

# Herodotean Geography (4.36–45): A Persian *Oikoumenē*?

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IN BOOK 4 of the *Histories*, Herodotus pauses his discussion of the Scythian steppe and turns to the question of the world: what does it look like? How should it be represented? These questions lead to the historian's critique of his predecessors, those who draw the world with a compass (4.36.2), namely those working in the theoretical tradition of Ionian geography or those following Homeric geography with its encircling Ocean.<sup>1</sup> Yet Herodotus' map of the *oikoumenē* as

<sup>1</sup> For studies of Herodotean geography see J. L. Myres, "An Attempt to Reconstruct the Maps Used by Herodotus," *Geographical Journal* 8 (1896) 605–629; G. Lachenaud, "Connaissance du monde et représentations de l'espace dans Hérodote," *Hellenica* 32 (1980) 42–60; J. Romm, "Herodotus and Mythic Geography: The Case of the Hyperboreans," *TAPA* 119 (1989) 89–113, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton 1992), and *Herodotus* (New Haven 1998) ch. 6; H. Edelmann, "Ἐρημίη und ἔρημος bei Herodot," *Klio* 52 (1970) 79–86; A. Purves, *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative* (Cambridge 2010) ch. 4. K. Raaflaub, "Herodotus and the Intellectual Trends of his Time," in E. J. Bakker et al. (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden 2002) 159–160, gives a summary of Herodotus' reliance on Hecataeus, with further bibliography. On the accuracy of Herodotean geography see G. F. Hudson, "The Land of the Budini: A Problem in Ancient Geography," *CR* 38 (1924) 158–162; O. K. Armayor, "Did Herodotus Ever Go to the Black Sea?" *HSCP* 82 (1978) 45–62, and "Sesostris and Herodotus' Autopsy of Thrace, Colchis, Inland Asia Minor, and the Levant," *HSCP* 84 (1980) 51–74; A. F. Rainey, "Herodotus' Depiction of the Eastern Mediterranean Coast," *BASOR* 321 (2001) 57–63. For general studies of ancient geographical thinking/cartography see O. A. W. Dilke, *Greek and Roman Maps* (London 1985), esp. ch. 1–2; P. Janni, *Le mappa e il periplo* (Macerata 1984), and "Cartographie et art nautique dans le

given at 4.36–45, while introduced with the promise to “make clear the extent of each [continent] and what sort each is in depiction” (ἐγὼ δηλώσω μέγεθός τε ἐκάστης αὐτέων καὶ οἴη τις ἔστι ἐς γραφὴν ἐκάστη, 4.36.2),<sup>2</sup> devotes much more narrative space to Asia than to the continents of Libya and Europe. Only Asia is described in its totality at once; Europe and Libya must be content to appear in part over several books, their full shape pieced together in the minds of the audience. Moreover the historian begins with Persia,<sup>3</sup> centring his map of the *oikoumenē* on the empire’s heart and orienting everything in reference to it as he proceeds through global space from a putative Persian perspective. In this version of the *oikoumenē* (4.36–45), the Persian Empire’s expanse dominates and the Greek *poleis* of Ionia and mainland Greece do not appear at all.

This paper examines how Herodotus’ description at 4.36–45 presents an alternative perspective of the *oikoumenē* to that of the Ionian geographical tradition as seen in Hecataeus’ *Periodos Gēs* by centring the map on Persia instead of the Aegean and/or Delphi. In addition to beginning with Persia, Herodotus returns to this starting point several times to connect the various portions of the world to it. By doing so, the historian turns Greek geographical consciousness as seen in the Ionian tradition on its head: Persia moves from being on the periphery to

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monde ancien,” in P. Arnaud and P. Counillon (eds.), *Geographica Historica* (Bordeaux/Nice 1998) 41–53; N. J. Thrower, *Maps and Civilization: Cartography in Culture and Society*<sup>3</sup> (Chicago 2007) ch. 2, esp. 18–19; R. Talbert, “Greek and Roman Mapping: Twenty-First Century Perspectives,” in R. Talbert and R. W. Unger (eds.), *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods* (Leiden 2008) 9–28; and the discussion of the *oikoumenē* in M. Munn, *The Mother of the Gods, Athens, and the Tyranny of Asia: A Study of Sovereignty in Ancient Religion* (Berkeley 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Text of Herodotus is from N. G. Wilson, *Herodoti Historiae I–II* (Oxford 2015); all translations are my own. Dates unless otherwise noted are BCE.

<sup>3</sup> D. Asheri, A. Lloyd, and A. Corcella also note the centring of the map on Persia in their commentary on the passage (*A Commentary on Herodotus: Books I–IV* [Oxford 2007] 609).

the centre, and both mainland Greece and Ionia suddenly find themselves on the outside looking in, presumably on the periphery but not worth placing on the world map. Finally it will be argued that Herodotus' world geography as seen in 4.36–45 may derive from the impact of the Persian Wars on Greek understandings of the world as well as from the continuing dominance of the Persian Empire in the eastern Mediterranean and Near East after Mycale, which may have prompted and made possible a reconceptualization of global space.

