

## MEDES IN MEDIA, MESOPOTAMIA, AND ANATOLIA: EMPIRE, HEGEMONY, DOMINATION OR ILLUSION?

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### ABSTRACT

The nature and even the existence of the Median empire has been the subject of controversy for a number of years. The present article revisits (I) Herodotus' account, (II) certain items of indirect evidence, and (III) the non-Greek pre-Achaemenid material provided by texts (neo-Assyrian, neo-Babylonian and Hebrew) and archaeology (especially Anatolian) and argues the legitimacy of belief in Median domination in regions outside lowland Mesopotamia.

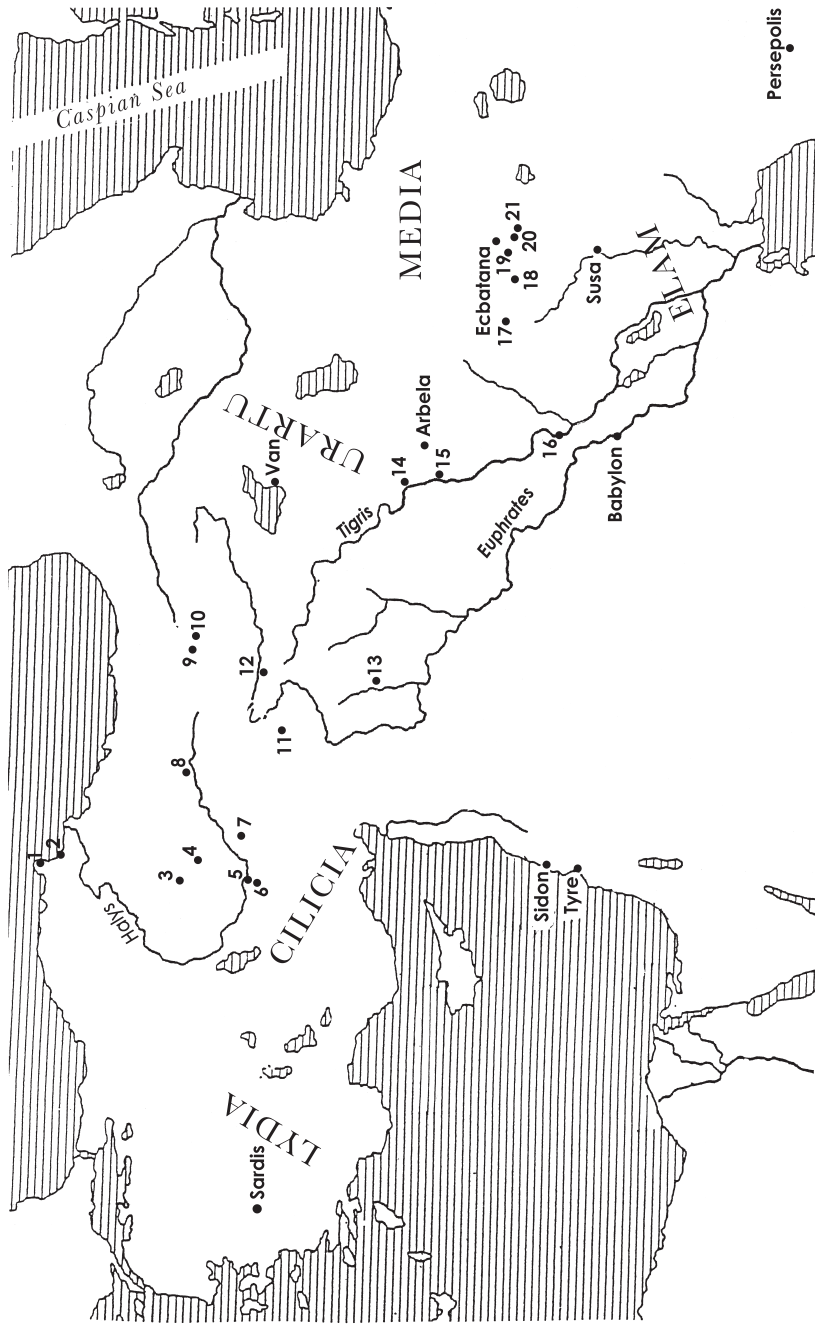
Convention postulates a 6th-century Median empire stretching through Anatolia to the River Halys. To validate this postulate we must validate belief in (a) the Median empire, (b) its westward extension, and (c) the role of the Halys as a frontier (Fig. 1).

That this needs validating reflects Sancisi-Weerdenburg's probing questions about the Median empire.<sup>1</sup> She argued that there is no substantive direct or indirect non-Herodotean evidence for a Median Empire, and that Herodotus' account (1. 95–130) is not only unhistoric but also too dull, ideologically barren and disinclined to treat Cyaxares as a national hero to be genuine (oral) Median mythistory or presumptive evidence for a Median state of which it can be the Charter Myth. Rather, it is a Greek construction out of a few data available via Babylon. One must stress that Sancisi-Weerdenburg was controverting the idea that the Median empire was like the Achaemenid: she credited a war with Lydia and adduced Herodotus 1. 134 (on Median 'imperial' rule) as relevant to the situation in which a Lydian war could be waged, but rejected a Median state or bureaucratic imperial structure; and because she was primarily engaged in heuristic hypothesis-making,<sup>2</sup> she was more specific about what Medes did not have than about what they did. One immediately observes that, since she saw the developed Persian empire (what Medes did not have) as an artefact of Darius<sup>3</sup> and since Cyrus had an empire, perhaps the Medes did too. But to go any further we need to examine Herodotus'

<sup>1</sup> Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988; 1994. Kienast 1999 (which I only saw after my own paper was complete) presents a sceptical treatment based on unpublished seminar and lecture material from the early 1970s (*cf.* 66, n. 1). Despite some bibliographical updating, there is no reference to Sancisi-Weerdenburg.

<sup>2</sup> Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1994, 40.

<sup>3</sup> Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988, 197.



Map of the ancient Near East.  
1. Sinope; 2. Gersh; 3. Boğaz Köy; 4. Kerkenes Dağ; 5. Avanos; 6. Nevshehir; 7. Kayseri; 8. Sivas; 9. Erzincan; 10. Altintepe; 11. Malatya; 12. Elazığ; 13. Harran; 14. Nineveh; 15. Nimrud; 16. Baghdad; 17. Qal'eh-i Yazdigird; 18. Kermanshah; 19. Godin Tepe; 20. Nush-i Jan; 21. Malayer.

account, certain pieces of indirect evidence, and the 7th- and 6th-century non-Greek sources.<sup>4</sup>

### I. *Herodotus' Account*

I cannot deal here with every aspect of Herodotus' account, and I shall note and comment on just five distinctive elements:

- Deioces' creation of a single *polis* and of autocracy
- the treatment of the kings of Media
- the Median form of 'imperial' government
- the chronological framework
- the Scythian interlude

*The creation of Median autocracy.* The first stage of Deioces' rise to power turns on his activity as an impartial dispenser of justice. We are perhaps conditioned (not least by the contrast Herodotus' Demaratus draws between Spartan obedience to Law and Xerxes' subjects' obedience to the King: 7. 103) to regard behaviour of this sort as Greek, but (if so) it is a conditioning we ought to resist, not just because of the importance of *data* in the ideology of Achaemenid royal inscriptions<sup>5</sup> but because the role played by even-handed settlement of lawsuits in the Deioces story does not obviously conform to a Greek stereotype: Greek law-givers are usually a product of political *stasis*, and Greek tyrants do not characteristically emerge as law-givers—not least because tyrants represent the suspension or circumvention of ordinary legal process. In the next stage of the story Deioces makes the Medes (who at that stage lived *κατὰ κόμας*) build him a house and provide a bodyguard. Then, when he has power, he makes them *ἐν πόλισμα ποιήσασθαι καὶ τοῦτο περιστέλλοντας τῶν ἄλλων ἦσσον ἐπιμέλεσθαι*. When they agree to this as well, he builds seven walls and has the *demos* live around them. It is important to note that what the walls surround is Deioces' house (1. 99. 1), not the city: the palace (*basileia*) is merely the innermost part of the *oikia*. The size of the walled area (comparable with Athens, so 10 km in circumference at a minimum), the number of the walls, and the decoration of the battlements with paint or gold- or silver-plate remind us we are in some degree in the realm of fantasy.<sup>6</sup> But, if there is any sort of reality underlying this fantasy, then it is provided not by Greek synoecism (as one might initially be

<sup>4</sup> For a relatively brief controversion of Sancisi-Weerdenburg's position, see Muscarella 1994, 60–62.

<sup>5</sup> Briant 1996, 526–28, 981–83; 2002, 510–11, 956–57.

<sup>6</sup> Polyb. 10. 27 conveys a different picture of Ecbatana (on which *cf.* some remarks in Briant 1996, 1050–51; 2002, 1023–24).

tempted to think, given the interplay of *κατὰ κόμας* and *ἐν πόλισμα*) but by oriental palaces: the comparison of a house with the city of Athens and (perhaps) the choice of *polisma* (not *polis*) to denote the Medes' extra-mural settlement actually underline this point.<sup>7</sup> The palatial model is perhaps more Persepolis or Susa than Nineveh or Nimrud—though not, of course, if one chose to regard the outer-walls of those sites as enclosing 'royal' space; and it should be noted that the stated circumference of Deioces' palace lies between those of Nimrud and Nineveh. But the important thing is not to determine that there is anything distinctively Median (rather than Mesopotamian, Elamite or Persian) involved—only that we do not have to regard (and dismiss) the story as purely the product of Greek imagination.

