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SESOSTRIS AND HERODOTUS' AUTOPSY OF THRACE, COLCHIS, INLAND ASIA MINOR, AND THE LEVANT

O. KIMBALL ARMAYOR

INTRODUCTION

IN the first centuries B.C. and A.D. the Graeco-Roman tradition of Diodorus (i.53.1 ff), Strabo (xvi.4.4, C 769), Plutarch (*Moralia* 360 B), and Josephus (*Contra Apionem* i.98 ff, ii.132, *Antiquities* viii.253, 260) knew of a great Egyptian national hero named Sesostris who was celebrated for the extent of his conquests. The orthodox view of Sesostris holds that the Egyptians came to glorify him as a national hero in a time of national opposition to the Persian rule.¹ But that Sesostris does not appear in the Egyptian record. The extant beginning of his tradition is that of Herodotus in the mid-fifth century B.C., who purports to tell the Egyptian priests' version of Sesostris and to support at least some of their claims for the great king from personal experience (ii.102 ff, 137). Thus we have come to believe that Herodotus sailed the coast of Palestinian Syria and traveled inland from Ephesus, Smyrna, and Phocaea in Asia Minor largely on the basis of his story of Sesostris, and Sesostris also determines our attitude toward Herodotus' autopsy of Thrace, Colchis, and the inland Levant and confirms our assumption of Herodotus' travels in Egypt and the Black Sea.²

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¹ Cf., e.g., Martin Braun, *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature* (Oxford 1938) 13 ff, cf. Kurt Lange, *Sesostris: Ein ägyptischer König in Mythos, Geschichte, und Kunst* (Munich 1954) 7 ff; M. Malaise, "Sésostris: Pharaon de légende et d'histoire," *CdE* 41 (1966) 244-272; A. B. Lloyd, *JEA* 63 (1977) 143 n.7, 152, 154. Cf. Strabo, e.g., i.2.31, C 38, i.3.21, C 61.

² Cf., e.g., Felix Jacoby, *RE Supp.* ii.264; W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* (Oxford 1912; corr. ed. 1928) i.20 (hereafter HW); *ad loc.* below.

Does Herodotus really claim that he went to Thrace, Colchis, and the Sesostris monuments, as they have been called, of Asia Minor and the Levant, and if so, did he?

King Sesostris in context. At the beginning of ch. 99 in Book II, Herodotus tells us that up to this point it has been his own eyesight and judgment and *historiē* that has told us all these things, but that henceforth he will proceed to tell us Egyptian *logoi* according to what he has heard. He seems to add, almost as an afterthought, that there will also be something of his own eyesight in addition (προσέσται δὲ αὐτοῖσί τι καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψιμος).

Herodotus goes on to tell us the Priests' story of King Min, the first king of Egypt, who dammed off Memphis by casting up the southern bend of the Nile about a hundred stades up river, drying up the ancient course of it and channeling the river so as to flow through the middle of the mountains. "Even now," says Herodotus, "this bend of the Nile as it flows diverted is held under strong guard by the Persians, and hedged in every year. For if the river ever wanted to break through it and overflow, there is a danger that all Memphis would be overwhelmed." When the cut-off part of the river became dry land, Min founded Memphis in it. "For even Memphis," Herodotus adds, "is in the narrow part of Egypt." Outside the city he dug a lake around it to the north and west because the Nile encloses the city to the east, and next he established the great temple of Hephaestus in it (ii.99).

Herodotus says that after this the priests recited the names of 330 kings from a *byblos*. "In so many generations of men there were 18 Ethiopian kings and one native woman, and all the others were Egyptian men. The name of the woman who reigned was the same as that of the Babylonian queen, Nitocris." Herodotus goes on to tell the priests' story of how she avenged her royal brother, whom the Egyptians had slain while he ruled them, before they gave her the sovereignty. She destroyed many of them by guile. She built a great underground chamber and pretended to consecrate it with a great banquet of her brother's murderers, only to turn the river in on them through a great secret channel and throw herself into a chamber full of ashes in order to go unpunished (ii.100).

Apart from Nitocris, the priests told of no great works by any of the other kings, except for Moeris, the last of them, who left the northern *propylaia* of the temple of Hephaestus as a memorial, dug a lake, and built pyramids in it (ii.101). Having passed over them, therefore, Herodotus says that he will make note of the next king after them, whose name was Sesostris.

What kind of introduction to King Sesostris have we? Perhaps we can take note of four major characteristics.

First, the inspiration seems Mesopotamian and not Egyptian. Min's dykes and diversions to keep the river from flooding the plain of Memphis are like those of Herodotus' queen Semiramis of Babylon in the previous book (i.184), and A. W. Lawrence points out that city building on land reclaimed from a river was a Mesopotamian phenomenon. The Assyrians built part of Nineveh that way. The name of Herodotus' Egyptian queen Nitocris may be reminiscent of the Egyptian Nitokerti in the VIth and XXVIth Dynasties,³ but it is also that of Herodotus' own second Babylonian queen, as Herodotus points out (i.185, ii.100). Egyptian Nitocris' sumptuous underground chamber and secret channel to the river are like those of Sardanapallus, the king of Nineveh (ii.150). And death by suffocation with ashes belongs to the eastern fertile crescent and is not recorded in Egyptian documents.⁴ King Moeris' great artificial lake and pyramids are like the great artificial lake and bridge of Herodotus' Babylonian queen Nitocris, who also built mighty diversions of the river, like the Egyptian king Min (i.185 ff). These stories could conceivably belong to some kind of Mesopotamian influence on Egypt in the time of the Assyrian occupation, but we have no evidence of such in the Egyptian record.⁵ We do know of the still controversial *Assyrioi logoi*, as Drews and von Fritz remind us, that Herodotus promises to tell and then seems to forget (i.106, 184).⁶

Second, even apart from the question of *Assyrioi logoi*, the substance and emphasis of this narrative is Greek. The chronology of it is Greek. The priests' chronicle belongs to the temple of a god named Hephæstus (ii.3.1, 4.2 f, 99.1 ff). It includes a written account, with a reckoning in years, of the Greek gods who first ruled Egypt, including Heracles (ii.4.2, 144 f). It includes 341 high priests and 341 kings who presided over Egypt for 341 generations after them, an equation which points to the parallel king-lists of Ionian chronology (ii.142.1). Its *byblos* of 330 Kings in 330 generations seems related to the Theban priests' 345 wooden colossi that showed up Hecataeus' attempt to connect his genealogy to a god in the sixteenth generation (ii.100.1, 101.1, 143). The Theban priests

³ Cf., e.g., Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford 1961) 102, 354 f.

⁴ Cf. e.g., A. W. Lawrence, *Herodotus* (London 1935) 198 f; Gardiner (above, n.3) 102, 354 f.

⁵ Cf., e.g., Gardiner (above, n.3) 345 ff.

⁶ Robert Drews, "Herodotus' Other Logoi," *AJP* xci (1970) 181 ff, and *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History*, (Washington, D.C., and Cambridge, Mass. 1973) 92-95, with notes and bibliography; Kurt von Fritz, *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung* (Berlin 1967) i.1.445.

displayed 345 wooden colossi to Hecataeus and to Herodotus, as if they were together,⁷ in a temple and city that could not possibly have kept records from the beginning of Egyptian history in the Old Kingdom because they did not exist till the Middle Kingdom.⁸ It includes a king named Proteus in Greek who belongs to the story of Helen, Alexander, Menelaus, and the Trojan War (ii.112 ff), to say nothing of the *Odyssey* (iv.365 ff) and Stesichorus (fr. 193.16).

The emphasis on engineering is also Greek. Dams and river diversions, man-made lakes and pyramids, temples and underground chambers, all are reminiscent of Polycrates' Samian technology rather than the values and emphasis of the Egyptians (cf. iii.39, 60).

