later under Persian imperial influence Aramaic spread westwards as far as Lydia²⁴; but it is not obvious that Choirilos had Aramaic in mind when he wrote *γλῶσσαν Φοίνισσαν* here. The allusion may be less specific: for Herodotos notes that some of the inhabitants of Lycia originated in Crete, to which the mother of Sarpedon, Europa daughter of Phoinix, had migrated; Sarpedon it was who led Cretans to the Milyas (1.173). Hence, somewhat pedantically perhaps, historical descendants of Cretan immigrants to the Milyas could be called speakers of a Phoenician tongue. But the explanation is not simple, and cannot be correct if Pisidians or Milyans are not in fact referred to by the poet here.

For the gear of the Solyman contingent Choirilos almost certainly drew upon Herodotos, whose Asiatic Aithiopians²⁵ have their unique head-dress formed of the skin of the upper part of a horse's head with the ears and mane in place, the ears being fixed upright. The haircuts, *τροχοκουράδες*, recall the Arabs, of whom Herodotos²⁶ states *κείρονται δὲ περιτρόχαλα, ὑποξυρῶντες τοὺς κροτάφους*. Choirilos evidently took delight in dressing this Phoenician-speaking contingent as outlandishly as possible. Against the claim of Josephus that they are Hebrews, it must also be emphasised that the round tonsure was not a Jewish practice.

One explanation of the verses is, as we have seen, that they describe Milyans or Pisidians. But a simpler and, I think, more cogent inter-

²³ R. D. Barnett, *CAH*² II ch. 30 (1967) 27.

²⁴ A. Goetze, *Kleinasien*² (Munich 1957) 207 and 212.

²⁵ 7.70. See also Naeke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 145.

²⁶ 3.8. Cf. Naeke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 140. Nonnos, *Dion.* 26.341–49, may well have these verses of Choirilos in mind when he describes the Aithiopian contingent's headgear. See also R. Dostálová, *Acta Antiqua* (Budapest) 15 (1967) 446.

pretation is possible. The horses' heads worn by the troops point strongly to the Asiatic Aithiopians. In the *Odyssey*²⁷ Poseidon on his way back from the Aithiopians to Greece rests on the Solyman mountains, whence he spies Odysseus drawing nigh to Phaeacia. Homer thinks of Poseidon as watching, in mid-journey, from Asia Minor, but Choirilos may have assumed the lines to mean that the Solyman mountains were amongst the eastern Aithiopians. If so, he would have brought his Aithiopians from the Solyman mountains.

The 'broad lake' beside which the Aithiopians lived must remain unidentified—the Persian gulf perhaps, or the Caspian? Such problems as this may well have been discussed by Aristotle in his *Ἀπορήματα Ἀρχιλόχου Εὐριπίδου Χοιρίλου ἐν βιβλίοις γ*, a lost work listed by Andronikos of Rhodes.²⁸ (The names would appear to be in chronological order in the book's title; so our Choirilos, the Samian—in whom Aristotle is known to have been interested—not the earlier Attic tragedian, is surely the poet mentioned in the index of Andronikos.)

What the Jewish scholar meant by calling Choirilos an "older poet"—*ἀρχαιότερος* is a well attested reading here²⁹—is not clear; he may well have thought the Samian to be earlier than Herodotos, whom he has just mentioned. The high dating of Choirilos would thus seem to have originated far earlier than the *Suda*—perhaps with the literary chronography of Apollodoros.

Herodian³⁰ quotes two lines on massed troops drinking at a spring and ascribes them to the *Persika* of Choirilos. The words are part of a simile comparing the soldiery to bees. The quotation is fragmentary because Herodian is concerned only with the use of *ἀρέθουσα* to mean a spring. (This generalised use of the particular is quite in the Panyassian epic manner. Panyassis had used *Ἀχελώϊος* to mean the streams of Ocean in their entirety.)³¹

παρὰ δὲ κρήνας ἀρεθούσας
μυρία φύλ' ἔδονεῖτο πολυσμήνοισι μελίσσαις
<εἴκελα>.
εἴκελα vel sim. suppl. Meineke.