*Treatment of Kings of Media.* Sancisi-Weerdenburg complains of inadequate mythologising, contrasting what she sees as genuine 'oral history' in the story of Cyrus' origins with the dullness of Herodotus on the Medes. This hardly seems fair to the Deioces story; and any Median angle on Astyages is lost behind Persian deformation. The complaint is therefore about Phraortes and Cyaxares—which *were* names to conjure with: one of Darius' rivals in 522/1 BC was called Phraortes (Fravarti) and claimed descent from Cyaxares (DB §24). I make two points. (a) Cyaxares' overthrow of the Scythians at a banquet (1. 106), though briefly summarised, is an event of appropriate storytelling type (as indeed Sancisi-Weerdenburg concedes); so too, perhaps, the quarrel of Cyaxares and Alyattes arising from the latter's giving refuge to child-murdering Scythian archery-teachers (1. 73). (b) Sancisi-Weerdenburg cannot imagine that Herodotus would edit orality out of what was known to him, but the truth is that he edits out the whole Fall of Nineveh, reserving it for now (and perhaps always) non-extant *heteroi logoi* (1. 106). Median tales about this may well have existed and been known to Herodotus; and, since Phraortes died fighting the Assyrians, they will have been relevant to him as well as to Cyaxares. So, the current state of Herodotus' text does not preclude the existence of Median mythistory. I do not assert (because I cannot prove) that it was the mythistory which (for Sancisi-Weerdenburg) is the expected by-product of state-formation, but the issue should not be used to undermine Herodotus' status as a source, however truncated or garbled, of genuine Near Eastern material.

<sup>7</sup> Herodotus uses *polisma* of Ionian cities (1. 143. 2, 6. 6)—including Athens—but also of Pelasgian sites (1. 57. 2), and of Nineveh and Babylon (1. 178. 1–2). On the term, see Flensted-Jensen 1995, 129f.; Hansen 1998, 25, 158. (*Polisma* is almost always used synonymously with *polis*, in the sense of nucleated settlement [not political community], but with a tendency to denote barbarian towns, towns in the remote past and towns in border districts.)

*Imperial Government.* Herodotus 1. 134. 2–3 draws an analogy between (a) the Persian scheme of honour and (b) the Median scheme of (imperial) rule:

τιμῶσι δὲ ἐκ πάντων τοὺς ἀγχιστα ἐωυτῶν οἰκέοντας μετὰ γε ἐωυτούς, δεύτερα δὲ τοὺς δευτέρους, μετὰ δὲ κατὰ λόγον προβαίνοντες τιμῶσι. ἤκιστα δὲ τοὺς ἐωυτῶν ἐκαστάτω οἰκημένους ἐν τιμῇ ἄγονται, νομίζοντες ἐωυτοὺς εἶναι ἀνθρώπων μακρῶ τὰ πάντα ἀρίστους, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους κατὰ λόγον τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀντέχεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ ἐκαστάτω οἰκέοντας ἀπὸ ἐωυτῶν κακίστους εἶναι. ἐπὶ δὲ Μήδων ἀρχόντων καὶ ἦρχε τὰ ἔθνεα ἀλλήων, συναπάντων μὲν Μήδοι καὶ τῶν ἀγχιστα οἰκεόντων σφίσι, οὗτοι δὲ καὶ τῶν ὁμούρων, οἱ δὲ μάλα τῶν ἐχομένων. κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ οἱ Πέρσαι τιμῶσι. προέβαινε γὰρ δὴ τὸ ἔθνος ἄρχον τε καὶ ἐπιτροπεῦον.

The final nine words of the Greek text present some real problems (an *obelus* may be called for—or even the recognition and deletion of a gloss), but in the present context this is not of crucial importance.<sup>8</sup> What matters is the picture of successive rule in the preceding sentence: A rules B which rules C, which rules D etc.; and the Medes rule both A and A+B+C+D+ . . . The drawing of the analogy—the Persians attach a degree of esteem to everyone and the degree diminishes with distance just the Medes exercised rule over everyone and the directness of rule diminished with distance—is remarkable. The nature of Median imperial rule does not figure in Herodotus' narrative: either he himself knows or an informant who had already drawn the analogy knew a lot more about Median *arkhe* than Herodotus' text makes us aware of. And what he knows is *not* a retrojection of Achaemenid Persian conditions. Crucially, he has an image of the Median imperial system as *different* from the Persian one. What 1. 134 says is not the same as what 3. 89 says about the formation of Darius' tributary *nomoi*:

καταστήσας δὲ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ ἄρχοντας ἐπιστήσας ἐτάξατο φόρους οἱ προσίεναι κατὰ ἔθνεα τε καὶ πρὸς τοῖσι ἔθνεσι τοὺς πλησιοχώρους προστάσσων, καὶ ὑπερβαίνων τοὺς προσεχέας τὰ ἐκαστέρω ἄλλοισι ἄλλα ἔθνεα νέμων.

Nor is there reason to discern in the actualities of Persian administration or in the depiction of imperial space in written or iconographic form any systematic and serial differentiation of the status of subjects vis-à-vis the centre into core and increasingly peripheral peripheries. Vogelsang's use of the concept of 'stepped organisation' in reference both to 1. 134 and to Achaemenid administration is a false equivocation,<sup>9</sup> Calmeyer's claim of an analogy between

<sup>8</sup> The text printed above is that found in the Teubner and OCT editions. For further details see Appendix 1.

<sup>9</sup> Vogelsang 1992, 177 (Hdt. 1. 134), 244. The latter refers to the fact that Persian conquest initially affected only the upper strata of local authority, leaving that it free to continue exercising power over other groups. An example might be Persians claiming authority over a Medic elite in Cappadocia which in turn controlled native Cappadocians. But, if so, this is not what 1. 134 is talking about. Högemann 1992, 58f. also implicitly does not distinguish

1. 134 and the (eccentric) List of Peoples in XPh is unpersuasive,<sup>10</sup> and Tourovets' detection of cartographic concentric circles in the arrangement of delegations on the Apadana stairways carries no implication of a hierarchy of rule and subjection as one proceeds along the carved panels.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, the point of the iconography is that there is a single source of power, *viz.* the Great King.<sup>12</sup> Whether 1. 134 is a sufficiently accurate or nuanced account of Median rule is no doubt debatable but is not the point; the point is that it is distinctive, and not manifestly Greek.

*Chronology.* The Median King List is a chronological and chronographical mare's nest, which I do not intend to revisit.<sup>13</sup> I merely note that solutions are possible which do not conflict with non-Greek sources, i.e. do not locate named Median kings at times which other sources preclude. This is mostly a matter of fitting them into *lacunae* in other evidence. But Cyaxares and Astyages (who do appear in other sources) are appropriately positioned in the King List, and that is comforting. It does not mean there is no artificial construction going on: we have two pairs of kings, each ruling a total of 75 years, and a total dynastic length of a neat 150 years; and the estimated length of Median rule of Upper Asia (1. 130) of '128 years, excluding the Scythian period' does not make sense in terms of the narrative. But nothing has been produced which we know that the producer could not have regarded as 'true'.

*The Scythian Interlude.* Herodotus' awareness that Scythians (who for 5th-century Greeks belonged in the north Black Sea) might have a role in 7th- and 6th-century Near Eastern history proves that he is heir to story-telling informed by some actual knowledge of that history: for people described as Scythians or Cimmerians certainly *were* important enough in the 7th-century Zagros to attract the interest of the Assyrians—the fact that the name Protothyes (1. 103) can be associated with the name Partatua encountered in Assyrian records<sup>14</sup> (without prejudice to personal identity or precise chronology) is an added bonus—and seem to make some impact on the politico-geographical imagination of Hebrew prophets in the late and post-Assyrian period.<sup>15</sup> The

between 1. 134 and the Persian system. On imperial administration *cf.* (relatively briefly) Tuplin 1987a, 1987b; (fully) Briant 2002, esp. chapters 2, 9–12, 16, 17.4.

<sup>10</sup> Calmeyer 1987, 143.

<sup>11</sup> Tourovets 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Briant (1996, 194; 2002, 181) cites 1. 134 (on Persian dispensation of esteem) in reference to the true centre of the empire being the country of Persia alone.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Millard 1979; Brown 1988; Scurlock 1990.

<sup>14</sup> Klauber 1913, no. 16 = SAA iv 20.