*The idea of geography*

Geography as a reflection of knowledge about the earth's spatial dynamics and as a collection of decisions concerning how to visualize space is a historically dependent, evolving process; maps thus present their users with both a geographical representation and a historical image of social order and thought as revealed by the spatial decisions that gave shape to the maps.<sup>4</sup> As instruments of social rhetoric and political power, maps reflect not only claims to geographical space and territory but also political hierarchies and power dependent on the ordering of space. This holds for physical maps as well as mental maps—the mental structures or processes by which individuals acquire, store, and use information about their geographical environment<sup>5</sup>—transmitted orally or through text, as in *Histories* 4.36–45.

The structure of a mental map depends on the general social

<sup>4</sup> The political and social forces behind these decisions and how maps become expressions of power are the subject of J. Black, *Maps and Politics* (Chicago 1997); cf. A. K. Henrikson, "The Map as an 'Idea': The Role of Cartographic Imagery during the Second World War," *American Cartographer* 2 (1975) 19–53.

<sup>5</sup> A. K. Henrikson, "The Geographical 'Mental Maps' of American Foreign Policy Makers," *International Political Science Review/Revue internationale de science politique* 1 (1980) 498. Cf. D. C. D. Pocock, "The Contribution of Mental Maps in Perception Studies," *Geography* 64 (1979) 279–287, and E. Graham, "What is a Mental Map?" *Area* 8 (1976) 259–262, for further discussions of the concept.

discourses informing a community's understanding of geographical space.<sup>6</sup> In ancient Greece, the social structures informing ideas of world geography depended variously on Homer's depiction of a circular cosmos surrounding a circular world (*Il.* 18.483–489, 606–607; cf. Strab. 1.1.2–10), the theories of the Ionian geographers which drew circular worlds surrounded by Ocean (Strab. 1.1.11–12, Diog. Laert. 2.1, 8.1, Agathemerus 1–2 [*GGM* II 471]), and the experiences of traders, travelers, mercenaries, colonists, and, in the fifth century, the Athenian navy, among others. The travel and perspectives of all of these groups were dominated by the Mediterranean and its encircling coastlines, and for colonists in particular Delphi stood especially prominent because of its assumed authority to allocate non-Greek space. By Herodotus' day, there appear to have been two dominant ways of representing space: the 'cartographical' and the 'hodological'.<sup>7</sup> The cartographical view of the world imagines geographical space as a single, easily viewable plane where the viewer can perceive the world in its totality.<sup>8</sup> The hodological approach to space

<sup>6</sup> For examples of the impact of social norms and contemporary events on mental maps see M. Roberts' study of Maori song lines for an analysis of how myth impacts the formation of mental maps ("Mind Maps of the Maori," *GeoJournal* 77 [2012] 741–751) and Henrikson's study of how WW II, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the shift in global politics following WW II affected American patterns of conceiving global space (*American Cartographer* 2 [1975] 19–53); also the examples given throughout Black, *Maps and Politics*, and Thrower, *Maps and Civilization* ch. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Terms from Janni, *Le Mappa*; cf. Purves, *Space and Time* 144–150, with ch. 1–4 on representations of the world before Herodotus and in the *Histories*. On the differences between Ionian and Herodotean geography see Lachenaud, *Hellenica* 32 (1980) 46–47, and for those between Iliadic geography and Herodotean, Romm, *The Edges of the Earth* 32–35; cf. Myres, *Geographical Journal* 8 (1896) 611–620.

<sup>8</sup> Examples of a cartographic perspective are the Shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.483–607), the Babylonian World Map (W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* [Winona Lake 1998] 20–42 and pl. 2–3, 6–7), and the Ionian tradition of world maps (see Strab. 1.1.11–12, Diog. Laert. 2.1, and Agathemerus 1–2 on Anaximander's and Hecataeus' maps).

takes the perspective of a traveler or seafarer, moving forward until reaching an intersection before proceeding to the next point.<sup>9</sup>

When Aristagoras brings his map—described as a *periodos gēs* on a *pinax*—to Sparta (Hdt. 5.49), the audience is invited to imagine something on the model of Hecataeus' *Periodos Gēs*,<sup>10</sup> a circular world balanced between two continents and surrounded by Ocean. According to Agathemerus, Anaximander's and Hecataeus' maps took this form (1–2), and Herodotus had earlier in the *Historiēs* highlighted the existence of such maps (4.36.2). Aristagoras' description of the route proceeds hodologically (beginning with the Ionians, then Lydians, Phrygians, and so forth), but it is in reference to and dependent on the cartographic vision offered by the physical map. Because of this, his outline of the route from Sardis to Susa omits the connecting threads which order hodological space: time and/or distance.<sup>11</sup> He describes the position of the Phrygians through to the Matieneans, pointing out one after another through the use of deictic adjectives/pronouns and filling in the space not with distance but with resources (5.49.5–6):

Next to the Lydians ... these ones, the Phrygians, hold the land eastwards, being the richest in flocks and fruits of the peoples I

<sup>9</sup> For example, the description of space in the *Odyssey* and Herodotus' description of Egypt via the Nile (2.5–34).