²⁷ 5.282–83: τὸν δ' ἐξ Αἰθιοπίων ἀνιῶν κρείων ἐνοσίχθων | τηλόθεν ἐκ Σολύμων ὄρεων ἴδεν.

²⁸ *Aristotelis Fragmenta* p.16, 144 ed. V. Rose.

²⁹ *FGrHist* 696 F 34e, *app.crit.*: ἀρχαῖος Euseb.

³⁰ *Περὶ μιν. λέξεως* 13.4 (2.919 Lentz) [Choirilos fr.2 Kinkel].

³¹ J. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* (Oxford 1925) p.248.

The context is lost, but Duebner³² suggested that the gathering of the army at Kelainai is meant; here, Herodotos reports, are the sources of the Maiandros and of the Katarrhektes. The latter indeed flowed from the very market place of Kelainai, where the army passed after the Halys crossing (Herodotos 7.26). Another context, and a more likely one perhaps because the poet emphasises the busy thronging of the bee-like troops, is the arrival at the Skamandros on the way to the Hellespont from Sardes. Herodotos (7.43) tells how the stream failed to supply the army's needs, so great was the horde of men and beasts drinking from it in the summer heat. Xerxes struck through the Ida range after leaving Antandros, and so entered the land of Ilios at or near the headwaters of the Skamandros.³³ 'Arethusan springs' would therefore be an expression appropriate to the circumstances. Either in the context of Kelainai or of the Skamandros the narrative of Choirilos would be well advanced; Meineke's proposed change of Herodian's text from *ἐν α' Περσικῶν* to *ἐν δ' Περσικῶν* is attractive therefore. It would imply that there were at least four books in the edition known to Herodian.

As the Persians' fleet rounded Cape Sepias the Athenians, lying in wait at Chalkis, prayed to Boreas that the enemy might be scattered, as indeed he was, but by the Apheliotes or Hellespontias.³⁴ Prayers were also offered to the daughter of Erechtheus, Oreithyia, whom Boreas had stolen away from Attica. Choirilos, as we learn from a scholiast to Apollonius Rhodius,³⁵ told the story of the rape of Oreithyia, almost certainly in connexion with the storm, but he may not have taken it from Herodotos, who himself insists that it was part of Athenian oral tradition: *λέγεται λόγος, . . . φάτις ὄρηται, . . . οἱ δ' ὦν Ἀθηναῖοι . . . λέγουσι*. The scholiast states that according to Choirilos Oreithyia was seized while she was gathering flowers by the sources of the Kephisos stream—*ἄνθη ἀμέργουσαν*³⁶ *ὑπὸ τὰς τοῦ Κηφισοῦ πηγὰς*. Hermann proposed to reconstruct the words of

³² See Kinkel, *EGF*, p.268.

³³ Hdt. 7.42 . . . *καὶ Ἀντανδρον τὴν Πελασγίδα παραμειβόμενος τὴν Ἴδην δὲ λαβὼν ἐς ἀριστερὴν χεῖρα ἦε ἐς τὴν Ἰλιάδα γῆν*. λαβὼν, *ἐς dist.* Holder. On the problem of supplying the army with water see A. R. Burn, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 328. The troops are unlikely to have found enough water for their needs until they had passed down the Skamandros valley as far as the springs of Burnabashi (F. Maurice, *JHS* 50 [1930] 22 n.35a). Another possible context for the fragment is the three-day stay at the sources of the river Tearos in Thrace by Dareios and his army (Hdt. 4.90–91. See Barigazzi, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.10] 181).

³⁴ Macan on Hdt. 7.189.

³⁵ 1.211 p.26 Wendel.