More important, King Min's diversion of the river from above so as to make it flow around the site of Memphis in the old dried-up channel is very much like Thales of Miletus' moon-shaped, semicircular diversion of the river Halys around Croesus' army from above so they could cross it in the absence of bridges. According to Herodotus, "Some even say that the ancient channel of the river was altogether dried up" (i.75).

Herodotus is supposed to be telling Egyptian *logoi* according to what he heard from the Egyptian priests, but the face value of this narrative seems difficult to accept. There is no evidence of Egyptian priests who took any notice of the pre-Ptolemaic Greeks.⁹ Herodotus' commentators have been uneasy over the nature of this chronicle for at least 200 years, from Pierre Larcher in the eighteenth century to Friedrich Oertel and Detlev Fehling in the 1970s.¹⁰ We can talk, if we like, of the intellectual impact of the Greek travelers in Egypt and the Greek varnish Herodotus will have given his Egyptian tradition, just as Wiedemann did in 1890 and A. B. Lloyd did in 1975, but there is no Egyptian corroboration of Herodotus' fifth-century Egyptians with Greek learning and values.¹¹ And it is difficult to understand how Egyptians of any description could

⁷ Cf., e.g., Friedrich Oertel, *Herodots Ägyptischer Logos und die Glaubwürdigkeit Herodots* (Bonn 1970) 7.

⁸ Cf., e.g., Detlev Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot* (Berlin 1971) 46 f with notes, 58, and 61.

⁹ Cf., e.g., J. G. Milne, *JEA* xiv (1928) 226 ff, "Egyptian Nationalism under Greek and Roman Rule."

¹⁰ Cf., e.g., P. H. Larcher, new ed. with corr. and add. by W. D. Cooley, *Comments on the History of Herodotus* (London 1844) i.373; Oertel (above, n.7) e.g. 4 ff; Fehling (above, n.8), e.g. 54 ff.

¹¹ Cf., e.g., Alfred Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch mit sachlichen Erläuterungen* (Leipzig 1890) 393; J. G. Milne (above, n.9) 226 ff; A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II, Introduction* (Leiden 1975) 109.

tell a Greek foreigner about 328 Egyptian kings who did and built nothing worth mentioning.¹²

Third, if Herodotus' story of the early monarchs from Min to Moeris is really Greek, it is also punctuated with what purport to be additions to an Egyptian narrative from his own experience, introduced with a promise of such. Herodotus' own Greek *opsis* and *gnōmē* and *historiē* have been speaking before chapter 99, but now he will tell us Egyptian *logoi* according to what he has heard. Yet he goes on to say that he will throw in something also of his own *opsis* — when he has just made a point of taking leave of a narrative from his own *opsis* by promising to tell Egyptian *logoi*. The explanation is that Herodotus adds *προσέσται δὲ αὐτοῖσι τι καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψιος* to some other Greek's written *historiē*. It is someone else who contrasted his eyewitness and judgment and *historiē* with forthcoming Egyptian *logoi*, and Herodotus who promises to throw in something of his own *opsis*.

Likewise Herodotus stops twice in the middle of an eventful and fast-moving account of Min and the founding of Memphis. Before the foundation of the city he confirms the story that Min diverted the river and dried up the old course of it for the site of Memphis: the Persians have to guard and maintain the diversion even now to keep Memphis from being deluged. And after the foundation he stops again, to confirm that “even Memphis is in the narrow part of Egypt,” which confirmation takes us all the way back to chapter 8 and the double-axe shape of Egypt, one that pseudo-Scylax draws explicitly with its point at Memphis in a passage that almost certainly derives from Hecataeus of Miletus,¹³ one that “seemed to me” no more than 200 stades wide at its narrowest (ii.8.3). Herodotus stops yet again to promise that he will later show how many stades in circumference King Moeris' lake is and how large its pyramids are, all of which looks to his experience of Lake Moeris and the Labyrinth and their respective pyramids (ii.148 ff).

In brief, Herodotus pointedly interrupts the priests' Greek narrative of the early kings to inject his own confirmations of that narrative, or promises of them in the case of King Moeris, from his own experience — his own eyesight, or *opsis*.

Finally, we should note that the question of Herodotus' credibility, the question of whether we can really believe the face value of his

¹² Cf., e.g., Fehling (above, n.8) 58.

¹³ Scylax 106 = GGM i.81. Cf., e.g., Wiedemann (above, n.11) 67 f and *Philologus* xlvi.1888.172 f, Felix Jacoby, *RE* viii.2679 f, and Oertel (above, n.7) 9, but also Lionel Pearson's caution, *Early Ionian Historians* (Oxford 1939) 84 n.1.

narrative, has already emerged full blown, before we ever come to Sesostris and Herodotus' autopsy of the Sesostris monuments with the female pudenda on them. If Herodotus' early Egyptian kings are really patterned after those of the east, if Herodotus' early Egyptian chronology and emphasis are really Greek, it is difficult to believe Herodotus when he tells us that he heard them from Egyptian priests of Memphis.

Herodotus' Memphis is difficult. He tells of a city built on a peninsula, surrounded on three sides by the Nile and a great lake proceeding from it, so low that it was founded on a dried-up river bed, so low that it stands in continual and imminent peril of being overwhelmed by flood with nothing but dikes to save it from the Nile, so low that in the time of Min all Egypt below Lake Moeris was nothing but a marsh, seven days down river to the sea (ii.4). Where shall we look for that kind of Memphis? And if Herodotus knows that the Memphis of his time does not really look like that, it is hard to understand how he can tell us these stories without saying so. Here again, the problem has occupied scholars from the late eighteenth century onward.¹⁴

Sesostris and his empire. According to the priests, Sesostris set out with long ships from the Arabian gulf and first conquered the Red Sea dwellers till he had to turn back because of the shallows. Back in Egypt he gathered a great army, conquered every race on the mainland, and erected commemorative stelae in the lands of the vanquished. "But when he took their cities easily and without a battle," according to Herodotus, "he also inscribed the genitals of a woman, because he wanted to make it clear that they were cowards" (ii.102). Having passed from Asia into Europe, he conquered the Scythians and Thracians. "It seems to me," says Herodotus, "that the Egyptian army got to the Thracians and no farther. For in their land can be seen (*φάνονται*) the stelae, still standing, but beyond the Thracians none at all." On the way back Sesostris left part of his army by the Phasis (ii.103). There Herodotus noticed how much the Colchians were like the Egyptians. He questioned both nations on the link between them. The Colchians and Egyptians too confirmed that the former were descended from Sesostris' army. Herodotus guessed as much, "partly because they are black-skinned and woolly-haired . . . but especially because alone of all men the Colchians and Egyptians and Ethiopians have circumcised from the beginning." The Phoenicians and Palestinian Syrians acknowledged that they learned it from the Egyptians, the Thermodon-

¹⁴ Cf., e.g., P. H. Larcher (above, n.10) i.324 ff, John Kenrick, *The Egypt of Herodotus* (London 1841) 128 f.

Parthenius Syrians and Macrones that they learned it from the Colchians, and Herodotus does not know whether the Egyptians learned it from the Ethiopians or vice versa, while the Phoenicians who dealt with the Greeks no longer circumcised at all (ii.104). Also, the Colchians work their so-called Sardonian linen the same as the Egyptians do, and their language and way of life are Egyptian (ii.105). And, according to Herodotus, he himself saw Sesostris' victory stelae in Palestinian Syria, with the *grammata* and woman's genitals still on them. On certain Ionian roads Herodotus also saw two figures of Sesostris carved in stone with sacred Egyptian *grammata* across the breast, figures which were often taken for icons of Memnon, and which Herodotus proceeds to describe in detail (ii.106).