<sup>15</sup> On all of this, and especially the Assyrian evidence, see the extensive treatment in Ivantchik 1993. Brief summaries: Millard 1979, 121; Sulimirski and Taylor 1991, 558f.; Ivantchik 1993, 155–57. Hebrew texts: *Jeremiah* 25. 25 (as emended by Ivantchik 1993, 148f.; Diakonoff 2000,

idea of Scythian long-distance raiding was familiar in a North Aegean context (6. 40), but it would be absurd to suppose we have a purely Greek invention here. The ideas of Cimmerians pursued by Scythians and of Scythians displacing the Median rule 'of Asia'<sup>16</sup> cohere inasmuch as Greek tradition about Cimmerians in Anatolia puts them west of the Halys and so of the Scythian (Median) imperial boundary,<sup>17</sup> so there *might* be Greek historical pattern-making going on here. But there was no cause to engage in pattern-making unless it was a given that 'Scythians' were pertinent in the first place; and that given is genuine and non-Greek. The proposition that Scythians temporarily took over the Median empire presupposes the concept of a Median empire, but—at the worst—it neither undermines nor reinforces that concept. At the best, it coheres with (but need occasion no suspicion about) Herodotus' distinctive picture of the Median imperial system. And the story-line does not follow what one might call the obvious line of having the Scythians kill the Median king and then be overthrown by a new liberator; Cyaxares survives, and all that has really happened is that a new authority (and consumer of taxes) is put on top of the system. Moreover, engagement with Scythians continues after the reassertion of Median authority (the renegade band of Scythian nomads: 1. 73). I am not saying any of this is true, only that it is a distinctive picture. It should be added that Vogelsang does see behind it an actual historical process of Scythian conquest leading to the emergence of a Scytho-Medic elite exercising authority over a Median empire—an example of a pattern of nomad-sedentary relation analysed by Khazanov.<sup>18</sup>

Herodotus' account is neither historical nor worthless. It has distinctive features which acquit it of any charge of being banal fiction (let alone Greek fiction), and nothing about its character requires us to eliminate the Median empire from the historical record. At the same time it does not require us to postulate a Median empire which was like Darius' empire.<sup>19</sup> No positive features demand that (even tribute-raising is only associated with the Scythian

228), 51. 27, *Ezekiel* 27. 11, 14 (with Liverani 1991, 67 n. 9, 69; Diakonoff 1992, 174 n. 34, 178 n. 48, 181, 187), *Ezekiel* 38. 6, *Gen.* 10. 2f. = *Chron.* 1. 5f. Ivantchik (1999, 511–15) argues a reference to the Scythian Palestine raid (*cf.* Hdt. 1. 105) in *Jeremiah* 1. 14–15, 4. 6–6. 30, *Zephaniah* 2. 4–15.

<sup>16</sup> Hdt. 1. 103f., 4. 2, 12, 7. 20.

<sup>17</sup> West Anatolia: Hdt. 1. 6, 15, 16, Callin. fr. 3D, Callisth. 124 F29; Callim. *Dian* 251f., Hesych. *s.v.* *Lygdamis*; Archil. apud Strab. 14. 1. 40, Eustath. *In Od.* 396. 41; RC no. 7 = OGIS 13. North Anatolia: Hdt. 4. 12; Ps. Scymn. 948; Strab. 12. 3. 8; schol. Ap. Rh. 1. 1126; Arr. 156 F 76; Heracl. Pont. fr. 129. North-west Anatolia: Strab. 12. 4. 6, 8. 4, 13. 1. 9–10, 33. Phrygia: Strab. 1. 3. 21; Eust. *Od.* 11. 14; Steph. Byz. *s.v.* *Syassos*. Postulating Scythian seizure of the Median empire accounts for the Cimmerians fleeing so far west, despite the absence of stories about Scythian activity in central Anatolia. (To the contrary, the prominent story is about them going south, to Palestine/Egypt: Hdt. 1. 105.)

<sup>18</sup> Vogelsang 1992, 305f.; Khazanov 1984.

<sup>19</sup> Or perhaps like Croesus' empire (*cf.* Balcer 1994; but contrast Högemann 1992, 97f.).

interlude); and to anyone who feels that the reader of Herodotus 1 is bound (by default) to assume that the Median empire is generically similar to the Persian one and infers that this is what Herodotus assumed, I would say (a) that Herodotus himself thought the Persian empire changed markedly with Darius (3. 89f.), but also (b) that, precisely because of the danger of assimilation to the Assyrian or Persian empires (i.e. the danger that people will want to see a sort of succession of empires), the most that Herodotus 1 attests anyway is that the ruler at Ecbatana laid claim to some sort of extensive (if often indirect) authority and was capable of turning that authority into military action far from the eastern Zagros. Which is pretty much what Sancisi-Weerdenburg conceded anyway.

## II. *Indirect Evidence*

Some alleged indirect evidence from the Achaemenid period is certainly inconclusive;<sup>20</sup> and a Median role as conduit for Assyrian and/or Urartian ceremonial, titulature or iconography is arguably something to be inferred from our picture of 6th-century Media, not used to establish it.<sup>21</sup> I select just three issues that may be telling.

(1) Sancisi-Weerdenburg says that the allegedly ‘Median’ phrase *xshayathiya xshayathiyanam* can indicate a paramount chief as well as a King of Kings; survival of the title is no guarantee of identical content.<sup>22</sup> This is true, though one notes that either way it is not inappropriate to the imperial system of Herodotus 1. 134. But irrespective of whether Persians already had leaders who were described as ‘kings’ in Old Persian, the Median form of this special title surely signifies something. The issue is not whether Darius (for example) was actually like a Median king; it is that the Median king was sufficiently

<sup>20</sup> That Darius’ 522/1 BC opponents included Fravarti, *alias* Xshathrita, descendant of Cyaxares (DB 24–5, 31–32) and Cīcantakhma, the Asagartian, another ‘descendant of Cyaxares’ (DB 33), *proves* nothing about the extent of Cyaxares’ authority: the primary claim is dynastic legitimacy (*cf.* alleged sons of Cyrus [DB 40] and Nabonidus [DB 16, 49]) and national independence (the sons of Nabonidus; and perhaps Martiya, *alias* King Imani of Elam, in DB 22) rather than resumption of imperial rule—Cyaxares could be celebrated simply as the destroyer of Assyria (*cf.* Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988, 202, 211). The Median character of the rebellion of Gaumata in Greek sources (*cf.* his description as a Mede in the Akkadian version of DB) is controversial but a Persian ‘construction’ of the events as attempted Median usurpation need not presuppose a Median empire.

<sup>21</sup> For a strong statement of the view that the only explanation for Assyrian features in Achaemenid ceremonial and art is transmission through Media *cf.* Roaf 2003. Seidl 1994 by contrast postulates direct Persian observation of Urartian phenomena, even long after the end of the Urartian period.

<sup>22</sup> Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988, 210. There are other supposed Median words in the bureaucratic or military terminology of OP inscriptions (which Sancisi-Weerdenburg also claims to be compatible with the world of tribal federation), but I concentrate on the most interesting case.



significant for Persians to emulate. Whether or not Cyrus was a Median subject, he certainly stepped into Astyages' shoes. But this does not guarantee that he saw himself as a Median king,<sup>23</sup> and the denomination 'King of Kings' was not demonstrably used before Darius. Its deliberate adoption makes little sense if the only interested parties were Medes and Persians and they were originally of comparable authority and status; and it is unreasonable both to envisage a disparity between Median and Persian realms large enough to account for the desire to emulate and then to insist on denying that the Median realm in question had wider, extra-Median horizons. If one admits the relevance of the issue at all, it will not do to dismiss it again just by saying *xshayathiya* can mean 'chief' rather than 'king'. But the issue may not be relevant: the philological presuppositions about what constitutes a Median dialect of West Iranian may be unreliable (i.e. the claim that *xshayathiya xshayathiyanam* is linguistically alien to Old Persian might be false) and 'King of Kings' is only known previously as a distinctive royal marker among the Urartians—whence Seidl seems inclined to think Darius got it direct.<sup>24</sup>

(2) Persian royal inscriptions include lists of the lands the king rules. Normally Media stands at the start with Persia and Elam, but in the earliest list it appears in tenth position, followed by Armenia, Cappadocia and the eastern Iranian provinces (Parthia, Drangiana, Areia, etc.) Vogelsang sees this as a Median imperial area, incorporated as a group.<sup>25</sup> Its eastward extension presents problems, but the telling point (if there is one) is Armenia-Cappadocia. Normally they belong to the west, so their association in DB with a section starting in Media and otherwise moving east *is* noteworthy; and it is reinforced by their sartorial identification with Medes in Persepolis iconography, and the fact that the Behistun narrative (DB 26–30, 34) deals with Armenian events as part of 'what [Darius] did in Media' (i.e. suppress the Median rebels, Fravarti and Cicantakhma). Five battles were involved, so the decision not to deal with it as a separate entity (as Parthia and Hyrcania, although supporting Fravarti, are treated separately: DB 35) is very striking. Armenia is clearly so strongly connected with Media that the narrator does not feel the need to note explicitly that Armenians sided with Fravarti—and so strongly that their suppression required major effort.

(3) Greeks tended to confuse Medes and Persians. Elsewhere I have argued that 'Median' terminology is characteristically used when the Persian empire is seen as an alien, faceless military and political threat.<sup>26</sup> It is the terminology with which Anatolian Greeks reacted to the descent of Cyrus' Iranians,

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Tuplin 1994.

<sup>24</sup> Seidl 1994.

<sup>25</sup> Vogelsang 1986.

<sup>26</sup> Tuplin 1994.

later taken over by other Greeks, and recurs in the concept of ‘medism’.<sup>27</sup> I do not believe Cyrus actually styled himself as a Median king,<sup>28</sup> so the best explanation for these phenomena lies in the Median character of the territory into which Croesus so disastrously intruded and of his excuse for doing so, perhaps reinforced by memories of the fearful character of the Medes with whom his predecessor had managed to do a deal.<sup>29</sup>

### III. *Ancient Near Eastern Sources*

We turn now to direct, pre-Achaemenid non-Greek evidence, both textual (neo-Assyrian, neo-Babylonian, Hebrew) and archaeological (with special reference to the central Anatolian site of Kerkenes Dag).

Between 835 and *ca.* 650 BC the Assyrians encountered ‘Medes’ in the Zagros. Some live in cities, ruled by *bel alani*;<sup>30</sup> others sound nomadic (‘Arabs of the Sunrise’). Presumably the latter (if really nomads) are tribal. The character of the former is more debated, but the number of putative Median cities in the later 8th century is very large: we are not dealing with real cities, and transhumant pastoralism may well be part of the socio-economic picture (*cf.* n. 30).<sup>31</sup> What we see is heavily fragmented, perhaps somewhat volatile in terms of settlement pattern,<sup>32</sup> and not very suggestive of a potentially imperial state—though the fact that, alone of adversaries encountered by Assyrians, Medes were formulaically called ‘strong’ (*dannu*) suggests the Assyrians perceived some actual (or claimed) special quality in them.<sup>33</sup> (The usage may

<sup>27</sup> On this concept, see Tuplin 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Tuplin 1994, 255.