³⁶ *ἀμέργουσαν* L. *ἐκλέγουσαν* Par. *ἀμέργουσαν* Pierson, Naeke.

Choirilos as ἀνθε' ἀμέργουσαν πηγὰς ὑπο Κηφισοῖο, but, as Naeke pointed out, Herodotos (7.189) states that the Athenians set up a sanctuary to Boreas by the Ilisos in gratitude to the god; and in the *Phaedrus* it is assumed that Oreithyia was taken from the Ilis(s)os (229b). So the scholiast may have written Κηφισοῦ in error. It is not surprising that Choirilos should tell this Athenian story, which is likely to have been well known outside Athens even before the publication of Herodotos' work, since it had been celebrated soon after the Persian defeat in a poem by Simonides on the battle of Artemision.³⁷ Simonides seems to have declared Oreithyia to have been stolen away from *Brilessos*,³⁸ but here too the place name is not quite certain in the scholium. In any case we cannot be sure that Choirilos placed the seizure by the Ilisos. Besides, Herodotos says that the shrine to Boreas was set up by that stream, but he does not also state that Oreithyia was stolen from there.

There would have been many opportunities for Choirilos to mention his fellow countrymen in his poetry. One fragment suggests that he in fact did so. Photios³⁹ notes that according to Choirilos the ships of the Samians had prows shaped like boars' heads; and from Hesychios,⁴⁰ who quotes Didymos, we learn that these broad-bellied ships were called Samainai. Hesychios quotes an anonymous hexameter:

ναῦς δέ τις ὠκυπόρος Σαμία, ὑὸς εἶδος ἔχουσα.

This almost certainly comes from Choirilos, whose description of (what seems to be) a Samaina as swift is consistent with Plutarch's account⁴¹ of them as high-capacity fast-sailers, first introduced by the tyrant Polykrates. Such ships took part in the Persian wars, and, earlier, representations of their prows had been displayed by the Samians of Zankle on the reverse of their tetradrachms.⁴² Earlier still, Samainai had engaged in the battle of Kydonia (Hdt. 3.59.3). A possible context for the mention of a Samaina by Choirilos is the battle of Salamis, in which two Samian captains Theomestor and Phylakos specially distinguished themselves. For their bravery Theomestor was

³⁷ Fr.29 Page (schol. ad Ap.Rhod. 1.211).

³⁸ So Naeke.

³⁹ *Lex. s.v. Σαμακὸν τρόπον.*

⁴⁰ *s.v. Σαμακὸς τρόπος.*

⁴¹ *Perikles* 26.4. See also Lysimachos, *FGrHist* 382 F 7.

⁴² J. P. Barron, *The Silver Coins of Samos* (London 1966) 6.

made tyrant of Samos by the Persians and Phylakos was granted land by the Great King (Hdt. 8.85). Another context would be the Samian embassy to Leotychidas at Delos, when the Spartan king was urged to liberate Ionia (Hdt. 9.90). It is worth noting at this point that the patriotism of Choirilos may have prompted him to compose a poem on Samian matters. The *Suda* article on him states that *Λαμιακά* and other poems of Choirilos are handed down. Lamia did not have a large mythology; so Choirilos of Samos is unlikely to have written a special poem on the place. Some scholars⁴³ have therefore supposed that Choirilos of *Iasos* wrote a poem devoted to the Lamian war, but there is no other evidence for such a work. I prefer to emend to *Σαμιακά* and to suppose that Choirilos of Samos composed a work on his native island, but I readily admit that no fragments from the poem can be identified.

A three-line fragment is ascribed by Athenaios (464A) simply to “Choirilos the epic poet.” Our Samian poet, not the Iasian contemporary of Alexander the Great, is meant: that is clear from a remark of Ktesias⁴⁴ prefixed by Athenaios himself: “He whom amongst the Persians the Great King dishonours makes use of pottery cups,” that is to say, instead of metal ones. The speaker of the verses says, “I hold in my hands my wealth, a sherd of a broken cup, a shipwreck of feasting men, so many vessels has the wind cast out to the shores with the violence of Dionysos.”