The priests said that when Sesostris was on his way home with his captives at Pelousian Daphnae, his brother, who had been ruling Egypt, invited him and his sons to a banquet and then piled wood around the house and set it on fire. On his wife's advice he stretched two of his six sons over the pyre and bridged the burning so as to save himself and the rest of the family (ii.107). Once he got back and took vengeance on his brother, Sesostris wrought great public works with his captives. They built stone additions to the temple of Hephaestus. They dug out all the canals in Egypt to bring drinking water to the inland cities, and raised up Egypt's cities with dikes, and so made Egypt horseless and wagonless (ii.108, 137.3 f). Sesostris divided all the land equally and taxed the Egyptians fairly on the basis of their allotments, and thereby learned geometry for them — "For the Greeks learned the sun-clock and the twelve parts of the day from the Babylonians" (ii.109). Sesostris was the only Egyptian king to rule Ethiopia, and the priest of Hephaestus would not let Darius erect a statue of himself before that of Sesostris, because Sesostris conquered all the nations conquered by Darius and the Scythians too, and Darius admitted as much (ii.110). Sesostris' son Pheros succeeded him (ii.111).

Sesostris and the east. What we must now ask is whether the story of Sesostris does not merely continue in the same vein as that of the previous monarchs. The inspiration is Mesopotamian. Sesostris invaded Scythia and Thrace from the east, as an Assyrian would have done. Darius marched through the Thracians on the way to the Scythians (iv.89, 93 ff, 99 ff), but Sesostris seems to have conquered the Scythians first and then the Thracians. These were the farthest people the Egyptian army reached. The stelae can be seen in their country but not beyond them (ii.103.1). The Scythians first, then the

Thracians, and no further. Sesostris' troops tarried on the river Phasis after the king turned back — on the way home. If he had not invaded from the east it would have been the Colchians who owned the greatest extent of his conquest rather than the Thracians, which means he started from the east. If an Egyptian conqueror had done so it would only have been after he conquered the Assyrians, but they are notably absent here, even though Herodotus alludes both to Memnon and Babylon (ii.106.5, 109.3).

Herodotus' Memnon, who is wrongly given credit for the Sesostris monuments by "different people," was an Assyrian sent by his king to help the Assyrian vassals of Troy according to Diodorus' *barbaroi*'s account of the royal archives (ii.106.5, Diodorus ii.22.1 ff). Herodotus believes that Memnon is an easterner because he calls Sousa "Memnonian" three times (v.53 f, vii.151). Sesostris' wife and six sons were acting an oriental role if they marched forth with the king on his conquests as Herodotus says they did (cf., e.g., vii.39, viii.103). Herodotus is thinking of the Assyrians when he tells us that the Greeks learned of the sunclock, sundial, and twelve-part day from the Babylonians (ii.109.3).

Specifically, Sesostris is reminiscent of both Assyrian queens. His great long blocks of stone for the temple of Hephaestus are like those of Nitocris for her Babylonian bridge and river diversion (ii.108, i.186, *λίθους περιμήκειας*). His canals are like Nitrocris' canals in the land of Babylon (ii.108, 137, i.185, 193). Nitocris dramatically bridged the Euphrates, and Sesostris no less dramatically bridged the fire round his Pelousian Daphnae banquet house with his two sons in order to escape with his own life and the lives of the rest of his family (*οικοδόμειε γέφυραν, . . . ἐπιτείνεσκε δὲ ἐπ' αὐτήν . . . ξύλα τετράγωνα, ἐπ' ὧν τὴν διάβασιν ἐποιεῦντο*, i.186.2 f, *τοὺς δύο ἐπὶ τὴν πυρὴν ἐκτείνοντα γεφυρώσαι τὸ καίμενον, αὐτοὺς δ' ἐπ' ἐκείνων ἐπιβαίνοντας ἐκσώζεσθαι* ii.107.2).

More important, Sesostris' attitude is like that of Nitocris. She also was superior to Darius. The dead Sesostris' triumph in the precedence of his statue is like the dead Nitocris' triumph over a greedy Darius, who violated her tomb only to find it empty of money. Sesostris' taunting victory *aidoia*, which preside over his cowardly conquered, are like Nitocris' taunting *grammata*, which preside over Babylon from the queen's own tomb above the most frequented gate of the city (ii.102, 106, 110, i.187). Originally it may have been an Assyrian queen with the taunts of a Nitocris and a special relationship with Aphrodite who ordered her own woman's genitals inscribed on the victory monuments of an eastern predecessor such as Memnon. Herodotus apparently breaks

his promise to tell us more of Semiramis in his *Assyrioi logoi* and only alludes to the Babylonian gates of Semiramis in passing (i.184, iii.155). But he does tell us that she, like Sesostris, built notable dikes throughout the plain (i.184, ii.137.4). Diodorus' Semiramis, wherever she derives from and whatever her relation to Herodotus' narrative, came from Ascalon, Syria, home of the oldest temple of Aphrodite and her peculiar "female sickness" (Hdt. i.105). From her husband Ninos she inherited all the lands of Herodotus' Sesostris monuments, Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, Caria, Lydia, Phrygia, the Troad, and all the shores of the Pontus to Tanais among other lands. Like Sesostris, she built all her great works with the captive hordes of her empire, left inscribed memorials of herself in distant parts, and mounted a great seaborne invasion of India only to turn back after partial failure (ii.2.2 ff, 7.2 ff, 13.2 ff, 16.1 ff; cf. Strabo xvi.1.2, C 737). Like Sesostris, she subdued Ethiopia (Diodorus ii.14.4, Justin i.2.8). Here, at least, Diodorus' tradition may belong to sixth-century Ionia, Hecataeus of Miletus by way of Hecataeus of Abdera.¹⁵ Originally Herodotus may not have been thinking of *Egypt* as a flood plain of horses and wagons that were driven out by dikes and canals, but rather the Assyria of the lost *Assyrioi logoi*. Babylon's very walls were built to accommodate four-horse chariots (i.179). Semiramis built notable dikes over all the Babylonian plain to keep it from being flooded (i.184). Nitocris, on the other hand, dug her canals in the first place as a defense against the Medes (i.185). Cyrus attacked with his horses when he came to conquer Babylon (i.189). Darius' satrap kept 800 stallions and 16,000 mares, not counting war horses (i.192). Mules had an important part in the revolt and reconquest of Babylon in the time of Darius (iii.151, 153).

Eastern or Egyptian, Herodotus does not seem to understand that Sesostris' empire is greater than Darius' own eastern empire in every direction and not merely that of the Scythians. Darius never owned Arabia (ii.4 f, iii.88, 97) or the whole of India (iii.101), but Sesostris seems to have conquered all who dwelt on the Red Sea and indeed all Asia (ii.102.2, 103.1). The Persians may claim Asia for their own (i.4, ix.116), but Sesostris actually conquered it (cf., e.g., Diodorus i.53.5, 55.2, Strabo xvi.4.4, C 769). Likewise, according to Herodotus, Ethiopia and Colchis at the ends of the earth (iv.45) remained independent of Darius (iii.97), while Sesostris conquered both of them (ii.103 ff, 110), and the same is true of the Scythians and Thracians (ii.103, 110, iii.90, v.2, 10, vi.44). Darius never owned Libya at all (iii.91, 96,

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., Anne Burton, *Diodorus Siculus Book I, A Commentary* (Leiden 1972) 9 ff.

iv.197, 204) but Sesostriis seems to have conquered it early in his career (ii.102.2 f, Diodorus i.53.6). If Darius finished Necho's original Suez canal (ii.158, iv.39), Sesostriis dug the first canals in Egypt (ii.108). If it took Persian generals, Phoenicians, Cypriotes, Cilicians, and Egyptians to conquer Miletus for Darius (vi.6 ff), the Sesostriis *typoi* in Ionia prove that Sesostriis had conquered the country by himself a long time ago (ii.106).

Sesostriis and the Greeks. If the inspiration of Herodotus' King Sesostriis is Mesopotamian, the substance and emphasis is Greek, Jason and the Argonauts and Aegyptus and Danaus.