<sup>10</sup> The reference to Hecataeus earlier in the preparations for the Ionian revolt, where he detailed all the peoples and resources subject to Darius in an attempt to dissuade Aristagoras (5.36), likely primed the audience to make the connection between Aristagoras' map of the world and Hecataeus'. The fragments attributed to Hecataeus' *Periodos Gēs* reflect the list attributed to Hecataeus by Herodotus: they largely consist of place-names, *poleis*, and *ethnē* in Europe and Asia.

<sup>11</sup> Even Odysseus' extremely limited hodological perspective during his travels includes matters of time spent travelling to order the route he takes. He may not be able to say from which direction the Laestrygonians, for example, lie from the Cyclops' island, but he can say that one will arrive at Telepylos on the seventh day of rowing day and night from Aiolos' floating island (*Od.* 10.80–81).

know. Next to the Phrygians are the Cappadocians, whom we call Syrians; bordering them are the Cilicians, who reach this sea here, in which the island of Cyprus lies here. The Cilicians pay a yearly tribute of 500 talents to the king. Next to these Cilicians, these ones here are the Armenians, and *they* are wealthy in respect to their flocks, and next to the Armenians the Matieneans hold this land here.

Λυδῶν δέ ... οἶδε ἔχονται Φρύγες {οἱ} πρὸς τὴν ἠῶ, πολυπροβατώτατοί τε ἐόντες πάντων τῶν ἐγὼ οἶδα καὶ πολυκαρπώτατοι. Φρυγῶν δὲ ἔχονται Καππαδόκαι, τοὺς ἡμεῖς Συρίοις καλούμεν· τούτοισι δὲ πρόσουροι Κίλικες, κατήκοντες ἐπὶ θάλασσαν τήνδε, ἐν τῇ ἦδε Κύπρος νῆσος κεῖται· οἱ πεντακόσια τάλαντα βασιλεῖ τὸν ἐπέτειον φόρον ἐπιτελεῦσι. Κιλικῶν δὲ τῶνδε ἔχονται Ἀρμένιοι οἶδε, καὶ οὗτοι ἐόντες πολυπρόβατοι, Ἀρμενίων δὲ Ματιηνοὶ χώρην τήνδε ἔχοντες.

Aristagoras stands as Herodotus' rival geographer<sup>12</sup> and as someone who gives us the first 'practical' use for a map in the Greek tradition, namely to arrange space in reference to future or ongoing conquest.<sup>13</sup> Herodotus' discussion of the Royal Road (5.52–54), however, rejects the frozen, viewable image of Aristagoras' map, and instead proceeds stage by stage, giving the number of posts between each stage and the distances involved for the stages and the road in total. For the first section of the route, Herodotus describes the journey from Lydia and

<sup>12</sup> D. Branscome, "Herodotus and the Map of Aristagoras," *ClAnt* 29 (2010) 1–44.

<sup>13</sup> Dilke, *Maps* 23; Munn, *The Mother of the Gods* 217–219. On maps and empire-building in Herodotus see Munn 188–193 on the connections between kingship and the *oikoumenē* (i.e. settled land); cf. Purves' comment that Herodotus' "rejection of [Aristagoras'] map betrays a certain anxiety about his own project as a historian, given that cartography is also related ... to the implied power relations within the project of history writing itself, which cannot help but plot a version of events from one particular point of view" (*Space and Time* 149). Several studies have examined the link between maps made by Europeans of non-European lands and imperial conquest: see Black, *Maps* 19–21, for an introduction to the subject, and the book in general for the relationship between geography and networks of power.

Phrygia to Cilicia as follows (5.52.1–2):

Twenty staging-posts extend through Lydia and Phrygia over 94.5 parasangs. The river Halys comes next after Phrygia, where there are gates which everyone must pass through and thus cross the river, and there is a large guard-post at this place. For the one crossing into Cappadocia and travelling this road until the Cilician border there are 28 staging-posts over 104 parasangs.

διὰ μὲν γε Λυδίας καὶ Φρυγίας σταθμοὶ ἰστένοντες ἑῖκοσι εἰσί, παρασάγγαι δὲ τέσσερες καὶ ἐνεήκοντα καὶ ἡμισυ. ἐκδέκεται δὲ ἐκ τῆς Φρυγίας ὁ Ἄλυς ποταμός, ἐπ' ᾧ πύλαι τε ἔπεισι, τὰς διεξέλασαι πᾶσα ἀνάγκη καὶ οὕτω διεκπερᾶν τὸν ποταμόν, καὶ φυλακτῆριον μέγα ἐπ' αὐτῷ. διαβάντι δὲ ἐς τὴν Καππαδοκίην καὶ ταύτη πορευομένων μέχρι οὐρων τῶν Κιλικίων σταθμοὶ δυῶν δέοντές εἰσι τριήκοντα, παρασάγγαι δὲ τέσσερες καὶ ἑκατόν.