<sup>29</sup> On another possible (but inconclusive) association of ‘Media’ with territory outside the Zagros heartland (Xenophon’s ‘Media’, and Herodotus’ Matiene) see below.

<sup>30</sup> For details, see Lanfranchi 2003, which also discusses the term’s earlier history and notes a connection with contexts which have a pastoralist dimension. (In non-Assyrian texts *II Kings* 17. 6, 18. 11, on deportations to ‘the cities of the Medes’—in practice the Assyrian provinces of Harhar and Kishesim—reflects a similar view.) The term is also used of Zagros peoples not normally reckoned as Medes. For interesting non-Zagros examples *cf.* below 237.

<sup>31</sup> Radner (2003) takes a strong line against any idea that these Medes are tribally organised.—There seems to be a general willingness both to regard Assyrian pictures of Median ‘cities’ (for example, Gunter 1982; Jacoby 1991) as depictions of sites like Godin Tepe or Nush-i Jan and to suppose that there were many such sites.

<sup>32</sup> There is little overlap in Median place names between the texts of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon. There are nearly 140 Median names in their texts, but only 11 appear in both sets, though no more than 31 years have passed. Moreover only five reappear in the admittedly less name-rich records of Ésarhaddon and Assurbanipal, while over ten new names turn up. There is also relatively little repetition between texts *within* the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser and Sargon. I am not persuaded that these phenomena are wholly due to the two kings’ Median operations having been in almost completely different regions (*pace*, for example, Radner 2003).

<sup>33</sup> The usage appears in texts of Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon and Assurbanipal: for details *cf.* Lanfranchi 2003. CAD *s.v.* *dannu* 4d renders it ‘obstinate, bad, harsh, tyrannical’. In itself *dannu* can be approbative, as often when applied to gods or kings (for example, Cyrus in *Cyrus Cylinder* 1 and elsewhere).

originally reflect lowlanders' stereotypes about mountain peoples, but it is not applied by Assyrian texts to other such peoples.) There is also a problem of geography. Some Medes became part of Assyrian provinces (Harhar and Kišesim), probably located (broadly) between Kermanshah and Malayer. But where exactly all the others were, and whether some were on the Iranian plateau or near the Caspian, is arguable: a distinction can be discerned between core, provincialised Medes and 'distant' Medes,<sup>34</sup> and the sheer number of Median locations may favour eastward extension, but debate is not closed.<sup>35</sup> Still, since relevant neo-Assyrian evidence ceases before 650 BC, it need not preclude a more-than-local Median authority based at Ecbatana after that date—and Herodotus' dates actually locate the empire after 650 BC.

So the problem is not what we see directly in Assyrian sources but whether we can imagine the process of change between *ca.* 650 BC and 615 BC. Some speculate about the socio-politico-economic effects of tributary demands and exploitation of trade along the Great Khorasan Road (whether with Assyrian encouragement or by 'robber-barons') not only fostering wealth accumulation by *bel alani* (e.g. at Godin or Nush-i Jan) but prompting an unusually ambitious individual to seek wider authority; others might notice (i) conflict between Median *bel alani* leading to invited Assyrian intervention in 676 BC,<sup>36</sup> (ii) the swearing of loyalty-oaths in 672 BC by Median *bel alani*, variously seen as part of the royal bodyguard or political refugees,<sup>37</sup> and (iii) contemporary Assyrian apprehensions that tribute-collectors and others were in danger from Medes, Scythians and Cimmerians,<sup>38</sup> conclude that the Zagros was disturbed, and see this as the opportunity for a *capo dei capi* to emerge. The two models are consistent, and in both the assault on Assyria during 615–610 BC may play a crucial role in focusing and solidifying the great chief's authority. One may also note an eerie consonance between the Herodotean Deioces' formation of Ecbatana by elimination of other settlements (see above) and the late 7th-century demise of Godin and Nush-i Jan as elite sites (a rather formal, even ritualised, process in the latter case)—a consonance spoiled only by the fact that some date that demise 50 years later.<sup>39</sup> So, there are stories we can tell; and Sancisi-Weerdenburg's proposition that any move towards state-formation inherent in these stories could have been aborted is beside the point.

<sup>34</sup> 'Distant' Medes appear in texts of Sargon, Sennacherbi and Esarhaddon: for details *cf.* Lanfranchi 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Levine 1973; 1974; Medvedskaya 1992; 1995; Muscarella 1994, 57f.; Vera Chamaza 1994, 103ff.; Reade 1995.

<sup>36</sup> Borger 1956, §21 ll. 31–36, §27 Epp. 15–16; Heidel 1956, 24–27 iii 53–61, iv 1–20 (esp. 11f.).

<sup>37</sup> Parpola and Watanabe 1988; Liverani 1995; Reade 1995, 41; Lanfranchi 1998.

<sup>38</sup> Starr 1990, nos. 36–62, 64–66, 71, 77, 79–80.

<sup>39</sup> Curtis 2003. For Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1988, 203), of course, the closure of Nush-i Jan signifies the *end* of a process of state-formation.

The issue is exercise of authority, not the presence of a particular structure for it to be exercised in.

The events of 615–610 BC certainly show a single leader exercising authority to deploy military forces in Assyria. They do, of course, show it through the medium of a chronicle uninterested in nuanced information about the Babylonians' alien allies. But the fact that these allies are highlighted at all makes it difficult to regard them merely as a bunch of mercenaries or a renegade bit of the Assyrian army. What *is* true is that their participation has a spasmodic quality: they arrive (in 614, 612 and 610 BC), they fight, they go away again, disappearing permanently from the chronicle record after 610 BC.<sup>40</sup> There has been much debate about what happened to Assyria after the fall of Nineveh. Direct Greek sources imply Median occupation, Akkadian sources may not preclude this but do not impose a vision of Assyria and North Mesopotamia as part of a Median empire, and neither Xenophon's perception that the east bank of the Tigris north of Baghdad was 'Media' (*Anabasis* 2. 4. 27) nor Herodotus' (large) lowland Matiene (5. 52. 5), if relevant at all, can truthfully be accounted for in terms of historical Median control west of the Zagros.<sup>41</sup> There is, in fact, only one set of evidence which puts Medes anywhere in the Mesopotamian lowlands any time after 610 BC. The place is Harran, and the evidence (from Nabonidus inscriptions) is of a certain complexity.<sup>42</sup> But all it need show is that in the 550s BC (though for all we know at other times too) Harran was vulnerable to incursions by the Ummanmanda whom Cyrus eventually disposed of—i.e. Medes. There is no evidence they occupied the area in any permanent way; and Nabonidus' claim that they destroyed Harran in 610 BC looks like a rewriting of history (the Fall of Nineveh chronicle attributes the 610 BC capture of Harran to Babylonians) not a reason for postulating Median rule of North Mesopotamia.

So, our Median empire need not stray into the lowlands. But post-615 BC non-Greek texts do nonetheless sometimes see Media as a significant power.<sup>43</sup> *Isaiah* 13. 18, 21. 2 casts them as a potential (viciously destructive) enemy of Babylon. Jeremiah in *ca.* 595 BC specifies 'the kings of the Medes' (51. 11) or 'the kings of the Medes, his viceroys (*pechah*) and all his governors (*sagan*)

<sup>40</sup> ABC 3. 23 (615 BC), 3. 24f. (614), 3. 38f. (612), 3. 59f. (610). The chronicle speaks first of 'Medes', then of 'Ummanmanda', but Cyaxares (Umakistar) is their king in both cases. A contemporary letter from Nebuchadnezzar (TCL 9. 99 = Thureau-Dangin 1925) confirms that the Ummanmanda at Harran in 610 were Medes.

<sup>41</sup> On all this, see Tuplin 2003, 364–66. Högemann (1992, 82) takes a different view about the implications of Matiene.

<sup>42</sup> Langdon 1912, no. 1 = Beaulieu 1989, no. 15; Langdon 1912, no. 8 = Beaulieu 1989, no. 1 (with which contrast both ABC 3. 59f. and Beaulieu no. 13). In general, see Baltzer 1973/4; Beaulieu 1989, 109f.; Rollinger 2003.

<sup>43</sup> This may also be implicit in its putative role as refuge for Uruk dissidents: Zawadzki 1988, 133; Joannès 1995 (on GC 2.395 = NBB 255).

and all the land (*eretz*) of his dominions (*memshalah*)' (51. 28). The plurality of 'kings' is striking (though the Septuagint not insignificantly has 'king'); whether the fact that *Jeremiah* (25. 25) can also list 'all the kings of Elam and Media' (and Sidon and Tyre) among doomed nations shows plural and singular are simply rhetorically interchangeable is moot. Perhaps the answer lies rather in Nabonidus' talk of 'the Ummanmanda, their country and the kings who march at their side' (Langdon 1 = Beaulieu 15). Rollinger sees tribal confederation here, Högemann an imperial structure,<sup>44</sup> but whatever anthropological or political term we deploy, Nabonidus is identifying a unitary threat (indeed the very power which Cyrus will destroy), consisting of components which include a plurality of kings; *Jeremiah's* formula could well be an alternative way of capturing this, given that the Hebrew prophet has no particular interest in the niceties of the situation. That Nabonidus ignores the chief Median king—Astyages—is due to Ummanmanda rhetoric taking precedence. (The way in which rhetoric obscures institutional accuracy is illustrated by Harran II = Beaulieu 13, where former enemies whose complaisance to Nabonidus is a sign of divine favour include 'the king(?) of the land(?) of Egypt', 'the land of the Arabs', 'all the kings who were formerly hostile'—and 'the city of the Medes'. Is this a deliberate denial of an overarching Median authority, or a hint at the magnificence of Ecbatana—where by this date Cyrus is ruler?<sup>45</sup>

What else can we say about this Median realm? Nabonidus' and *Jeremiah's* descriptions are consistent with the sort of 'loose' structure Sancisi-Weerdenburg recognises in Herodotus 1. 134. But how extensive an area is involved? About the East nothing can be said (save what might be inherent in indirect evidence from Darius' Behistun inscription). About the West I offer the following points.