χερσὶν <δ’> ὄλβον ἔχω κύλικος τρύφος ἀμφὶς ἐαγός
 ἀνδρῶν δαιτυμόνων νανάγιον, οἷά τε πολλὰ
 πνεῦμα Διωνύσοιο πρὸς Ὑβριος ἔκβαλεν ἀκτάς.
 I. ἀνολβον Toup, unnecessarily.

The language is rather forced perhaps, but striking. Hermann⁴⁵ aptly suggested that the speaker was Xerxes after the defeat at Salamis. The wrecks of the ships are compared to the damaged vessels left after a violent drinking party. In Herodotos (8.96) the Zephyr drives a broken armada to the Koliai beach, where, as an oracle had predicted, the women used the driftwood for cooking—*Κωλιάδες δὲ γυναῖκες ἐρετροῖσι φρύξουσι*.⁴⁶ To this context the words of Choirilos

⁴³ e.g. Naeke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 101.

⁴⁴ *FGrHist* 688 F 40.

⁴⁵ See Kinkel on Choerilus Samius fr.9.

⁴⁶ *φρύξουσι libri, corr.* I. Kuhn.

ἀνδρῶν δαιτυμόνων ναυάγιον are appropriate, especially since πνεῦμα . . . ἔκβαλεν ἀκτάς follows.

Stobaios⁴⁷ quotes a line from the *Perseis* of Choirilos without context:

ὄρκον δ' οὔτ' ἄδικον χρεῶν ἔμμεναι οὔτε δίκαιον.

Naeke⁴⁸ imagined that a Persian was speaking or that the poet was referring to Persians, whose truth-telling had already been emphasised by Herodotos (1.138). The point of the remark would then be that no one should take an oath, not even a just one, because a man's reputation for truth should be so great that the oath is needless. Though a Persian may have argued thus in the poem, the thought is Pythagorean. Diogenes Laertius (8.22), for example, affirms that there was a precept of Pythagoras, μηδ' ὀμνύναι θεούς· ἀσκεῖν γὰρ αὐτὸν δεῖν ἀξιόπιστον παρέχειν. "Call not the gods to witness, because a man must try to make himself carry conviction." A philosophical aside, particularly one originating with the precepts of a Samian sage, would not have come unfitly in the *Persika*. Choirilos seems to have been interested in early philosophers; according to Diogenes (1.1.24) "Choirilos the poet" declared that Thales was the first to call souls immortal. The context is lost,⁴⁹ but there is no reason to think that the Iasian poet is meant here, not the Samian. There would also seem to be no room for a remark of this kind in the work of the early Attic tragedian Choirilos.

A few points of disconnected detail must now be discussed. There are some Choirilean *dubia* and *eicienda* included in Kinkel's collection of the fragments, and we must also consider some anonymous hexameters which may well be the Samian's work. One *dubium*, about a cloud gathering over Mount Aigaleos (fr.8 K.), is part of the *Hekale* of Kallimachos and has nothing to do with the *Persika*.⁵⁰ Another (fr.11+12), belonging perhaps to Choirilos the Attic tragedian,⁵¹

⁴⁷ Flor. 3.27.1 (3.611 Hense).

⁴⁸ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 160.

⁴⁹ Barigazzi (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.10] 181) ingeniously suggests that the allusion is to the Thracian Salmoxis, because Thales was by some held to be a name of Salmoxis the Getan (Porphyry, *Vit.Pyth.* 14). Herodotos (4.93–96) dwells at length on the belief in immortality of the Getae and on the antiquity of Salmoxis; he also emphasises their justice. Possibly therefore Choirilos alluded to Salmoxis as well as to Anacharsis (see text at n.20 *supra*) in connexion with the Skythian campaign of Dareios. The criticism of oath taking could also belong here.