Herodotus' route of the Royal Road can be plotted accurately and to scale, with the appropriate amount of space between each point; he gives no headings, however, only landmarks and distance travelled. Aristagoras' map on the other hand associates the different parts of the Royal Road with one another, so that Phrygia is known to be next to Lydia and the Cappadocians/Syrians next to the Phrygians even if one does not know the extent of each. Herodotus' hodological approach to the Royal Road covers time as well as space, while Aristagoras relies on the cartographic perspective of his map to elide time and to lessen the impact of the extent of space between Sardis and Susa.<sup>14</sup>

In general, Herodotus moves through geographic space from the best-known region (e.g., the Nile Delta) to the least known or to where conjecture overtakes *opsis* and *akoē* (e.g., the end point of the Nile).<sup>15</sup> Together the geographical expositions create a network of well-known 'centres' around the Mediterranean that fade into less-known or unknown peripheries. With

<sup>14</sup> See Purves' discussion of the two descriptions of the Royal Road, *Space and Time* 144–149.

<sup>15</sup> Romm, *TAPA* 119 (1989) 99.

the exception of the world map in Book 4, the well-known point from which Herodotus begins is such from a Greek perspective: Egypt begins with the coast and the Delta (2.6–7), Scythia with the Borysthenites' trading centre (4.17), and the Royal Road with Lydia (5.52).<sup>16</sup> These individual depictions of geographical space together create a composite map that orders the world according to Greek knowledge of it; the depiction of the *oikoumenē* in 4.36–45, however, departs from this practice by beginning with Persia. By not starting with the region and continent most familiar to his audience (Greece and Europe) or privileging his own region, as was the norm,<sup>17</sup> Herodotus presents to his audience a new, marked layout of the *oikoumenē*. As I will argue, this shift of perspective on his part may be due to the preeminence of Persia in the Mediterranean region and the impact the Persian Wars had on how individuals perceived the world's composition.

*The Herodotean oikoumenē (4.36–45)*

Herodotus' description of the *oikoumenē* follows the Hyperborean *logos* and the Hypernotian coda (4.32–36.1); after taking his audience as far north (and by extension as far south) as he can go without descending beyond likelihood,<sup>18</sup> he then turns to the question of geography and of how the world should be represented (4.36.2). He rejects the Ionian theoretical model of the world for one based on his own experience, and his description of the world proceeds in a quasi-hodological fashion, moving point by point as the various parts of the *oikoumenē* are linked to one another but without the connecting distances or time of travel.<sup>19</sup> Overall, however, we get a cartographic image

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Rainey, *BASOR* (2001) 57, where he notes that Herodotus numbers the satrapies from a Greek perspective (from Greece looking eastward) and not a Persian one.

<sup>17</sup> T. E. Rihll, *Greek Science* (Oxford 1999) 101.

<sup>18</sup> Romm, *TAPA* 119 (1989) 100, cf. 109–112; cf. C. Dewald, "Notes," in R. Waterfield (transl.), *Herodotus: the Histories* (Oxford 1998) 650, on 4.37–45.

<sup>19</sup> The single distance given is restricted to the distance between the Red



of first Asia and then Libya and finally the edge of Europe, for the northern and eastern boundaries fade into uncertainty. Three types of space fill the map: occupied space (by sedentary or nomadic peoples), *erēmos* space,<sup>20</sup> and unknown/unexplored space. The map of the *oikoumenē* focuses on occupied lands; the other two types of space appear as borders to contain the lands held by settled and nomadic peoples.<sup>21</sup>

*Figure 1: Concept map of Herodotus' oikoumenē (4.36.2–45)*

The depiction of the *oikoumenē* takes form via several passes from the central point of Persia (see *fig. 1*). Beginning with the Red Sea and Persia, Herodotus moves northwards through the Medes, Saspeires, and Colchians at the River Phasis, whereupon he returns to Persia and lays out the two peninsulas off of

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Sea and the Mediterranean at the narrow point of Egypt/Libya (1000 stades: 4.41).

<sup>20</sup> On *erēmoi* in the *Histories* see Edelmann, *Klio* (1970) 79–86, cf. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth* 35–37; and Lachenaud, *Hellenica* (1980) 49–52, on Herodotus' configuration of the world.

<sup>21</sup> The lifestyle of the various *ethnē* comprising the *oikoumenē* appears in the ethnographic sections describing each; thus we learn that some Libyan tribes are sedentary (4.191–197.1) while others are nomads (4.168–180.1), that the Scythians are nomads but the mixed tribes near the Euxine Sea are farmers (4.17.1–2), that the Indians are sedentary (3.99–100), and so forth.

the Persian heartland towards the west: one stretching from the River Phasis to the Troad, the other moving from Persia and the Red Sea to encompass Arabia. He then finishes his depiction of Asia by asserting that the Indians lie farthest to the east, and beyond them the land is *erēmos*. Libya starts at the second peninsula off the Persian heartland; Egypt connects the two and is the narrowest point of the continent. We then have a brief digression on the sizes of the continents—Europe is as long as Asia and Libya together—and on the circumnavigation of Libya and Asia by the Phoenicians and Persians. All that is known about Europe is its length, and that is all Herodotus says on the subject before he ends his description of the *oikoumenē* with a discussion of the names of the three continents. In contrast to the circular, proportional world of Ionian geography, Herodotus gives us a tripartite, uneven world whose layout radiates out from the central point of Persia. The disparity of narrative space devoted to each continent is striking: of the ten chapters given to the *oikoumenē*, Asia receives five (one on the circumnavigation [4.37–40, 44]), Libya three (two on the circumnavigation [4.41–43]), and Europe a couple of sentences in a chapter largely devoted to detailing the origin of the continents' names (4.45.1, 4).