(1) Cyrus says Marduk made Gutium and the Medes submit to him.<sup>46</sup> In *ca.* 550 BC, therefore, there was a part of the western Zagros the Medes did not control, but which part is debatable, since Gutium is an elusive geographic concept. And the role of Ugbaru of Gutium as a supporter of Cyrus may skew his presentation of the matter or arise from Gutium having only recently rejected Median authority.

(2) Before the Medes, *Jeremiah* 51. 27 lists the kingdoms of Urartu, Mannaea and the Scythians as enemies of Babylon. Some read him as implying the

<sup>44</sup> Högemann (1992, 102f., 245f., 357f.) envisages a Median Great King ruling through kings (including those in Scythia, Urartu and Mannaea in *Jeremiah* 51. 27) who are 'clientes und socii zugleich' (247), both vassals and allies (347)—precursors of Cyrus' satraps and indeed the first bearers of that title.

<sup>45</sup> Högemann (1992, 86, 118) identifies the 'city' specifically as Ecbatana. Did Greeks have similar problems? Ibycus' Κυάραξ ὁ Μηδείων στρατηγός (320P) is rather striking, but perhaps signifies no more than the perception of Medes as a source of military assault.

<sup>46</sup> *Cyrus Cylinder* 11ff. Text: Berger 1975. Translation: ANET 315f.; Brosius 2000, no. 12.

three kingdoms were within the realm of the Median king(s).<sup>47</sup> Alternatively we infer that in *ca.* 595 BC Cyaxares had not yet extended his authority west and north or (because of a ‘loose’ imperial structure *à la* Herodotus) he was not perceived by Jews as having done so. (In 605 BC *Jeremiah* 25. 25 mentions anonymous ‘kings of the North’ who are presumably located north of Media.<sup>48</sup> Mannaecans fought for Assyria in 616 BC, but possibly as mercenaries rather than subjects—there is no pertinent evidence since Assurbanipal’s heavy attack in 656 BC.)<sup>49</sup>

(3) Urartu is of interest in its own right. The List of Peoples in DB may imply (some) Armenian subjection to Median authority; and it is very likely that Median expansion westwards went through Armenia, not Mesopotamia. In general terms, the Assyrians went to Media (as to Mannaea) to get horses and to thwart Urartian expansion<sup>50</sup>—which reminds us that the Medes were potentially very mobile wagers of war (and had the model of Scythians and Cimmerians in the immediate vicinity to foster this potential)—an important point to which we shall return—and suggests that Urartu might be as natural a target for Medes as Media was for Urartians. The history of Urartu post-640 BC is obscure. Urartu and Assyria had achieved coexistence; concomitantly Babylonians invaded Urartu in 608–607 BC, and perhaps 609 BC, once reaching as far as Van.<sup>51</sup> By this time the Urartian kingdom (once a distinctive conjunction of king, army, fortresses and road network)<sup>52</sup> had met a violent end, perhaps because earlier reverses at the hands of the Assyrians had already engendered structural fragmentation.<sup>53</sup> The agents are debated, but both Scythians and Medes have been postulated.<sup>54</sup> In any event there was no regional structure (or national consciousness) to resist Babylonian incursions or—when Babylonian attention turned exclusively west and south—Median assertions of authority.<sup>55</sup> The world of eastern Anatolia was not (as a geographical environment) as alien to Median conquerors as to Assyro-Babylonian ones—and might suit indirect/loose rule. Zimansky’s perception is that mobile Scythians destroyed the royal structure and moved on: perhaps

<sup>47</sup> For example, Högemann 1992, 103.

<sup>48</sup> Diakonoff (2000, 229), however, affirms that the passage belongs shortly before 540 BC, i.e. towards end of neo-Babylonian period. The passage lists kings of Cimmerians (*cf.* n. 9), Elam, Media and the North.

<sup>49</sup> 616 BC: ABC 3. 5. 656 BC: Piepkorn 51ff. (iii 16–iv 1); Borger 1996, 32–27 (text), 220–21 (trans.). Muscarella (1994, 62) notes the question’s relevance to late 7th-century Median power.

<sup>50</sup> Reade 1995, 41; 2003; Radner 2003.

<sup>51</sup> 608–07 BC: ABC 4.1f., 9f., 609 BC: Reade 2003 (on ABC 3. 72).

<sup>52</sup> Zimansky 1985; 1995a; 1995b.

<sup>53</sup> Smith 1999.

<sup>54</sup> Zimansky 1995a; Smith 1999, 70; Kroll 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Högemann (1992, 84) infers from ABC 3. 72, where Nabopolassar comes to the ‘Land of Urartu’, that there is a defined border and therefore that Urartu had already had ‘eine staatliche Ordnung’ imposed on it, putatively by the Medes—an optimistic argument, perhaps.

similarly mobile but more territorially ambitious Medes moved in their wake and sought acknowledgment of suzerainty not with fortresses (like the Urartian kings) but a Herodotean chain of submission and rule.

(4) Urartu had a western horizon, until the Assyrians interfered—though Rusa II deported people from Mushki, Hatti and Halitu, and much further north (out of historic Assyrian range) there is a 7th-century Urartian establishment at Altintepe.<sup>56</sup> This and the Cimmerian intrusion into Anatolia via Urartu invite us to think Median advance westwards natural. Late Assyrian control in the west centres on Cilicia Pedias and Syria (where Babylon proved to be the successor power), rather than in Melid (Malatya) or Tabal (the Nevshehir—Kayseri area). The Cimmerians had seen to that. But Cimmerian power—once great (one Assyrian oracle had even called their King *shar kishshati*)<sup>57</sup> and significant *inter alia* in Cappadocia directly and/or through collusion with Murgallu of Tabal-Melid<sup>58</sup>—had also collapsed, at much same time as Urartian.<sup>59</sup> There was space for Medes—and there is space in surviving source-material for imagination. The space was perhaps also conceptually familiar. It is striking that 7th-century Assyrian texts can speak of Cimmerian *bel alani*,<sup>60</sup> describe the grandson of Midas with the same title, and label the Cimmerian Lygdamis as ‘king of mountains and Gutium’:<sup>61</sup> it is as though Anatolia west of the Euphrates seemed to be a deutero-Zagros.

(5) Where there was not space was in Lydia (a power which contributed to the Cimmerians’ demise). Fighting ended by treaty, circumstantially attributed to Babylonian and Cilician mediation, is a plausible scenario (Herodotus 1. 74). From a western perspective Medes were readily seen as ersatz-Cimmerians (just as Assyrians saw Anatolian Cimmerians as ersatz-Zagros dwellers): hence the concept of *medismos* and the ‘Median’ enemy, already discussed. The

<sup>56</sup> Deportations: HChI 128. Altintepe: Summers 1993, 89–95.

<sup>57</sup> ABL 1391 + 679, with Ivanchik 1993, 100.

<sup>58</sup> Ishtar Temple Inscription 138ff. (Thompson and Mallowan 1933, 88 [text], 96 [trans.]; A. Fuchs, in Borger 1996, 284–85 [text], 294–95 [trans.]).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Kuhrt 1987/90; Sulimirski and Taylor 1991, 559; Ivanchik 1993. The latest Assyrian evidence—Assurbanipal fighting Lygdamis’s son Sandakšatru post-635 BC—seems to be Streck 1913, 283 = Borger 1996, 201f. (text only). Diakonoff (2000, 229) postulates a surviving small Cimmerian enclave in Anatolia or the Zagros as late as ca. 540 BC (his date for *Jeremiah* 25. 25).

<sup>60</sup> Streck 1916, 21 (Rassam ii 107ff.); Borger 1996, 31 (text), 219 (trans.).

<sup>61</sup> Starr 1990, no. 13. Ishtar Temple Inscription 142f.: see A. Fuchs, in Borger 1996, 284–88 (text), 294–95 (trans.). (The older reading ‘King of the Saka and Gutium’—Thompson and Mallowan 1933, 88—has long been abandoned.) Elsewhere he is king of the Ummanmanda (Streck 1916, 283; BM 122616+ = Borger 1996, 199f.) and ‘seed of *halgati*’ (Ishtar Temple Inscription l.c.; Annals J, Stück 6 = BM 121027 + 123410: Borger 1996, 196 [text], 251 [trans.]), understood as ‘nomad’ in *AHw* 313b and ‘accursed, rebellious’ in CAD *s.v. zer halgati*, but interpreted by Lanfranchi (2001/2, 100) as ‘seed of the (people who will be) destroyed (by Enlil)’. Lanfranchi stresses that Assyrian hostility to Cimmerians matches that of Greeks in its intensity.

five-year war might even resemble Median actions in 614–610 BC—intermittent incursions, leaving a legacy of alarm about enemies who appear across an eastern border, but are perhaps not to be imagined as permanently resident on or along it. Indeed the sort of *horror Medorum* also exemplified in Isaiah's feverish fantasy of bow-bearing Medes who care nothing for gold and silver, only the slaughter of young men and unborn children (13. 18) may be so much more appropriate as a response to such a scenario as to be positive evidence in its favour. What else then, finally, can be said about that border and the nature of Median presence east of it?