His chronology points to Jason. Sesostriis was two generations before the Trojan War (ii.111 f) and Jason only one (i.2 f), so that Jason emulated the great Egyptian's wanderings and Colchian conquest a generation later (ii.103 ff). Sesostriis' long ships are reminiscent of the long ship that stole away Medea, the Argo, first of the long ships (Hdt. i.2, Diodorus i.41.1 ff). Sesostriis' wife is like Medea. After his Red Sea conquests Sesostriis set out again with an army, like the Argonauts (ii.102), but when he got back he was defenseless, with a nameless wife and six sons, and Herodotus rather lamely explains that he was taking her with him (ii.107). She displays the cruelty of Medea toward her children when she persuades the king to save herself and the rest of the family by burning alive two of their sons (ii.107).

Like Sesostriis, Jason also is supposed to have left monuments of his conquests in distant places (cf., e.g., Strabo xi.4.8, C 503, 13.10, C 526, 14.12, C 531 with xvi.4.4, C 769, 4.7, C 770). Even Herodotus' Colchian linen which is "called Sardonic by the Greeks"¹⁶ may reflect Hecataeus' account of Jason's western travels (cf., e.g., *FGH* 1 F 17 ff, Ap. Rh. iv.982 ff, 1227 ff, with Pindar, *Pyth.* iv.9 ff and Hdt. iv.179). Sesostriis was someone's earlier Egyptian model for Jason.

As for Sesostriis' nameless brother who took over the kingdom when he was abroad and tried to kill him when he got home, even in antiquity Josephus identified Sesostriis and his mysterious brother with Aegyptus and Danaus on the authority of Manethon (*Contra Apionem* i.97 ff, 231, ii.16). Sesostriis and his sons (ii.107), who took a nameless vengeance on this brother before building great public works at the head of a captive army, both seem appropriate to such an identification (ii.108). So does the location of Sesostriis' brother's murderous attempt. Pelousian

¹⁶ There seems no question about Herodotus' text because Pollux quotes it as it stands (v.26). Aristophanes' Sardianic dye of *Acharnians* 112 (βάμμα Σαρδιανικόν) seems neither here nor there on the basis of evidence now in hand.

Daphnae was certainly a Greek name and probably the home of a Greek garrison before Amasis moved it to Memphis according to Herodotus (ii.30, 154). Also, when Sesostris' brother heaped wood around his banquet house and burned him out, his method was Greek. As if to avenge Aegyptus, the Egyptian-Spartan king Cleomenes (vi.53), the Heraclid descendant of an Argonaut, heaped wood around Danaid Argive captives, who seem to have been atoning anew for the Pelousian sin of a Danaus against a royal Aegyptus and his family (vi.80). We are reminded of the Cylonians' massacre of the Pythagoreans in Croton. The conspirators set the house of Milon on fire and burned them to death, all except the two youngest and strongest, who burst out and got away (Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, xxxv.249 = DK 4 A 16).

Sesostris' lofty emphasis on freedom and the value of striving for it is Ionian Greek (ii.102.4), and if the priests told of cowardly *cities* in such a connection, they must have been thinking of the Ionian Revolt (ii.102.5). Likewise the priests' emphasis on Sesostris' engineering is Ionian Greek, reminiscent of another great sea lord, Polycrates of Samos (iii.39, 60). Sesostris' stone temple of Hephaestus is reminiscent of the Samian Heraion even though Herodotus does not tell of its stone (i.70, ii.148, iii.123, iv.88, 152, ix.96). Sesostris' canals, like those of Nitocris and Cyrus on the way to Babylon (i.185, 189), run every which way, but they are not for military purposes, but rather for drinking water, like Polycrates' Samian tunnel and aqueduct (ii.108, iii.60). Sesostris' dikes in the plain are like Polycrates' harbor mole in the sea (ii.137, iii.60).

Sesostris' equal division of the land was a democratic Greek ideal at least from the time of Solon (cf., e.g., *Ath. Pol.* xi.2, xii.3, Plutarch, *Solon* xvi.1). It may well have been discussed by Thales or the fellow Milesians who talked about him, to judge from its context here and the traditional connection between Solon and Thales (cf., e.g., Hdt. i.29, Plutarch, *Solon* vi.1). Certainly Sesostris' land measurement is an explanation of the Egyptian origin of Thales' geometry, which he was supposed to have brought back from Egypt.¹⁷ And clearly Sesostris' fair taxation in accord with the amount of land actually retained is another Greek ideal that dates from the time of Solon and Thales (cf., e.g., Hdt. ii.177).

Here again, therefore, Herodotus is supposed to be telling Egyptian priests' Egyptian *logoi* but his story is really Greek.

¹⁷ Proclus, in *Euclidem* p. 65 = KR 69; cf. Hdt. ii.109 = KR 71, Diogenes Laertius i.27 = KR 81, Proclus, in *Euclidem* p. 352 = KR 82.

Sesostris and the face value of Herodotus' narrative. Herodotus' story is punctuated with additions to a previous narrative from his own experience, additions that can only make it difficult for us to accept the face value of his account.

In context, when Herodotus applies the word *φαίνονται* to the Thracians' Sesostris stela, he probably purports to confirm the priests' account of Sesostris in Thrace from his own experience (*Herodotus in Scythia and Thrace* below). But the same is true of the Colchians. To Herodotus the Colchians *appear* to be Egyptians (*φαίνονται*), and he noticed it before he heard it from "others." When he began to think about it, he asked both, and the Colchians remembered the Egyptians better than the Egyptians the Colchians. Herodotus goes on to the Phoenicians, two kinds of Syrians, and the Macrones by way of adding to his confirmation. Not only are the Colchians black-skinned and woolly-haired like the Egyptians but they are also circumcised. The Phoenicians, Syrians, and Macrones learned their own circumcision from either the Egyptians or the Colchians. Herodotus also adds to his confirmation by way of the mysterious Sardonic linen: it is really Colchian no matter what the Greeks call it. All of this is strongly reminiscent of Herodotus' assertion that *anyone* with sense can see that the Egypt to which the Greeks sail is the gift of the river, at which point Herodotus goes on to add that the gift extends three days further up the river than the priests told him (ii.5, 10; Hecataeus, *FGH I F 301*).

By means of the Sesostris stela in Palestinian Syria Herodotus confirms the priest's story of the female *aidoia* that Sesostris carved on his victory monuments in the lands of his cowardly subjects. By means of the Sesostris *typoi* in Ionia he confirms the extent of the great king's conquests and proves that Darius was not the first empire builder to conquer Ionia.

Herodotus' account of an Egypt without horses and wagons because of Sesostris' canals, which the inland Egyptians used for drinking water, seems to be the same kind of confirmation: you can see the results of Sesostris' forced-labor public works even now. Herodotus also seems to be confirming the priests' story of Sesostris from his own observation in the matter of the king's land allotments. "It seems to me that it was from *this* that geometry was discovered and made its way to Hellas." As for the sunclock, sundial, and twelve-division day, Herodotus seems to be correcting someone who claimed them for Sesostris when he gives them to the Babylonians in this context. (It is Anaximander who is supposed to have introduced them into Greece [Diogenes Laertius ii.1 f = *KR* 96, Suidas s.v. *Anaximandros* = *KR* 97, Agathemerus i.1 = *KR* 100]).

The face value of his narrative seems to require that Herodotus found Sesostris stelae in Thrace and looked for them beyond the Thracians; that Herodotus found black-skinned, woolly-haired, circumcised Egyptians in Colchis who remembered their descent from Sesostris' army; that Herodotus talked to the Phoenicians, two kinds of Syrians, and the Macrones about circumcision only to be told that all of them learned it from the Egyptians and their colonists in Colchis; that Herodotus found women's genitals carved on the Sesostris monuments of Palestine and inland Asia Minor; that Herodotus traveled the length and breadth of the country from the delta to Elephantine (ii.29) and could not find any horses or wagons in Egypt. Herodotus tells us that the canals of Egypt are for drinking water without stopping to qualify or specify when he knows of canals in connection with irrigation and navigation elsewhere (cf. i.193, ii.158, iv.39, 42, vii.24). He tells of inland cities that needed the canals' drinking water without further comment. His Greek narrative of Sesostris purports to derive from Egyptian priests. Here again, therefore, just as in the case of his introduction to Sesostris, we are driven back from the face value of Herodotus' narrative.