The disparity in treatment may be due to the fact that Herodotus fills in Europe and Libya elsewhere in the *Histories*. He details Egypt and the course of the Nile at 2.5–9 and 32–34, where he again challenges Ionian geographical representations, as well as the Libyan coastline, Scythian rivers, and Scythia (4.168–97, 47–59, and 100–101 respectively). Aside from Herodotus' and Aristagoras' competing descriptions of the Royal Road in 5.49–54, Asiatic space is not described as a separate entity as Egyptian or Scythian geography are. Instead Herodotus gives us the course of the Persian juggernaut: the land conquered as the army passes through it as well as the land that refuses entry and so resists being incorporated into

the empire.<sup>22</sup> While it can also be argued that Herodotus focuses on Asia because it is the most exotic or least known to his audience, the fact that elsewhere in his geographical expositions he proceeds through space according to general Greek knowledge of the world,<sup>23</sup> including when the exposition is voiced by Aristagoras (5.49.5–9), suggests that something else is at play, namely Mediterranean geopolitics in the aftermath of the Persian Wars and a consequent shift that sees Persia as a (possible) centre of the world.

Xerxes brought the whole of Asia with him to Europe in his invasion of Greece, or so it must have seemed to the Greeks. In Aeschylus' *Persians*, Atossa asserts that Xerxes "emptied the broad plain [of Asia]" (κενώσας πᾶσαν ἠπείρου πλάκα, 718) to campaign against Athens, and Herodotus devotes forty chapters in Book 7 to the ethnic contingents who compose Xerxes' army and hail from across Libya and Asia, totaling 1,700,000 according to the historian (7.60–100).<sup>24</sup> The Greeks had had contact with different Asian states for centuries before the Persian Wars, but aside from the political interactions of the

<sup>22</sup> The most famous of the regions that resist incorporation is the Scythian steppe, which, as F. Hartog has shown, is a place of *aporia* to those who do not dwell in it: "Les Scythes imaginaires: Espace et nomadisme," *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 34 (1979) 1137–1154, esp. 1141–1144.

<sup>23</sup> With Aristagoras' description of the route to Susa (5.49.5–9) and Herodotus' of the Royal Road (5.52–54), the starting point of Ionia makes practical sense even as it reflects Greek hierarchies of geographical space: the route proceeds from the coast inland for those setting off from Greece. Elsewhere, however, this practical reason does not explain the ordering of space according to Greek knowledge. The description of Egypt and then Ethiopia begins in the Delta and moves inland, contrary to the river's flow (2.5–34), while that for Scythia starts at the end point of the Ister on the Euxine and with Thrace, and Herodotus has to resort to analogy to Attic geographical features to adequately depict Scythia (4.99–101).

<sup>24</sup> I am not so much concerned with the realities of the numbers and whether they accurately reflect the size of Xerxes' army but rather the perception of size and of the geographical expanse from which the various contingents came.

Ionian and some mainland *poleis* with Anatolian kingdoms such as Lydia, on the whole interactions between mainland Greece and the inland states of the Near East seem to have been primarily through traders or mercenaries. The same holds for Egypt and Libya: most interactions occurred on the African coast through trade or colonies (e.g. Cyrene and Barca), while a few Greek mercenaries went farther inland than the Delta.<sup>25</sup> Through these interactions, the continents touched both physically and through the exchange of peoples on their coasts; the interior of each continent, however, remained separate from the zone bordering the Mediterranean, where people moved around. The Persian Wars changed this as first Darius and then Xerxes moved from the interior of Asia into Europe, movements which had the potential to restructure the relationships between the continents.

<sup>25</sup> From the Iron Age to the early Classical period, some Greeks did likely live in cities such as Babylon (D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon* [Oxford 1985] 78) or the Levantine city-states (J. C. Walbaum, "Greeks in the East or Greeks and the East? Problems in the Definition and Recognition of Presence," *BASOR* 305 [1997] 12; W.-D. Niemeier, "Archaic Greeks in the Orient: Textual and Archaeological Evidence," *BASOR* 322 [2001] 24), but on the whole evidence from the northern and southern Levant points towards a primarily trading relationship, not one of settlement. The Greek settlement at Naucratis was a different matter, as it was an identifiably Greek enclave in an otherwise Egyptian area. While Alcaeus fr.350 L.-P. refers to mercenary service in Babylon (from Strab. 13.2.3), Greek lyric on the whole seems unaware of Mesopotamian idiosyncrasies such as beer drinking, as is Herodotus, suggesting a lack of detailed knowledge about Mesopotamia. On Greek mercenaries in the east, who seem to have been primarily eastern Greeks in the Archaic period, see Niemeier 17–23 and N. Luraghi, "Traders, Pirates, Warriors: The Proto-History of Greek Mercenary Soldiers in the Eastern Mediterranean," *Phoenix* 60 (2006) 21–47. That the Near East had a good deal of cultural influence on Greek art, culture, and poetry is without doubt, but how much this influence, which would have trickled in over a long period of sometimes sporadic interaction between the two regions from the Bronze Age on, had an effect on Greek perceptions of the closeness of the Near Eastern states is doubtful, particularly for inland states such as Babylonia or Persia.