(6) Rollinger, while accepting a Lydian war and Lydo-Median treaty, questions the Halys frontier, arguing that Herodotus is unclear on the actual geography and retrojects an Achaemenid geopolitical concept connected with the Royal Road.<sup>62</sup> This is problematic for those who believe, with French, that the Royal Road did not cross the Halys.<sup>63</sup> French defends his route with an unacceptable translation of Herodotus (and a rather arbitrary placing of the Cappadocian border), but a conventional northern route is certainly about nine parasangs too long from Sardis to the Halys, so this old problem remains at an impasse (see Appendix 2). But a twofold answer can be posed to Rollinger. (a) We know north-western Cilicia bordered Lydia at the time of Neriglissar's campaigns in the region in the early 550s BC (ABC 6. 23f.): there is no conflict with the implications of the Medo-Lydian 'Halys' boundary.<sup>64</sup> (b) For those entering central Anatolia from Urartu along the Erzincan-Sivas route (as Medes could well have done) the Halys is literally a line to be crossed. But even those travelling west from the old Urartian Van-Elazig highway<sup>65</sup> might, after crossing the mountains to Kayseri, hear talk of the nearby great river flowing to the northern sea and feel that it helped to define a stage in the longer journey towards Lydia.

(7) In picturing conditions east of this frontier zone one component (as we have seen) is a view of the Medes as a comparatively mobile—one might say Scythoid—military proposition. This view is, of course, entirely consonant with the implications of Vogelsang's important wider investigation of the cultural components in the genesis of the Achaemenid empire;<sup>66</sup> and it suits the image of absentee rule postulated in Herodotus 1. 134. There is, however, a further component which has to be fitted in. This in turn comes in two parts: (a) Herodotus' description of the initial target of Croesus' military operations

<sup>62</sup> Rollinger 2003.

<sup>63</sup> French 1998.

<sup>64</sup> The suggestion (Högemann 1992, 114) that the Medes incited Appuwašu against Babylon (prompting Neriglissar's response) presupposes Median engagement in the area but, being itself a speculation, cannot prove anything in our present context.

<sup>65</sup> Sevin 1988; 1991.

<sup>66</sup> Vogelsang 1992.



across the River Halys, and (b) the huge fortified *enceinte* with associated internal buildings at Kerkenes Dag. Summers has argued that we should identify these two elements but, whether or not we do so, each has to be taken into account as part of a putative central Anatolian Median imperial landscape.<sup>67</sup>

For Herodotus Croesus' target is a Cappadocian region called Pterie which is associated with Συρίων κλήροι, the πόλις τῶν Πτερίων, and περιοικίδες αὐτῆς [sc. πόλεως τῶν Πτερίων πόλεις]. How should we envisage the situation? (1) It seems rather unlikely that *kleroi* is used as a purely casual alternative for *χώρη* or *γῆν*, so it is quite possible that Herodotus' source knew there was something distinctive about local land-holding, even if we cannot tell exactly what it was.<sup>68</sup> (2) Herodotean usage does not demand that the relationship of the *perioikides poleis* to the 'city of the Pterians' involves the type of subordination often associated with perioecic status.<sup>69</sup> Still, given a region named 'Pterie' and something that Herodotus firmly calls 'the' city of the Pterians, it is tempting to regard the *perioikides poleis* as a categorically different part of the region—provided that the region is sufficiently large for this to be meaningful. The alternative is to identify Pteria (the region) as little more than the immediate territory of the city of the Pterians, and assume that the *perioikides poleis* (and some of the Syrians' *kleroi*) lie outside it: that would make a purely geographical understanding of the phrase more probable. Either way the description would neither require nor exclude the possibility that the inhabitants of the *perioikides poleis* were ethnically distinct from Pterians. (3) As a result of Croesus' campaign the 'city of the Pterians' is enslaved (ἠνδραποδίσσατο), the perioecic cities may be,<sup>70</sup> and the Syrians are made ἀνάστατοι. The different descriptions mirror the difference between *poleis* and *kleroi*. There is nothing to require that we identify Pterians and Syrians—and nothing to require the opposite (not least because neither ἀνδραποδίζεσθαι nor ἀναστάτους ποιεῖν is peculiar to, respectively, cities and non-urban populations).<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Summers 1997; 2000. Location of Pteria at Kerkenes was envisaged by Przeworski 1929, immediately after the discovery of the site. Other suggestions are listed in Radke 1959; Kirsten 1959. *The Barrington Atlas* puts Pteria at Kerkenes on Map 63 (S. Mitchell), but at Egrikale (80 km south of Sinope) on Map 87 (T. Sinclair), citing Radke 1959. Högemann (1992, 250 n. 33) opts tentatively for the Kayseri region—not in principle unreasonable.

<sup>68</sup> Högemann (1992, 148 n. 35, 250 n. 33) suggests the 'Syrians' are inhabitants of the heartland Assyria deported westwards by the Medes as 'Grenzbauern'.

<sup>69</sup> Herodotus' only other use of *perioikis* (9. 115) does not have more than geographical sense; and he uses *perioikos* thus as well.

<sup>70</sup> Herodotus writes: εἶλε μὲν τῶν Πτερίων τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἠνδραποδίσσατο, εἶλε δὲ τὰς περιοικίδας αὐτῆς πάσας, Συρίους τε οὐδὲν ἐόντας αἰτίους ἀναστάτους ἐποίησε. Is this phrasing meant to distinguish the fate of the two sets of cities? Or is it primarily intended as a neater alternative to εἶλε μὲν τῶν Πτερίων τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὰς περιοικίδας αὐτῆς πάσας καὶ ἠνδραποδίσσατο or εἶλε μὲν καὶ ἠνδραποδίσσατο τῶν Πτερίων τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὰς περιοικίδας αὐτῆς πάσας, and therefore equivalent to 'he captured the city of the Pterians and enslaved it (the same fate befell the *perioikides poleis*) and dispossessed the Syrians . . .'?

<sup>71</sup> In Herodotean usage ἀνάστατος is not confined to depopulation of cities: cf. 1. 97. 3 (villages, *khore*), 7. 118 (houses).

(4) The Syrians are picked out as οὐδὲν ἐόντας αἰτίους—presumably in the sense that Croesus' quarrel was with Cyrus and had nothing to do with the Syrians. The point might be sharper if 'Pterians' were not Syrians but more direct representatives of Cyrus' power, but this is not essential.

In the end, then, we cannot demonstrate that Herodotus is describing a situation in which (for example) an alien group (Pterians) have taken over a region and imposed themselves upon the native Syrian (Cappadocian) population, confiscating their land and then re-assigning it to them on some more precarious basis—though at each stage we *could* choose to read his text in such a way. If we did so read it, we might be tempted to see the 'Pterians' as Medes.<sup>72</sup> But perhaps that would in any case be wrong. If the Pterians were Medes, why not say so? And, in any case, a scenario in which (whatever the precise local boundaries and power-relations) the Medes themselves are—as a permanently settled element—absent accords better with the requirements of Herodotus 1. 134.

The programme of survey and selective excavation undertaken by Geoffrey Summers at Kerkenes Dag has introduced a (literally) massive new element into the situation.<sup>73</sup> Within a 7 km *enceinte* of Anatolian aspect (especially, but not solely, as regards the glacis surrounding the so-called Cappadocian Gate)<sup>74</sup> are constructions which have an Iranian allure in the shape of columned halls reminiscent of Nush-i Jan and Godin Tepe. There are public, residential and storage buildings, so it is a secular centre, not a purely ritual one. This combination of features certainly seems appropriate to the Anatolian edge of a Median empire. So, too, perhaps is the (at first sight) disconcerting conviction of the excavator that climatic conditions would have ensured the place was not a residence of choice during the winter: here was a place of secure refuge but also (at least for anyone allowed to approach it) intimidating strength, available for use by a comparatively large transient population—for example, a Median force sent annually to assert suzerainty over (collect dues from?) the open agricultural lands to the south and more mountainous regions to the north, and to engage in predatory raiding beyond the boundaries of acknowledged hegemony.<sup>75</sup> Not that this is the only possible model, even

<sup>72</sup> Summers 2000, 70.

<sup>73</sup> Summers 1997; 2000; and <http://www.metu.edu.tr/home/wwwkerk/index.html>, an exemplary web-site which includes the latest seasonal report.

<sup>74</sup> Summers 2000, 71. It is worth noting that the *enceinte* is larger than Boghaz Köy (Hattuša). The extent and nature of intra-mural building is not readily paralleled in an Anatolian context (Summers 2000, 69) and also has some non-Mesopotamian features (Summers 2000, 71 n. 20).