Such is the context of Herodotus' eastern travels in his account of Sesostris. In the light of that context, what is the evidence for such travels?

Herodotus in Scythia and Thrace. Whatever the value of his statement on its own, in context Herodotus does imply that he saw Sesostris stelae in Thrace, which is hardly a more exotic locale than many of the others in this story (ii.103.1, quoted above, *Sesostris and his empire*). Herodotus is in a position to confirm the priest's story. He saw the stelae, with or without *aidoia*. In the land of the Thracians they are there to be seen, but not beyond. Sayce thought that Herodotus claimed to have seen the Thracian stelae and so did How and Wells,¹⁸ even if Jacoby did not believe that much significance should be attached to the passage¹⁹ and even if Herodotus' use of the word *φαίνονται* is hardly conclusive.²⁰ Herodotus may even imply that he too traveled through Scythia on the way to Thrace and the stelae, in the wake of Sesostris, and that he

¹⁸ A. H. Sayce, *Herodotus Books I-III* (London 1883) 179; HW i.218.

¹⁹ Jacoby (above, n.2) 260.

²⁰ Herodotus does apply it to his own autopsy (e.g., ii.104, 106, 131, 148) but there are a great many cases where we can hardly be sure of the author's intent (e.g., i.93, ii.58, 79, 90, 93) and a great many others where the intimate acquaintance the word connotes seems nothing but part of a good story (e.g., iii.35, 69, 134, vi.9).

himself looked for the stelae even beyond. But it seems difficult to believe that Herodotus did in fact find any such stelae in Thrace, much less look out for them even beyond.

Herodotus in Colchis. Herodotus does not claim that he found evidence of Sesostris in Scythia, but he does claim extensive knowledge of Colchis by way of confirming the priests' story that Sesostris left part of his army there. There have been those who argued that Herodotus met his Colchians in Egypt or Asia Minor rather than Colchis and who therefore tried to assume that Herodotus never claimed to have reached Colchis. But when Herodotus tells us that he asked both nations about the link between them and goes on to relate what "the Colchians" and "the Egyptians" remembered, he means to convey that he questioned Colchians and Egyptians in general and on the spot.²¹ It seems difficult to believe that story.

As I have already argued,²² surely Herodotus is merely telling us what he heard, or read, rather than what he himself did. That impression seems confirmed in the matter of the circumcision that Herodotus defensively adds to the story. As in the case of Hecataeus' Egypt as the gift of the river (ii.5 = *FGH* 1 F 301), Herodotus himself saw that the Colchians were Egyptian, and the conclusive link was circumcision. "Others" had already told of Egyptian black skin and woolly hair among the Colchians, but Herodotus himself took note of their Egyptian circumcision and followed up his observation by questioning the Phoenicians and both kinds of Syrians and the Macrones.²³ Herodotus merely builds on his predecessors so as to claim a personal contribution in the matter of circumcision.

Whatever the context, Herodotus does not really know what the Colchians looked like or he would not call them black and woolly-haired. He would know if he really went to Colchis. We can probably account for his tradition in terms of Ionian geography, the Nile and the Phasis as the ends of the earth (iv.45; Pindar, *Isthmian* ii.41 f), linked in Ionian ethnology even as in geography by way of Ocean. If Herodotus' King Sesostris reached the Phasis by land with rebellious black Argonauts (ii.102 ff), Hecataeus of Miletus brought the Argonauts back from the Phasis through the Ocean into the Nile and down river into

²¹ See n.22 below. Breddin and Wiedemann are examples of the former view and Jacoby allows for the argument. Jacoby, Legrand, Pohlenz, Powell, and Myres assume the latter.

²² See *HSCP* lxxxii.45-62 and esp. 57-61 with nn.38-44.

²³ See below, *Herodotus among the circumcised Phoenicians, Palestinian and Thermodon Syrians, and Macrones.*

“our sea” (*FGH* I F 18a). Pindar also believed that the Colchians were black-faced (*Pyth.* iv.212), and Aeschylus’ Egyptians were black (*Pr.* 808, 851, *Supp.* 719). But they do not claim to have seen for themselves, and there is no evidence worthy of the name for Herodotus’ and Pindar’s Colchian negroes. Either Herodotus did go to Colchis and remained content to tell of traditional negroes that he and his audience wanted to find there or he never went to Colchis at all.

Herodotus among the circumcised Phoenicians, Palestinian and Thermodon Syrians, and Macrones. Much the same can be said of Herodotus’ circumcised Phoenicians, Palestinian and Black Sea Syrians, and Macrones. Given the circumcision of the Egyptians and their colonists the Colchians, we can explain them in terms of Ionian geographical proximity to Egypt and Colchis (cf., e.g., iii.85, vii.89 [Phoenicians and Palestinian Syrians], i.76, iii.90, iv.86, vii.72 [south-shore-Black-Sea Syrians], iii.94, vii.78 [southeast-Black-Sea Macrones]). In context Herodotus seems to imply that he himself questioned them on their circumcision *in situ* and got them to admit the Egyptian-Colchian origin of it.

That does not seem very likely on the face of it, and it is difficult to believe that Herodotus could have found all this circumcision even if he looked for it. As in the case of the Colchians, we have not the evidence by means of which to control Herodotus on the circumcision of the Black Sea Macrones and Thermodon-Parthenius Syrians round the corner from the Colchians. But we know from the Old Testament that the Phoenicians and Palestinian Syrians, at least, really ought not to have been circumcised (cf., e.g., *Gen.* xxxiv.14, *Ex.* xii.48, *Judges* xiv.3, xv.18, I *Sam.* xiv.6, xvii.26, xviii.25, 27, II *Sam.* i.20, *Isaiah* lii.1, *Ez.* xxviii.10, xxxiii.26, 30, and *Acts* xi.3 in the NT). Josephus believed that the Jews were the only people in Palestine who were circumcised and that therefore Herodotus must have been referring to them in this passage (*Contra Apionem* i.171). Moderns have tried to adopt this solution at least from the time of George Rawlinson in the mid-nineteenth century. But Pausanias, at least, refers to the Hebraioi *above* the Syrians (i.5.5). In any event it seems difficult to believe that the Jews told Herodotus or anyone else that they got their circumcision from the Egyptians. Christ, at least, said that it came from Moses and the fathers (*John* vii.22).

Herodotus and the Sesostris monument of Palestinian Syria. It is in such a context that we must view the problem of Herodotus’ Palestinian

Sesostris monument. It is largely on the basis of his claim to have seen this monument for himself that we have come to believe that Herodotus sailed the coast of Palestinian Syria.²⁴ Herodotus not only says that Sesostris inscribed the privy parts of a woman on his commemorative stelae in the lands of those whose cities he conquered easily (ii.102), but also that he himself saw Sesostris stelae in Palestinian Syria, replete with inscription and *aidoia* (ii.106.1).

Here again the difficulty is not in the story but in Herodotus' own experience of it. We can understand how Herodotus or his predecessor might tell it of a conqueror with a taunting sense of humor, especially if his conquests were based on those of a Nitocris or Semiramis. But it is difficult to believe that Herodotus found an Egyptian-looking Palestinian Sesostris monument with a woman's genitals carved on it.

Ordinarily we could not take that kind of story seriously. But in Egypt, at least,²⁵ "the hieroglyphic script regularly used the pudenda of the female (for the word 'woman') and the male genitals (particularly with the word 'husband') and crossed these two hieroglyphs to express the idea of coitus." Therefore we know what to look for. And at the mouth of the Nahr-el-Kelb or Dog River, the ancient Lycus, some eight miles north of Beirut, there are three weathered Egyptian limestone stelae, on one of which "Rameses II" and "the year IV" could be discerned at one time. These are the stelae that we traditionally identify with Herodotus' Sesostris monument.²⁶ But (HW i.219) "there is no trace of the *aidoia* on them now, nor is it likely there ever was."