Herodotus' narrative of the expansion of the Persian Empire demonstrates that very little can oppose it; the few halts are effected by the Massagetae (1.214), the trek to the Long-Lived Ethiopians (3.25), the Scythians (4.120–142), and finally the Greeks. Each can be seen as an attempt by the Persians to move too far into a continent not their own:<sup>26</sup> the Persians have a foothold in both Europe (Thrace) and Libya (Egypt, Cyrene and Barca), but their control can only extend to the areas close to where the continents 'touch'. Yet even if they cannot conquer these spaces they can still *reach* them, excepting the land of the Long-Lived Ethiopians. Xerxes brought Asia to Greece, widening the world and its horizons as he demonstrated that the breadth of the *oikoumenē* could, despite its size, be crossed. The Persian Wars and the continuation of hostilities in the Aegean after Mycale thus, I would argue, impacted the ways by which at least some Greeks understood the layout of the *oikoumenē* and the ease by which it could be crossed,<sup>27</sup> by providing a catalyst and context for the reconsideration of the spatial relationship between all three continents, but especially of that between Europe and Asia. Herodotus' depiction of the Persian-centric *oikoumenē* offers some of the evidence for such a shift in geographical perspective.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the attribution of *hubris* to Xerxes' decision to cross the 'natural' borders dividing Greece/Europe and Asia (Aesch. *Pers.* 719–725, 744–751; Hdt. 7.22–24, 33–36). For the theme of natural boundaries and *hubris* see Romm, *Herodotus* 79–87 (focusing esp. on water boundaries), and D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto 1989) 127–135 (cf. ch. 6 for boundaries and limits [*nomoi*] in general). Cf. Munn, *The Mother of the Gods* 245 (also 185, 195) on the Halys as a border that should not be crossed (cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 865).

<sup>27</sup> In addition to Herodotus' description of the world, such changing perceptions of global space can be seen in the Corinthians' complaint that the Spartans considered Persia more of a threat than Athens (Thuc. 1.69.5) and, perhaps more tellingly, in the fact that while Cleomenes rejected Aristagoras because the march to Susa was too long (Hdt. 5.50.3), a little over a century later Agesilaus made such a march with seemingly little qualms about the distance involved (Xen. *Hell.* 4.2–3).

I draw this model of changed perspectives of geographical space following a ‘global’ war from the repercussions of WWII, particularly of Pearl Harbor, and the lead-in to the Cold War on American perceptions of global space as seen in cartographical depictions, public discourses, and geopolitical policies.<sup>28</sup> Henrikson identifies the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor as the catalyst for a rethinking of geographical preconceptions and policy (namely, moving from isolationist defense to global offense) that over the course of the war had “a foreshortening effect [so that] the world was made to seem smaller and more compact.”<sup>29</sup> The reconceptualization fired by this catalyst was then furthered by the ensuing conflict in which the Americans found themselves. Within four days of Pearl Harbor the United States was at war with Germany and Italy as well, so that the war overran the borders of both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. President Roosevelt’s fireside chat on 23 February 1942 then asked the American public to take out their maps and atlases with him to fully visualize the global scope of American wartime activities. A ‘new cartography’ and geography arose to explain and address the new demands for representing global space imposed by the scope of the war which extended into the public communications sector, particularly in the publishing of maps and atlases. This new cartography produced maps where Asia was split, instead of the Pacific, as well as alternative projections to the popular Mercator projection which better indicated the sphericity of the earth, such as the azimuthal equidistant projection.<sup>30</sup> As

<sup>28</sup> This paragraph follows the analysis presented in Henrikson, *American Cartographer*, esp. 19–22 on Pearl Harbor and 20–22 on the impact of FDR’s fireside chats on American geographical perspectives.

<sup>29</sup> Henrikson, *American Cartographer* 19

<sup>30</sup> For maps splitting Asia, which had been around since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century but which took off in the 1940s, see A. K. Henrikson, “America’s Changing Place in the World: From ‘Periphery’ to ‘Centre’?” in J. Gottman (ed.), *Centre and Periphery: Spatial Variation in Politics* (Beverly Hills 1980) 79–80, and Black, *Maps* 59; on the various projections popular during WWII

distance increasingly came to be measured in flight hours instead of miles, the size of the world became conceptually smaller, a perception reflected in part by maps which stressed the closeness of North America and northern Eurasia. This ‘shrinking’ of the world had political consequences, particularly as American and Soviet power grew while the old European empires faded: a 1947 cartoon published in the *Washington Post* by ‘Herblock’ shows ‘Uncle Sam’ and ‘Uncle Joe’ astride a world too small to hold them both and is titled “The Realization of a Shrinking World.”