<sup>75</sup> Or even, initially, to conduct the war with Lydia, if one favours (as Summers now does) a foundation-date prior to 585 BC. The location of the site precisely at the point where a rugged mountain-landscape gives way to the plain of northern Cappadocia (with distant views of Erciyas Dag) is one of its most striking features.

granted the hypothesis of seasonal occupation. Perhaps, instead, the site was primarily the creation of a powerful Cappadocian vassal and vicegerent of the Median *capo dei capi* who had some other base (further south) for winter use. On this hypothesis it is the Cappadocian ruler, not the Median king, who was primarily engaging in a nomadic assertion of suzerainty, though development of the site would have presupposed the latter's complaisance—and even practical assistance (hence elements of Iranian architecture inside what might otherwise have been inspired by a visit to Boghaz Köy, a site still partially occupied in the Iron Age)—and its resources would have been available to any passing Median horde. A perfect understanding of the site's operation may still elude us. The crucial point is that its creation implies the exercise of considerable power by someone and that it would be a quite unnecessarily uneconomical approach to the evidence to attribute that power entirely to an otherwise entirely unknown, local and independent central Anatolian potentate or polity rather than seeing it as derived from or enabled by the Median king.<sup>76</sup>

All of this is true irrespective of whether Kerkenes is 'the city of the Pterians'—always assuming that a chronological location of the (single-period) site within the first half of the 6th-century is justified independently of that assumption. Apart from neatness and the pleasure of nailing an elusive toponym to the map, the identification would tend to favour the Cappadocian vassal-potentate model (in view of the absence of Medes from Herodotus' picture of the local circumstances). It might also lead one to form a view of what Herodotus' source had in mind in speaking of (a) Pteria and the city of the Pterians and (b) the Syrians' *kleroi*. Kerkenes was city-like by virtue of size and fortification, but it only functioned as a centre of power on a seasonal basis and for the population spread out across the landscape to the south the only real focus of identity was their individual parcels of land. The description is an attempt to capture in Greek terms a sharp disjunction between precarious and disempowered agricultural settlement and the physical manifestation of a more or less distant politico-military authority. But this does, admittedly, leave one asking uneasily what (and where) are the *poleis perioikides*.

To deny the identification removes such difficulties, but only in the sense that without a specific hypothesis (to which all of Herodotus' details might be asked to conform) there are no opportunities for mismatch. As things currently stand, Summers' case for the identification is, of course, strongly suggestive

<sup>76</sup> Roaf's objection (2003) to the idea that Kerkenes was part of an imperial enterprise—*viz.* that a local Parthian chief built a bigger *enceinte* at Qal'eh-i Yazdigird—simply draws attention to the varied characteristics of imperial landscapes (*cf.* Keall 1994). Apparent Median architectural features could travel far to the west before there was any question of a Median empire (*cf.* Roaf 1995 on Assyrian-period Tell Jemmeh), though the context was still a (neo-Assyrian) imperialist one.

rather than definitively compelling. But any suggestion that Herodotus' description of the location of Pterie and the contents of a Giessen papyrus might point to a serious alternative must, I think, be rejected—the alternative is scarcely viable, for the idea that Croesus and Cyrus confronted one another somewhere in the coastal plain east of Sinope or the mountains immediately to the south is certainly no less intrinsically awkward than anything implied by the Pteria-Kerkenes identification (see Appendix 3). Perhaps Pteria *was* elsewhere (on a broad interpretation of the significance of the Halys as an aspect of the frontier—see above—the general vicinity of Kayseri might come into question),<sup>77</sup> perhaps further investigation at Kerkenes will come up with a definitive proof. One can only reiterate that, since the Herodotean Pteria and Kerkenes are separately reconcilable with a Median empire stretching into central Anatolia, it is in the current context comparatively unimportant whether they are one place or two.

#### IV. Conclusion

Sancisi-Weerdenburg's sceptical engagement with the Median empire was a distinctive and valuable strand in the rich skein of archaeological and historical study of Media and the Medes which stretches from the Nush-i Jan and Godin Tepe excavations to the present day and is so well represented by the volume edited by Lanfranchi, Roaf and Rollinger.<sup>78</sup> The conclusion must be that in contemplating the outreach of power (at least westwards) from a centre in north-western Iran we are not dealing with an illusion. Perhaps the term 'empire' should be avoided lest people be misled by false equivocation with the neo-Assyrian, Babylonian or (developed) Achaemenid Persian empires. Historians of classical Greece are accustomed to use the word 'hegemony' when addressing cases of unequal power-relations between an individual city-state and smaller or larger numbers of similar states within its political ambit where they detect inadequate institutional structure or sense of stability to justify talk of empire. Whether the inherent implication of leadership of other states against some real or potential outsider is quite appropriate to post-610 BC Media is perhaps doubtful. One has a stronger sense of the seizure of power because a power-vacuum presented itself and to do so suited a cultural taste—one relatively newly emerged and therefore particularly energising—for military self-expression than of the assertion and pursuit of a supposed shared

<sup>77</sup> Högemann 1992, 250 n. 33. Given that Diod. 9. 31 speaks of Cyrus coming to τὰ τῆς Καππαδοκίας στενά in response to Croesus' attack one might even wonder about the region around French's candidate (1998) for the μέγα φυλακτήριον on the Phrygian-Cappadocian border in Hdt. 5. 52.

<sup>78</sup> Lanfranchi *et al.* 2003. The existence of this important volume has allowed me to restrict citation of earlier literature on various Median, Assyrian and Urartian topics.

agenda. Rather than hegemony, therefore, let us perhaps speak of ‘domination’. Above all, let us reaffirm the importance of the Median interlude in creating conditions from which other Iranians—heirs both to the Scytho-Median and to a more Mesopotamian (and literate) state-model—would create the largest empire (properly so-called) the Near Eastern and Western worlds had yet seen.

*Appendix 1: Herodotus 1. 134. 3*

1. The final sentence (προέβαινε γὰρ δὴ τὸ ἔθνος ἄρχον τε καὶ ἐπιτροπεύον) must be about the Medes (or the situation obtaining during their empire), not the Persians: this is clear from the tense of προέβαινε which contrasts tellingly with τιμῶσι and the fact that the sentence is about the exercise of rule, not the dispensation of honour.<sup>79</sup> The switch of attention from the Medes in the first sentence (ἐπὶ δὲ Μήδων . . . . . ἐχομένων) to the Persians in the second (κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ οἱ Πέρσαι τιμῶσι) and then back to the Median situation in the third is a little awkward. But it is one of those awkwardnesses which seem worse the more one thinks about them but would not much puzzle the ordinary reader, and I am not sure that *in itself* it is enough to authorise either Stein’s deletion of the comment on the Persians<sup>80</sup> or the adoption of a repunctuation and amendment (δὴ for δὲ) designed to subordinate it.<sup>81</sup> I stress ‘in itself’: the problem may not be so much the switching of focus as the unclarity of expression of the final sentence.

2. Given the general context and the specific pairing of ἄρχον τε καὶ ἐπιτροπεύον it seems very improbable that ἐπιτροπεύειν does not carry the overtone of rule for someone else—for on what other basis could ἄρχον τε καὶ ἐπιτροπεύον be anything but pointless repetition? In Herodotus the verb always means ‘to rule on behalf of’, not ‘to delegate’ (i.e. cause someone else to rule on one’s own behalf), so τὸ ἔθνος cannot mean ‘the Medes’, because, though they may have delegated, they did not rule on behalf of someone else.<sup>82</sup> Since the previous sentence makes the Median scheme one of multiple ἔθνεα, it is very difficult to take ἔθνος as a way of describing the Median *arkhe* as a whole. So, if ἔθνος cannot designate the Medes or the empire as a whole it must refer to an ἔθνος within the empire. But then further problems arise.

(a) We should expect the sentence to making a statement valid for any non-Median ἔθνος, but, as it stands, τὸ ἔθνος can hardly simply be translated as ‘each ἔθνος’ or ‘any particular ἔθνος’.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Rawlinson (1880, 260), Cary (1901, 61) and Waterfield (1998, 62) nonetheless make the final sentence apply to Persians not Medes (Rawlinson and Waterfield also translate προέβαινε as though it were a present tense), and Sayce (1883, 81) regards this as an option.

<sup>80</sup> Stein 1901, 161.

<sup>81</sup> Stein 1883, 159f.; Macaulay 1904, 69, 111; Legrand 1946, 152 (see below, section 3). The relocation of the contents of either the last sentence (de Selincourt 1972, 97) or the penultimate one (Powell 1949, 81) to the start of the first sentence is presumably another reaction to unease on this score.

<sup>82</sup> Contrast: LSJ *s.v.*; Stein 1883, 159f.; Sayce 1883, 81 (second translation); Macaulay 1904, 69, 111; Godley 1921, 175; Högemann 1992, 100, who mistreat the verb and equate *ethnos* with the Medes. Legrand 1946, 152 (*app. crit.*) states the objection clearly.

<sup>83</sup> Legrand 1946, 152 correctly notes this.

(b) What does προέβαινε mean? Given προβαίνοντες in 134. 2 (and, of course, the general context) we naturally take it to allude to a series.<sup>84</sup> We might inelegantly render the sentence thus: ‘the ἔθνος went-on-to-the-next-stage-in-the-series of ruling (for itself) and governing (for others)’; but it is hard to persuade oneself that the idea of series in προβαίνειν is quite powerful enough by itself to provide the idea of ‘eachness’, i.e. to turn ‘the ἔθνος’ into ‘each ἔθνος in the series’. On the contrary, in the abstract the sentence means that ‘the’ ἔθνος kept going on to new stages in a series of (states of) ‘ruling and governing’—a proposition which does not make a lot of sense—not that there was a series of ἔθνεα each of which (in the same way) ruled and governed.