⁵⁰ H. J. Mette, *Der Kleine Pauly I* (Stuttgart 1964) 1152–53.

⁵¹ Fr.2 and fr.3 Nauck².

describes stones as the bones, and rivers as the veins, of the earth. To the tragedian may also belong the statement in the scholia to the *Georgics*⁵² that according to Choirilos the Eridanos is a river of Germania in which Phaethon met his end; but the ascription of a *Barbarika* to the Samian Choirilos must cause us to hesitate before rejecting this story from the fragments of our Choirilos. The name Germania would be a gloss by the scholiast; it is most unlikely that either poet named Germania so early as the fifth century B.C.

The pretty line

πέτρην κοιλαίνει ράνις ὕδατος ἐνδεδεχέει,

gutta cavat lapidem, consumitur anulus usu, could be the Samian's, as Kinkel thought;⁵³ but the context is lost. The use of the rare word ἐνδεδέχεια is remarkable. Sometimes confused with ἐντελέχεια, it may well be cognate with δολιχός.

In a fragment of the comic poet Alexis (*CAF* 2.345 Kock) we find Linos instructing a rather unwilling pupil, the glutton Herakles. Linos has a library at his disposal; it includes Hesiod, tragedy, Choirilos and Homer. Since Choirilos is distinguished from τραγωδία, our Samian poet, not the Athenian, seems to be the author named here. The fragment suggests that the composer of the *Persika* was well known a generation or so after his death; he was so well known, indeed, that Plato, according to Herakleides Pontikos, was impelled to champion the merits of the rival Antimachos of Kolophon,⁵⁴ and Aristotle (*Topics* 8.1) quietly pointed out that the similes and examples given by Choirilos were inferior to Homer's, because they were selected from things unfamiliar or little understood. Just such an obscure simile is to be found on a fragment of papyrus of the second or first century B.C. published by W. Aly in 1914.⁵⁵ Reitzenstein⁵⁶ thought that the verses were by Antimachos or Choirilos; they compare, somewhat uneasily, a fisherman's rod, baited hook and line with the notch of a spear or arrow dragging out the thin thread from a helmet's plume through which it has passed.

ὡς δ' ἄλιεὺς ἀκτῆ ἐν ἀλιρράντῳ ἐπὶ πέτρῃ
ἀγ(κ)ίστρον δ' ἔλικος δελεουχίδα μάστακ' ἀείρας,

⁵² 1.482 (Schol. Bern.) [*FGrHist* 696 F 34f].

⁵³ Fr.10 (Simpl. in Arist. *Phys.* 429a 41).

⁵⁴ Proklos, in *Plat. Tim.* 1. p.90, 20 Diehl (*FGrHist* 696 F 33e).

⁵⁵ *Mitteilungen aus der Freiburger Papyrussammlung I* (Heidelberg 1914) p.9.

⁵⁶ See Powell, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.31) p.251.

ὦδ'

οὐ[ρ]αχος (?) ἐγ λο[φιῆς ἀ]παλήν τρίχα[-υυ]πῶν.

2. τελευχιδα pap.: corr. J. U. Powell.⁵⁷

οὐραχος for οὐρίαχος would be odd, but possible. A doubtful variant οὐρακος is also attested by Pollux (*Onom.* 1.90) as the name given to the shaft of an oar, between handle and blade. If that is the intended meaning here, then the lines presumably describe a sea fight; one thinks of Salamis; and Reitzenstein's ascription of the fragment to Choirilos is attractive. The confused fighting is reminiscent of the description of the Salamis battle in the *Persae* of Choirilos' contemporary, Timotheos.

The dispute over the relative worth of Antimachos and Choirilos continued for long after their deaths; an epigram (*AP* 11.218), ascribed to a Crates, declares Antimachos the better poet, and ridicules with irrelevant obscenity Euphorion for preferring Choirilos.