A similar process of expanded access and shrunken perceived distance as facilitated by a major conflict may have taken place after the Persian Wars as the Athenians and the Delian League continued to engage the Persians on a repeated and frequent basis throughout the first half of the fifth century. Susa may have been three months and three days from the sea (Hdt. 5.54), but the empire was all around, easily reachable from mainland Greece and the islands. The Helleno-centric maps of the Ionians, where Persia sat on the southern periphery of Asia, no longer fit the post-Persian Wars *oikoumenē*. Herodotus’ decision to begin with Persia in his map of the *oikoumenē* and arrange everything around the Persian heartland thus reflects the political order of the Mediterranean after Cyrus’ conquest of Lydia and Babylonia as the map of the *oikoumenē* in 4.36–45 turns Mediterranean politics into a geographical reality.

The alternative layout of the *oikoumenē* seen in *Histories* 4.36–45 and the understanding of global space that shapes it may additionally reflect Persian conceptualizations of global space which depended on their claim to being the centre of the world. It is a truism that every civilization imagines itself to be the world centre,<sup>31</sup> and the Persians, like the Babylonians<sup>32</sup> and

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through to the Cold War see Henrikson, *American Cartographer* 26–28, and Black, *Maps* 31–33.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Thrower’s comments on the phenomenon and the link to the geocentric theory of the universe (*Maps and Civilization* 16).

<sup>32</sup> On Babylon as a world centre see Horowitz, *Cosmic Geography* 20–42; cf.

Lydians<sup>33</sup> before them, were no different. After the conquest of Babylon Cyrus identified himself as “Cyrus, king of the universe, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, *king of the four quarters*” (*Cyrus Cylinder* 20),<sup>34</sup> as he adopted a title which sets the ruler in the centre of a four-part world, and there is evidence that the Persian kings maintained the Lydian principle of Sardis-as-centre<sup>35</sup> even as their own rule and reception of tribute drew the putative world centre down to the Persian heartland.<sup>36</sup> The Persian kings also made their own, local declarations of a central place in the world. Darius, for example, stated that his domain covers “Persia, Media and the other lands of other tongues, of mountains and plains, from this side of the sea to that side of the sea, from this side of the desert to that side of the desert” (DPg §1),<sup>37</sup> whereby he arranges his

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Munn, *The Mother of the Gods* 194, which also includes a discussion of Mesopotamian itineraries of conquest, and Dilke, *Maps* 13–14.

<sup>33</sup> Munn, *The Mother of the Gods* 200–203, 219–220; see ch. 5 in general for his arguments as to the place of Lydia in maps of the *oikoumenē*. Cf. his argument that Anaximander’s map was drawn “according to an understanding of the principles of earthly sovereignty” influenced by the Lydian empire (188).

<sup>34</sup> Translation from A. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London 2013) ch. 3, no. 21; emphasis added.

<sup>35</sup> Munn, *The Mother of the Gods* 215–216.

<sup>36</sup> The reliefs of tribute-bearers in Persepolis perhaps illustrate this best, as all the subjects and allied states are shown arriving at Persepolis; before ‘all roads led to Rome’, they led to Persia. See also A. Kuhrt on the centralizing nature of the Persian Empire, where she notes that Herodotus’ comment that the Persians respect those closest to them the most, those farthest from them the least (1.134), “may be echoing the Persian-centred nature of the Achaemenid empire” (*The Ancient Near East: c. 3000–330 BC II* [London 1995] 678).

<sup>37</sup> Transl. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire* ch. 11, no. 3. Cf. Cyrus’ declaration that “all the kings ... from all parts of the world, from the Upper Sea [Mediterranean] to the Lower Sea [Persian Gulf] ... brought their heavy tribute to me and kissed my feet in Babylon” (*Cyrus Cylinder* 28–30; Kuhrt ch. 3, no. 21).



control around a central point, from “this side of the sea/desert” to “that side” with Persepolis conceptually in the middle where he gathered together the peoples of the lands mentioned (DPg §2). Furthermore, Herodotus may have relied on a Persian map of the world for his own map as given in 4.36–45, perhaps one based on the voyages conducted by Scylax under Darius (cf. Hdt. 4.44).<sup>38</sup> The list of Persian satrapies and peoples at 3.90–97 correlates to a large extent with the Persian royal inscriptions, suggesting that Herodotus had some knowledge of them,<sup>39</sup> and so a Persian source may also underlie the map of the *oikoumenē*.