Professor Henrichs very kindly tells me that it is virtually impossible that Herodotus or any of his contemporaries ever saw a hieroglyphic sign that even remotely resembled the female vulva.²⁷ Whereas the Egyptians regularly used the phallus as a determinative of words for "ass," "bull," and "male," and the phallus with fluid issuing from it as a determinative in the words for "phallus" and "husband," they tended to avoid depicting the female organ and used a sign that has been called "a well full of water" as a substitute. According to Gardiner,

²⁴ Cf., e.g., Jacoby (above, n.2) 264, HW i.20.

²⁵ Jean Yoyotte, Georges Posener, eds., *A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilisation* (London 1962) 260.

²⁶ Cf., e.g., Cooley's Larcher, Kenrick, Rawlinson, Stein, Sayce, Wiedemann, HW, Lawrence, Waddell, above, *ad loc.* On the reliefs, cf., e.g., C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin 1849-58) iii.197; F. H. Weissbach, *Die Denkmäler und Inschriften an der Mündung des Nahr-el-Kelb* (Berlin and Leipzig 1922) 1 ff, pls. 1 ff.

²⁷ I owe the substance of this paragraph to Professor Henrichs of Harvard and I am very grateful to him for it.

even the combination of phallus and vulva occurs only in Old Kingdom texts.²⁸ A. R. Burn writes, "Herodotus could have seen hieroglyphic monuments here, but the 'genitals' are imaginary."²⁹

Herodotus could have mistaken something for the emblem he was looking for. There may have been relevant hieroglyphs on the Egyptian monuments of Herodotus' time that are now effaced. There may well have been monuments other than those of the Nahr-el-Kelb that we have not yet taken into account. We can find something to corroborate Herodotus' account. But apart from what Herodotus says there is also what he does not say. At Nahr-el-Kelb there is not merely one Egyptian relief but three, and beside them six Assyrian rockcarvings, two Babylonian, and a variety of later inscriptions.³⁰ There is not merely an Egyptian victory text³¹ but also one of the Assyrian conqueror Esarhaddon.³² If Herodotus saw Nahr-el-Kelb for himself, it seems difficult to understand why he does not mention any of these other monuments.

But Herodotus does not describe what he saw. He merely tries to confirm Sesostris' humorous exploits for himself. "Sesostris did carve the *pudenda*, the figures were not those of Memnon, I know." It seems difficult to rely on that kind of evidence for proof of autopsy.

Herodotus and the inland of Asia Minor: the Kara Bel Sesostris monuments. Inland Asia Minor is closer to home for Herodotus than Palestinian Syria. But the face value of Herodotus' great Sesostris monuments in Ionia is nonetheless difficult, for all their proximity to Halicarnassus.

We traditionally identify Herodotus' monuments "on the way from the Ephesian land to Phocaea" and "on the way from Sardis to Smyrna" with those of the Kara Bel pass, some 25 miles inland of Smyrna and about three miles east-southeast of Nif. The following description and map are those of George E. Bean's archaeological guide to Aegean Turkey of 1966.³³

²⁸ Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (London 1927, 3rd rev. ed. 1957-73) 492.

²⁹ Aubrey de Sélincourt, *Herodotus* (Penguin 1954; rev. ed. A. R. Burn, 1972) 168.

³⁰ Cf., e.g., A. W. Lawrence (above, n.4) 202.

³¹ That of Rameses II. Cf., e.g., *ARE* iii.297.

³² Cf., e.g., Luckenbill ii.582 ff.

³³ George E. Bean, *Aegean Turkey* (London 1966), p. 55. Elsewhere on Kara Bel cf., e.g., Kurt Bittel, *AO* xiii (1940) 181-193, and *MDOG* xcvi (1967) 5-23; J. M. Cook, *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* vi.2 (1956) 59-65; Hans Güterbock, *IM* xvii (1967) 63-71, all with extensive notes and bibliography.

The other Hittite monument in the neighborhood of Smyrna [in addition to the two possible Niobes near Magnesia ad Sipylum to the north] is in the Karabel pass, which leads south from the Smyrna-Sardis road a little east of Kemalpassa (formerly Nif) to Dagkizilca and the country around Torbah and Tire. At a point just four miles from the main highway the road passes under an ornamental arch; immediately beyond this arch, some 70 feet above the road on the left, is a figure cut in low relief in a panel on the rock facing south. It is rather over life-size and represents a warrior holding in his right hand a bow and in his left a spear, wearing a short tunic and a conical cap. Between the head and the spear are some partially obliterated hieroglyphics, not easy to distinguish . . . This figure is similar in style and execution to the Hittite monuments of central Anatolia, and probably portrays a war-god. The Turks call it *Eti Baba*, the Hittite Father.

Ramsay and his followers notwithstanding, it seems likely that Kara Bel is also the home of Herodotus' second figure.

When the Karabel figure was first discovered by European scholars about 1840, it was at once recognized as one of these carvings of "Sesostris"; the other remained for some time a mystery, till in 1875 a second figure was found 200 yards below the first, by the left bank of the stream. This second figure was cut on a fallen rock (apparently after it fell) and though badly damaged was apparently similar to the other. It was afterwards thought to have disappeared, but has recently been rediscovered. Under these circumstances it is virtually certain that Herodotus was referring to these two figures, which stood one on either side of the road leading by the Karabel pass.

In the light of Bean's work, therefore, built on that of J. M. Cook,³⁴ there seems very little doubt on the identity of Herodotus' monuments. In context there can also be very little doubt on the nature of Herodotus' claim on them. In the light of his other Sesostris monuments he does claim to have seen them for himself. Herodotus says that in Ionia there are two figures of Sesostris carved in stone, one where people pass on the way from the Ephesian territory to Phocaea and the other on the way from Sardis to Smyrna. On either figure from shoulder to shoulder across the breast there run sacred Egyptian *grammata* carved into the stone saying, "I took possession of this land with my own shoulders." Who this Sesostris is and where he comes from he does not show there, but he has shown it somewhere else (with another inscription that Herodotus knows about perhaps?). Some of those who have seen them

³⁴ Cf., e.g., George Bean (above, n.33) 56, and below; Carl Humann, *AZ* xxxiii (1876) 51; A. H. Sayce, *JHS* i (1880) 85, *Soc. Bibl. Arch.* vii (1882) 268; Wiedemann (above, n.11) 415; J. M. Cook (above, n.33) 62 ff.

guess that they are icons of Memnon, but they are left a long way from the truth. Therefore Herodotus does not say that he saw the monuments in so many words, but (*HW* i.220) he certainly implies that he had done so and that he had traversed the roads. Thus Matzat claimed for Herodotus a trip from Ephesus to Phocaea and another from Sardis to Smyrna on the strength of this passage and Jacoby followed.³⁵

But we have known at least from the time of Sir William Ramsay at the end of the nineteenth century, who probably knew more about the ancient roads of Asia Minor than anyone else of his time, that virtually everything Herodotus says seems wrong.

Kara Bel is not on the road from Sardis to Smyrna but four miles south of it.³⁶

Lepsius . . . rejected the location on the Sardis-Smyrna road, which certainly never passed up the Karabel gorge.³⁷

Nor is it on any very obvious road from the land of Ephesus to Phocaea.³⁸

The very idea of defining a road as leading from Ephesus to Phocaea is as absurd as it would be to say that a monument was on the railway that leads from Scarborough to Lincoln. Moreover the natural way from Ephesus to Phocaea would be through Smyrna, and no one could possibly understand from Herodotus' words a road through the pass of Kara Bel, which involves a journey of quite double the distance.

Herodotus gives us to believe that his Sesostris figures are in two different places on two different roads.³⁹ But⁴⁰

the two figures are so close to one another that it is impossible any one could say they were on different roads, especially when they are in a single mountain-pass.