Χοιρίλος Ἀντιμάχου πολὺ λείπεται, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν
 Χοιρίλον Εὐφορίων εἶχε διὰ στόματος,
 καὶ κατάγλωσσ' ἐπόει τὰ ποήματα, καὶ τὰ Φιλητᾶ
 ἀτρεκέως ἤδει· καὶ γὰρ Ὀμηρικὸς ἦν.

The poem is not likely to have been written long after Euphorion's death, if indeed it was not written during his lifetime.⁵⁸ The Choirilos is not identified therein, but our Samian rival of Antimachos, not the Iasian, is surely meant. Euphorion can hardly have praised Choirilos of Iasos, whose heroic verses were so poor that Alexander the Great, whom the poet accompanied, declared that he would rather be the Thersites of Homer than the Achilles of Choirilos.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ See Powell, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.31) Epimetrum I 8.

⁵⁸ See A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams* II (Cambridge 1965) 222, and R. Pfeiffer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 243, who decisively reject the attribution of the epigram to Krates of Mallos.

⁵⁹ *FGrHist* 153 F 10a (Porphyrion *ad* Hor. *AP* 357). Alexander, if we may believe Horace (*Ep.* 2.1.232ff), did however find some of the Iasian's work pleasing:

*gratus Alexandro regi magno fuit ille,
 Choerilus incultis qui versibus et male natis
 rettulit acceptos, regale nomisma, Philippos.*

It must have been the account of his military successes, not the (perhaps distinct) poem on Achilles, that gave the monarch pleasure; *Choerilus Alexandrum secutus opera eius descripsit*, says Porphyrion of this passage in Horace, adding that seven only of the verses of Choirilos were praised. These are the hexameters on the testament of Sardanapalos at Nineveh, which Choirilos adapted from what purported to be a translation of a Chaldaic inscription (Amyntas, *FGrHist* 122 F 2, *ap.* Athen. 529E–530A). Athenaios ascribes all seven verses to Chrysippos, but that seems to be a mistake. Strabo (672) places the inscription at Anchiale

To return to the epigram of Crates: Why was Euphorion always talking about, or quoting, Choirilos the Samian—*εἶχε διὰ στόματος?* One alleged reason is given in the next line: Euphorion made his own poems full of obscure or far-fetched words because he had studied Choirilos closely. The few fragments of the Samian are consistent with the charge of rare vocabulary; consider *τροχοκουράδες* or the rare use of *ἀρεθούσας*. An admirer of Choirilos could properly be called *Ὀμηρικός*, no matter how inferior the *Persika* was to the *Iliad*, for had not Choirilos himself praised Homer in his invocation, and imagined himself to be continuing the great tradition of hexameter epic, a tradition carried on by Euphorion himself? But Euphorion, who in the *Chiliades*, for example, did not confine himself to themes of the remote heroic age, must also have approved the break with tradition made manifest in the recent historical theme of the *Persika*.

Another possible set of fragments of Choirilos has been recognised by M. L. West.⁶⁰ This is the group of hexameters published by E. Lobel as no. 2524 of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, eight pieces in all. The language is conventionally epic, but there are some Doricisms which, however, are not introduced consistently. Lobel notes the Attic late-fifth-century B.C. formation *ὄντως* and the learned variant of the Homeric *κλοτοπεύειν*, *κλυτοπεύειν*. West has compared the extravagant *ὕδατοτρεφέλωτος* with the equally extravagant *τροχοκουράδες* of Choirilos.