At the same time, Herodotus’ decision to centre the map on Persia may also derive from a desire to reflect Mediterranean and Near Eastern geopolitics pre- and post-Persian Wars. At the beginning of the fifth century the Persian Empire stretched from Lydia to the Indus Valley and from Arabia to Thrace, and while there would be various revolts, particularly in Egypt, this continued more or less unchanged until Alexander’s defeat of Darius III. Despite the Greek victory over Xerxes, the Persian Empire remained a major political power in the eastern Mediterranean and Near East. Herodotus’ home *polis* of Halicarnassus fought on behalf of Xerxes in the Persian Wars, and it would remain a Persian subject until Alexander. As a native of Caria and Halicarnassus, Herodotus would have had a level of familiarity with Persian power in the eastern Mediterranean and a perspective on global space, even before factoring in his

<sup>38</sup> Myres, *Geographical Journal* 8 (1896) 609, argues for two source maps for Herodotus’ geography: an “Ionian map” based on Hecataeus’ work and others working in the same vein (611–620) and a “Persian map” informed by the expeditions led by Scylax (620–624). This latter map, he argues (620), can be seen in Herodotus’ map of the *oikoumenē*; cf. W. A. Heidel, *The Frame of the Ancient Greek Maps* (New York 1937) 50–51, and Asheri et al., *Commentary* 609.

<sup>39</sup> See Asheri et al., *Commentary*, App. II and Table I (538–542), for the lists and discussion of the correlation, and Heidel, *The Frame* 52, on the similarities between Herodotus’ descriptions of the peoples living in the peninsulas of Asia (4.38–39) and those mentioned in the Behistun Inscription.

travels, which would separate him from those living on the Greek mainland who may have had fewer points of contact with the Persian Empire.

Herodotus' verbal map of the *oikoumenē* orders itself from the position of someone in Persia looking out. Thus Asia as the continent holding Persia is the best known and is elaborated on the most; Egypt and Libya as the empire's holdings to the west balance the eastern extent in India. Europe, on the other hand, is full of uncertainties, a land whose extent is the only thing known about it because it borders the other two known continents. Herodotus' progression through the *oikoumenē* in 4.36–45 does so in accordance with a Persian perspective: from Persia to Asia Minor, then adding the Levant and Arabia, the Caspian region, and far-off India before turning to Egypt and Libya. Xerxes ordered Sataspes the son of Teaspis to repeat the Phoenician circumnavigation of Libya (4.43), and Asia's extent was known from the travels of Scylax under Darius (4.44). Europe, however, has not been circumnavigated, nor have the Persian armies been able to get a secure foothold here. Cyrus' demand 'Who are the Spartans?' (1.153.1) succinctly conveys the irrelevance of mainland Greece in his eyes, an irrelevance likely borne of distance from Persia (cf. 1.134) and political insignificance that continued until the Athenians crossed over to Asia Minor and helped the Ionians burn Sardis, an event which showed just how close *mainland Greece* was to the Persian Empire.<sup>40</sup>

Herodotus' map of the *oikoumenē* is and is not what it claims to be. It does set out the known extent and layout for each of

<sup>40</sup> Munn's comment that "With the sack of Sardis, the Athenians became known to Darius as the chief obstacles to his sovereignty at the juncture of Asia" (*The Mother of the Gods* 248) suggests a similar shift in Persian views of Athens/Greece in the larger networks of power in the Mediterranean and its littoral. Cf. also A. Kuhrt on Athens and Eretria as a frontier region of the Persian Empire whose relationship to that empire changed after the Ionian Revolt ("Earth and Water," in A. Kuhrt and H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg [eds.], *Achaemenid History III Method and Theory* [Leiden 1988] 92).

the three continents. But it is also imprinted with Persian claims to that space, as the extent of the Persian Empire dominates the narrative space devoted to the map. The world map thus parallels the *Histories* themselves, whose ultimate subject may be the wars between Greece and Persia, especially the invasion led by Xerxes, but the majority of the work is devoted to the rise of the Persian Empire along with the peoples that it encountered in its attempts, both successful and otherwise, to expand its borders. Listening to Herodotus describe the extent of the world, his audience suddenly find themselves on the outside looking in as the historian's map challenges their own image of the world and forces a spatial decision: do they accept the historian's view of the world? Reject it? Adjust theirs so that there is some sort of compromise between the two?

The Persian Wars involved the crossing into and of Greek space by a large army composed of numerous contingents from across the Persian Empire. Such an invasion revealed not only the size and population of Asia—huge compared to the known areas of Europe—but also the relative ease by which the Persians could leave Asia and enter Europe, and vice versa for the Greeks as tested first by the Athenian campaigns against Persian Anatolia and Egypt and then by the campaigns of first Agesilaus and then Alexander against the Persians. Herodotus' map of the *oikoumenē*, which bears a striking similarity to the spread of the Persian Empire, presents his audience with a hard reality: Persia and Asia are immense, while Europe is inconsequential in a geographical perspective. It offers a full view of the *oikoumenē* in light of Persian power, expanding the potential horizon for Greek geographical awareness even as the narrative of the Persian Empire's expansion and Xerxes' invasion of mainland Greece demonstrates the ways by which this vast space could be crossed. Herodotus' map thus does not just upset the compass-drawn worlds of the Ionian geographers and those who would claim Delphi as the centre of the *oikoumenē* (e.g. Pind. *Paeon* 6.16–17), it challenges his audience to rethink their perceptions of the *oikoumenē* and perhaps to redraw their own mental maps as they suddenly find themselves in a contra-

ditory position: both on the outside of the Persian Empire, looking in from the peripheries, and inside the Empire with Herodotus, surveying the *oikoumenē* without.<sup>41</sup>

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