Herodotus gives us to believe that the two reliefs are similar to one

³⁵ Heinrich Matzat, *Hermes* vi (1872) 398 ff, Jacoby (above, n.2) 268 (1913); against, cf., e.g., Kurt Bittel, *AO* xiii (1940) 190, George Bean (above, n.33) 53.

³⁶ Cf., e.g., W. R. Ramsay, *JHS* ii (1881) 53; George Bean (above, n.33) 57.

³⁷ J. M. Cook (above, n.33) 62.

³⁸ W. R. Ramsay, *HGAM* p. 60.

³⁹ Thus George Bean (above, n.33) 57. J. M. Cook argues that *hekaterothi* means "on either hand" and *enthauta* refers to the single location of both figures (above, n.33) 63f. But *peri Ionien* in context really ought to mean more than one place in one *region* (see Powell's *Lexicon*, p. 300a). It seems unlikely that Cook would have argued in this vein if he had not been trying to fit Herodotus' words to Kara Bel. The translators and commentators tend to read two figures in two different places: thus, e.g., Valla in 1566, "B.R." in 1584, Gale in 1679, Laurent in 1827, Kenrick in 1841, Beloe in 1842, Cary in 1847, Rawlinson in 1858, Macaulay in 1890, Godley in 1920, Powell in 1949.

⁴⁰ W. R. Ramsay (above, n.36) 53.

another if not the same. But the second Kara Bel relief was badly defaced and defective even in the nineteenth century, and we have not any evidence worthy of the name apart from Herodotus' own words that it was in fact the same as the first or even similar in any but the most superficial details.⁴¹

Even the first relief is different from what Herodotus says it is. The spear is in the left hand and not the right as Herodotus says. The bow is in the right hand and not the left as Herodotus says. Herodotus says the inscription is right across the breast from one shoulder to the next but the extant hieroglyphics stand above the figure between the face and the top of the spear. As for the style and content, Herodotus' commentators have felt uneasy at least from the time of Blakesley in 1854.⁴²

Hence the dilemma. If Herodotus really saw the monuments of Kara Bel he was inaccurate in his location and description of them.⁴³ If he did not he was willing to pretend otherwise and his Sesostris monuments are based on what he heard or read rather than what he saw for himself.

We could prefer that Herodotus was confused or forgetful and merely explain away the confusion.⁴⁴ Ramsay proposed to emend the text such that the figures are on the roads from Ephesus to Sardis and Phocaea to Smyrna, in which case Kara Bel is on the road from Ephesus to Sardis and we need another relief between Phocaea and Smyrna. But there is not another such relief that we know of and there is little enough reason to doubt the text anyway.⁴⁵

Following Lepsius, Stein, How and Wells, and J. M. Cook, George Bean argues that the "land of Ephesus" really means the Tire valley inland, which belonged to Ephesus. The "natural route" to Phocaea depended on where the Hermus could be forded because there was not any bridge in the fifth century B.C.⁴⁶ But first, however compelling the later evidence for Ephesus' control far up the Cayster valley (cf., e.g., Strabo xiii.3.2, C 620), and however reluctant she may have been to colonize overseas rather than inland in the archaic period,⁴⁷ we can

⁴¹ Cf., e.g., Ramsay (above, n.36) 53, and J. M. Cook (above, n.33) 60 f, esp. nn.12 f.

⁴² Cf., e.g., J. W. Blakesley, *Herodotus* (London 1854) i.241, HW i.220.

⁴³ Cf., e.g., W. R. Ramsay (above, n.36) 53.

⁴⁴ Cf., e.g., Matzat (above, n.35) 397 ff, and many in his wake.

⁴⁵ Cf., W. R. Ramsay (above, n.38) 60.

⁴⁶ George Bean (above, n.33) 57; cf., e.g., C. R. Lepsius, *AZ* iv (1846) 276, Stein and HW *ad loc.*, and J. M. Cook (above, n.33) 62, 64 f.

⁴⁷ Cf., e.g., David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton 1950) i.75, ii.885 ff; Dieter Knibbe, *RE Supp.* xii.270 f.

hardly be certain of what she owned in the fifth century B.C. And second, whatever she owned, in context Herodotus really ought not to mean the upper Cayster when he says "the land of Ephesus." He really ought to mean "the neighborhood of Ephesus" in the light of its "ancient city" and newer settlement around the temple of Artemis (i.26). Elsewhere Herodotus' "Ephesian territory" is at or near the coast, where the Ionians could leave their ships before marching up the Cayster (v.100; cf. vi.16).

If we can guess that Herodotus really meant somewhere else, we can also guess that even if he meant Kara Bel he also meant something other than what he says, for example, that "right hand" and "left hand" are not those of Sesostris but rather of Herodotus himself as he faced the relief or stood between the two of them.⁴⁸ But such guesses would not be justified and would not meet the problem when taken in context.

We have to wonder if Herodotus ever left the coast, ever saw the monuments in question, and ever understood what he was told about them. Ramsay believed that Herodotus heard of three great roads to Sardis, one from Phocaea, one from Smyrna, and one from the Ephesian territory, two of which had Sesostris monuments: Kara Bel on the Smyrna road and Niobe near Magnesia ad Sipylum.⁴⁹ That reconstruction does not work. We have no good reason to believe that three roads to Sardis from the coast figure in this passage. A Niobe really ought not to look like a Sesostris. Kara Bel is four miles south of the road from Smyrna to Sardis. And Herodotus does not refer to a road from Smyrna to Sardis but rather from Sardis to Smyrna. But Bean's reconstruction of what Herodotus probably heard seems much more likely.⁵⁰ "Herodotus' informant was trying to say that the two carvings stood on either side of the road from the Ephesian country to Phocaea, close to where that road crossed the one from Sardis to Smyrna, but Herodotus understood him to mean one carving on each of these two roads."

Both Ramsay and Bean, therefore, account for Herodotus' narrative not in terms of Kara Bel itself but rather in terms of Herodotus' hearsay about Kara Bel. There are at least three other kinds of hearsay that we must take into account.

If Herodotus was trying to locate and identify the great monuments of Ionia on a rough chart of Asia Minor, such as the one that Aristagoras showed the Spartans on a brazen tablet, for example (v.49), or the one

⁴⁸ Cf., e.g., J. M. Cook (above, n.33) 64.

⁴⁹ W. R. Ramsay (above, n.38) 60 and cf. pp. 30 and 61.

⁵⁰ George Bean (above, n.33) 57.

that seems to underlie Herodotus' account of Xerxes' march from Sardis to the Troad (vii.42), then perhaps we can account for his Ionian Sesostris in terms of Ionian geography and cartography. The Kara Bel monument may not have been on the road from Smyrna to Sardis, but on any kind of a rough map it might very well look as if it were, as a glance at Bean's own map of 1966 will indicate.⁵¹ And likewise Herodotus might well assume from an Anaximandrian chart of Asia Minor not only that a Niobe was a Sesostris, but also that it was on a road from Ephesus to Phocaea.

At least one poet dealt with the road from Sardis to Smyrna and the landmarks of that road. And according to M. L. West's Oxford text of 1971, at least, Hipponax dealt specifically with a Sesostris stele.⁵² "Traverse, then, the whole road to Smyrna. Cross through Lydia past the tomb of Attales and the monument of Gyges and the stele of Sesostris [Bergk's restoration of the name] and the memorial of the great king Tos at Mytalis, turning your belly toward the setting sun." Herodotus and his predecessors in the sixth century probably first learned of the monuments of inland Asia Minor from poets. Homer lingered over Niobe (*Il.* xxiv.614 ff) and he must have had more followers among the lyric poets than we know about who paid their own kind of attention to other monuments. There may well be more Ionian poetry in Herodotus' account than we have been led to believe.