The fragments of the papyrus present a strange mixture of the historical and the legendary. Zeus and the vocative *Φοῖβε* appear in fr.5. Neleidai are mentioned in a martial context in fr.1, and three lines later come Arimaspoi (1, line 7). In fr.8 the son of somebody whose name ends in *]νάκου* is mentioned. Lobel suggests the Persian name *Φαρ]νάκου* here. Could we perhaps, as West suggests, have here part of the *Persika* of Choirilos? The son of Pharnakos would then be Artabazos, the Neleidai *ἐπ' ἀρίστερα δαῖσι τᾶτος* could be the Athenians

(Zephyrion) in Cilicia, which was thought to have been a foundation of Sardanapalos, and ascribes two lines from a version of the poem to a Choirilos (cf. Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀγγιᾶλη). The Nineveh tale comes from the *Stathmoi of Asia* by Amyntas, one of the Alexander historians, and evidently refers to the Iasian retainer of the monarch. The testament of Sardanapalos therefore has nothing to do with Choirilos of Samos; see Naeke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 37ff. The *Suda* s.v. Χοιρίλος (Σάμιος) state that Choirilos was given a gold stater for every line of his poem on the Athenian victory over Xerxes. The assertion about the Samian arises from abuse by Istros the Kallimachean and from a confusion with the payments to Choirilos of Iasos; it need not detain us. See Jacoby, *FGrHist* 696 F 33a *app.crit.*

⁶⁰ *CR* 16 (1966) 23.

at Plataea, and the Doricisms could be in honour of the triumphant Lysander. Plataea, after all, was conventionally regarded as a victory of 'the Dorian spear' and could fitly be recalled in the years of Athenian defeat.

If *POxy.* 2524 was part of a revised version of the poem in honour of Lysander, not of the now defeated Athenians, the rivers in fr.1 could be the Oeroe, Asopos and Molouros of the battlefield at Plataea;⁶¹ and the Arismaspoi could be in a simile rather than an exotic addition to the army. At the end of the last fragment (fr.8) appear the words

]φηϊ ανακτι
]αργος οπασσον

Lobel notes that proper names (e.g. *Κηφεύς*, *Ὀρφεύς*) in *-φευς* tend to be heroic. Kepheus is most apt to the context, if *Ἄργος* is to be read in the next line, because Kepheus is the father of Andromeda, who, according to the mythological propaganda of 480 B.C., became by Perseus of Argos mother of Perses, the eponymous ancestor of the Persian people.⁶² This Herodotean genealogy could well have been taken over by Choirilos. It strengthens slightly the case for ascribing the hexameter fragments in *POxy.* 2524, if not certainly to Choirilos, then at least to the context of the Persian Wars.

The fashion for heroic and heroic-historical epics in the grand manner of Choirilos lasted, as can be seen from the traditionally heroic *Ἡράκλεια* and the quasi-historical *Μεσσηνιακά* of Rhianos, for example. The onslaught of Kallimachos on big literary epics had no permanent effect on the poetical practice of his successors, except amongst the Kallimacheans of strict allegiance;⁶³ to Peisandros of Laranda, to Nonnos and beyond, learned, expansive, hexameter epic poetry about the recent or more remote past, about legend and about

⁶¹ Their courses are plotted by W. K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography I* (Berkeley 1965) 117, fig. 7.

⁶² Hdt. 7.61 and 7.150. The genealogy continued with Achaimenes son of Perses, whose name is evidently intended to be linked with the heroic Achaioi of Argos (Nicolas of Damascus, *FGrHist* 90 F 6).

⁶³ This matter is emphasised by K. Ziegler in his book on Hellenistic epic (*supra* n.3), though he perhaps underestimates the influence of the Kallimachean programme in the prologue to the *Aitia* upon that scholar-poet's close contemporaries. The problem of Kallimachos' relationship to Apollonios Rhodios cannot be discussed here (see now R. Pfeiffer, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.4] 142ff); it must in any case be kept distinct from the question of his attitude to, and criticisms of, Choirilos and Antimachos, which are linked to the attack on Praxiphanes and the Peripatetics.

myth prospered. Close to the source of one tributary of that tradition the author of the *Persika* can be seen; a mere shadow now, but a poet still worthy to be remembered.⁶⁴

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