Finally, Herodotus seems to have added his story of the Sesostris *typoi* to a previous narrative, to confirm the priests' account of the Egyptian king from his own experience. But the addition may be little more than a change in his predecessor's description of the monuments to imply greater familiarity with them, even a revision of their location and appearance.

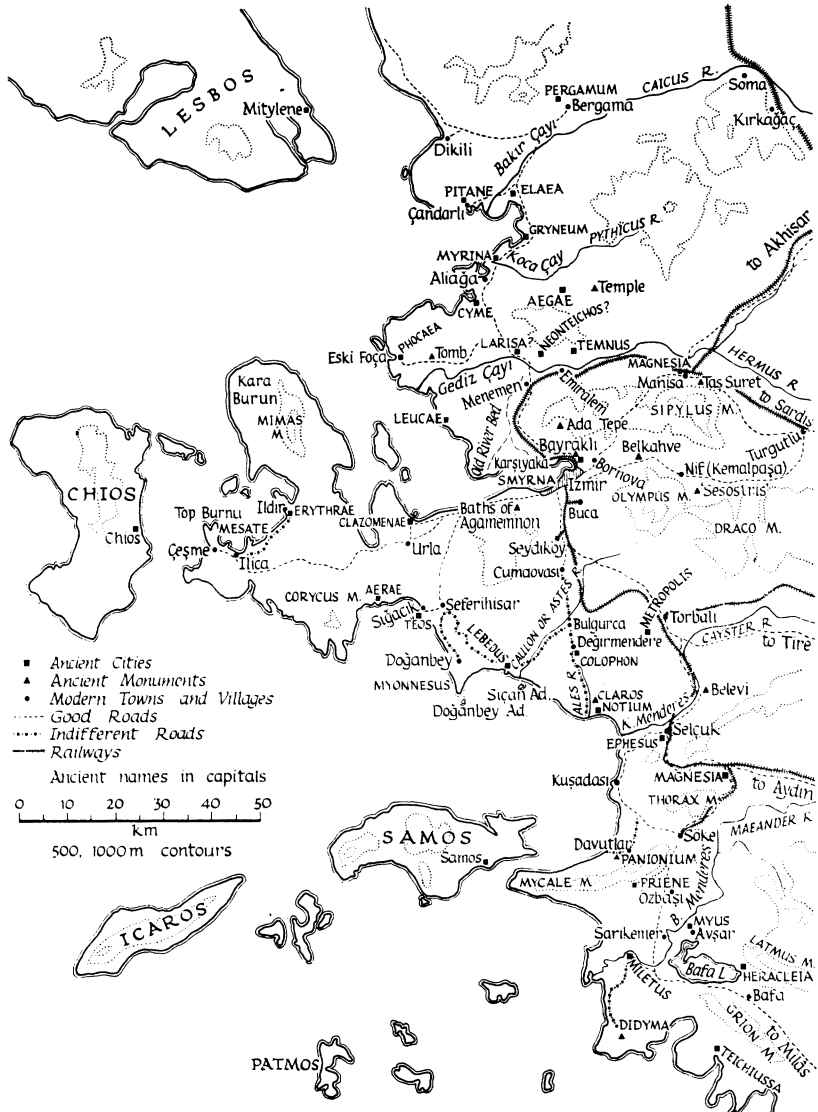
In brief, Herodotus' hearsay may have been written — cartography, logography, or poetry. However that may be, we can only doubt that Herodotus ever traveled any such roads as these or viewed any such Ionian

⁵¹ George Bean (above, n.33) 23; an enlarged version is reproduced at the end of the book.

⁵² M. L. West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* (Oxford 1971-) fr. 42 (below); cf. fr. 50.

τέαρε(. . . .)δεύειε τὴν ἐπὶ Σμύρνης
 ἰθὺ διὰ Λυδῶν παρὰ τὸν Ἀττάλειω τύμβον
 καὶ σῆμα Γύγωε καὶ (Σεσώ)στρ(ιος) στήλην
 καὶ μνήμα Τωτος Μυτάλιδι πάλμυδος,
 πρὸς ἧλιον δύνοντα γαστέρα τρέψας.

It should be noted that the name of Sesostris is Bergk's restoration, based explicitly on Hdt. ii.106.



Aegean Turkey. Source: George E. Bean, *Aegean Turkey*, 2nd ed. (London: Ernest Benn and New York: W. W. Norton, 1979).

Sesostris monuments as the ones he describes, at Kara Bel or anywhere else that we know about, whereas he certainly implies that he did. Ramsay traversed virtually all the important ancient roads of Asia Minor with the *History* in hand, and he was convinced that Herodotus never traveled the interior. The account of an eyewitness would be unmistakable.⁵³ Garstang came to the same conclusion in 1929.⁵⁴ In 1935 A. W. Lawrence stated the matter even more unequivocally⁵⁵ and Kurt Bittel agreed in 1940.⁵⁶ Ramsay felt that Herodotus did like travel by sea and did not like travel on land.⁵⁷ Perhaps a better answer is that virtually all travel in Herodotus' time was difficult and dangerous.⁵⁸ In any event Bean too thought the evidence of Kara Bel unmistakable.⁵⁹ "Herodotus had not seen the figures himself and had not clearly understood the information he was given."

It is hard to believe that Herodotus found traces of any such great Egyptian king as Sesostris in Thrace, Colchis, inland Asia Minor, or Palestinian Syria. In context his claims on the Levant and Black Sea lands and even on the roads to Sardis in the Sesostris narrative reveal a wealth of Ionian tradition that Herodotus shaped to his purpose. Some of Herodotus' early history of Egypt probably belonged originally to *Assyrioi logoi*, which he adapted to the cause of bettering Hecataeus' account of Egypt. Some of it was Greek mythology, Aegyptus, Danaus, Jason and the Argonauts. Some of it was enhancement of Greek engineering, mathematics, science, and politics. Much of it points to Miletus. Herodotus' *historiē* is a much more complex and difficult brand of enquiry than we have tried to believe.

If we cannot believe Herodotus' experience of Sesostris monuments in Thrace, Colchis, Palestine, or Asia Minor, how credible is he elsewhere? We need to reassess the nature and origin of Herodotus' claims on Egypt, with its priests and negroes, and the Pontus, which Herodotus purports to have measured, not to mention other exotic locales such as Tyre and Babylon, where we have tended to accept his authority perhaps too lightly for the last 60 years and where we do have the means of control on what he says in notable instances.

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⁵³ W. R. Ramsay (above, n.38) 60 f.

⁵⁴ John Garstang, *The Hittite Empire* (London 1929) 178.

⁵⁵ A. W. Lawrence (above, n.4) 118.

⁵⁶ Kurt Bittel (above, n.33) 189 f.

⁵⁷ W. R. Ramsay (above, n.38) 61.

⁵⁸ Cf., e.g., Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London 1974) 72 ff.

⁵⁹ George Bean above, (n.33) 57.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AJP* *American Journal of Philology*
AO *Archiv für Orientforschung*
ARE J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (5 vols.), Chicago, 1906–
Ath. Pol. Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia*
AZ *Archaeologische Zeitung*
CdE *Chronique d'Égypte*
DK H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, edited with additions by W. Kranz, seventh edition, Berlin, 1954
FGH Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, Leiden, 1957 ff.
GGM Karl Müller, *Geographi Graeci Minores* (3 vols.), Paris, 1855 (repr. Hildesheim, 1965)
HGAM Sir William Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, Royal Geographical Society, Supplemental Papers, Vol. IV, London, 1890, (repr. Amsterdam, 1962)
HSCP Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
HW W. W. How, J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus*, Oxford, 1912, corr. ed. 1928
IM *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JEA *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JHS *Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
KR G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, 1963
 Luckenbill D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (2 vols.), Chicago, 1926 f
MDOG *Mitteilungen der deutschen Orientgesellschaft zu Berlin*
RE Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopaedie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
 Stein Heinrich Stein, *Herodotos Erster Band, Zweites Heft*, 5th ed., Berlin, 1902 (1st ed. 1856–61)