(c) In any case, what does it mean to say of any particular non-Median ἔθνος that it was both ruling (on its own account) and governing (for someone else)? The only answer I can see is that, while the Medes rule everyone altogether (συναπάντων)—so any rule by one ἔθνος of another that goes on within the system is *eo ipso* an example of delegated rule (because it is rule exercised by an ἔθνος which is itself ruled, and its exercise of that rule is authorised by the overarching power)—rule exercised by one ἔθνος over another is *also* conceived as having an existence apart from the fact of its authorisation by the overarching power. But, although this is consistent with the earlier description (and indeed could represent an interestingly distinctive additional aspect of the situation),<sup>85</sup> it is not clear that it is relevant just at this point. The point of the analogy must be that the Persians’ esteem for people diminishes with distance just the directness of Median rule over people diminished with distance, whereas the reading of the passage’s final sentence just suggested talks about something which is essentially *the same* everywhere in the system and actually says nothing about it from the Medes’ point of view at all.

3. This succession of difficulties makes one suspect the text is at fault. Stein deleted κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ οἱ Πέρσαι τιμῶσι and replaced ἄρχων with ἀρχόμενον.<sup>86</sup> The latter move gives the final sentence an interplay or ruling and *being ruled* which fits very nicely with the lengthier description in ἐπὶ δὲ Μήδων . . . . . ἐχομένων; but γάρ hardly seems to be the correct connective particle. But if one retains κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ οἱ Πέρσαι τιμῶσι while accepting ἀρχόμενον the final nine words are still not a perfect explanatory comment (γάρ) on the reference to the diminution of Persian esteem with distance. The repunctuation and amendment of δὲ to δὴ in κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον . . . . . τιμῶσι<sup>87</sup> do not really alter this (since the γάρ-sentence must still

<sup>84</sup> Sayce (1883, 81: ‘the nation continually made advances in ruling and administering’), Macaulay (1904, 111: ‘for each race extended forward thus their rule or their deputed authority’), Carey (1901, 61: ‘for that nation went on extending its government and guardianship’), Godley (1921, 175: ‘for according as the Median state advanced its domain further from home, such was the measure of its rule and suzerainty’). Marg (1973, 78: ‘denn den Vorrang hatte jeweils das Volk das herrschte und verwaltete’) and Högemann (1992, 100: ‘denn es hat ja das Medervolk ausgegriffen, indem es herrschte und Herrschaft in seinem Namen ausüben liess’) tried different approaches, but the end-results seem empty of sensible meaning (at least in context).

<sup>85</sup> How and Wells (1912, 115) were, in effect, putting a specific interpretation on this when they suggested that all the ἔθνεα paid tribute to Media but ruled their own dependents.

<sup>86</sup> Stein 1901, 161f. Compare Powell (1949, 81), who shifts the content of κατὰ . . . τιμῶσι earlier in the sentence and translates the final sentence as ‘for each nation in succession was both ruled and ruler’. Högemann (1992, 100f.) deletes the phrase without changing ἄρχων to ἀρχόμενον.

<sup>87</sup> Legrand 1946, 152; Macaulay 1904, 69, 111.

be explaining the comment about Persians, even if that comment is a grammatically subordinate part of the previous sentence rather than a sentence in its own right),<sup>88</sup> and we still have the problem that τὸ ἔθνος does not mean ‘each ἔθνος’. Legrand’s πάν τι ἔθνος<sup>89</sup> is meant to deal with that, but leaves all other problems unaffected. (His rendering, ‘car il’ y avait de peuple à peuple gradation dans le commandement et l’autorité déléguée’, says something reasonably pertinent, but not something that comes very easily out of the Greek.)

4. My feeling, therefore, is that the last nine words should either be obelised or deleted as a gloss: for the phrase as it stands does have the sort of congested, ill-formulated and slightly off-target quality which seems perfectly suitable to a marginal jotting.<sup>90</sup>

#### *Appendix 2: The Royal Road*

French’s identification of the route of the Royal Road (a crucial feature of which is that it does not cross the River Halys but runs alongside it near Avanos, west of Kayseri) depends *inter alia* on a new understanding of Herodotus 5. 52. 2. His continuous translation of the crucial passage runs thus:<sup>91</sup>

After Phrygia is reached the R. Halys, at which there are gates, which it is absolutely necessary to pass through and, (in doing so) in this manner, (it is absolutely necessary) to make the passage along the river; and (there is) a large guard post at this point. For the person crossing into Cappadocia and travelling through this country as far as the borders with Cilicia there are thirty less two staging posts. . . .

1. ἐκδέκεται δὲ ἐκ τῆς Φρυγίας ὁ Ἄλος ποταμός. French wants this to be consistent with Cappadocia having started some way west of the point at which the Halys impinges on the route.<sup>92</sup> (This is necessary to make the parasang-distance through Cappadocia fit.)<sup>93</sup> This sits ill with Herodotus’ use of ἐκδέκεσθαι in the sense of ‘follow after’ (1. 185. 6, 1. 204. 1, 4. 39. 1, 4. 41, 4. 99. 1, 6. 111. 1, 7. 211. 1), where in all cases the thing following clearly is to be imagined as following *immediately* after—as indeed one would expect from the word’s literal meaning.

2. διαβάντι δὲ ἐς τὴν Καππαδοκίαν. Encountered straight after διεκπερῶν τὸν ποταμόν, this phrase will be sore pressed not to mean ‘crossing (the river) into Cappadocia’. At one point French (revealingly?) treats it as meaning ‘for the person crossing Cappadocia’, which is plain wrong (since it ignores ἐς).<sup>94</sup> Later on the same page he speaks of the ‘figurative “to cross over into a country” (5. 52: διαβάντι δὲ ἐς τὴν Καππαδοκίαν)’. This is in a discussion of how Herodotus putatively got confused when writing 7. 26 (Xerxes’ army crossing the River Halys, διαβάντες τὸν Ἄλυν ποταμόν)—conflating this supposed figurative sense with the alleged sense of διεκπερῶν in 5. 52, ‘to pass

<sup>88</sup> This is no doubt why Stein, who had adopted the same amendment in 1883 (159f.), now chose to delete the phrase.

<sup>89</sup> Legrand 1946, 152.

<sup>90</sup> Powell (1949, 81), without providing any explanation, regarded all of the three sentences under discussion here as an interpolation; this seems excessive.

<sup>91</sup> French 1998, 27.

<sup>92</sup> French 1998, 16.

<sup>93</sup> Moreover the resulting location of the border has a somewhat arbitrary quality geographically speaking.

<sup>94</sup> French 1998, 16.

out through (sc. the Gates)' (on which see below)—not in a straight statement of what 5. 52 is supposed to mean. Later still we do get a correct rendering *en clair*<sup>95</sup>—and, however διεκπερᾶν is translated, the passage's implication that Cappadocia is entered at this point seems to me overwhelming.

3. ὁ Ἄλυς ποταμός, ἐπ' ᾧ πύλαι τε ἔπεισι, τὰς διεξελάσαι πᾶσα ἀνάγκη καὶ οὕτω διεκπερᾶν τὸν ποταμόν, καὶ φυλακτῆριον μέγα ἐπ' αὐτῷ.

3.1 We are (i) invited to take διεκπερᾶν in terms of passing out through, for example, the Straits of Gibraltar (4. 152. 2: Colaeus of Samos) and (ii) reminded that Herodotus speaks of gates (*cf.* above on Herodotus' alleged use of the verb to mean 'pass out through [sc. the Gates]'). But, it is the river that is the object of διεκπερᾶν, not the gates (for which we have διεξελάσαι), so the force of (ii) is small. What about (i) (insofar as it is not affected by [ii]—a river not being *prima facie* the same as a Strait, unless perhaps you are travelling along it to its mouth)? The other Herodotean use is 3. 4. 3, which is about crossing a desert (Cambyses and Sinai), so is also not immediately parallel to a river. In both cases, of course, the essential force of the verb is 'get right through to the other side', and in both cases the stress involved in διεκ- is contextually important. It is also contextually important to Herodotus in 5. 52 (it goes along with διεξελάσαι πᾶσα ἀνάγκη). The continuous translation ('make the passage along the river') gives the game away: it is really very unlikely that διεκπερᾶν ποταμόν can signify passing *along* a river.

3.2 The φυλακτῆριον is over/on the river (αὐτῷ), not the gates (for which αὐτάις would be required). 'At this point' in French's continuous translation is an indefensible sleight-of-hand; and, although he might claim that the guard-post was broadly speaking on the river as well as at the gates, if it is passing through the gates that matters, it would be an odd way for Herodotus to put things. (The parallelism of ἐπ' ᾧ and ἐπ' αὐτῷ only underlines the point.)

4. French believes Xerxes' route in 481 (7. 26) was the same as the Royal Road, but is forced to admit that 7. 26 'makes no sense' (if 5. 50f. means what he thinks it means), compelling us to make a 'modification' of the meaning of διαβαίνειν or to re-organise and emend the passage. It seems to me that since 5. 50f. cannot reasonably mean what French wants but *does* on the face of it cohere with 7. 26, the economical conclusion is that French is wrong about the line of the Royal Road.

5. I freely concede (a) that French's southern route, as a route from Sardis to the Euphrates, is in itself attractive and (b) that a northern route (crossing the Halys east of Ankara) *prima facie* requires a second crossing of the Halys if it is to go through Cilicia (something Herodotus fails to mention), and involves a distance from Sardis to the Halys east of Ankara which exceeds that given by Herodotus by a significant margin (of the order of nine parasangs).<sup>96</sup> I merely insist that, if French's route is to be accepted as a matter of fact, it will have to be on the understanding that Herodotus' description of it does not match reality. In other words, any view of the route between Sardis and the Euphrates involves Herodotus getting something wrong. (This also goes for his estimate of the distance Ephesus-Sardis as 540 stades [54. 2].)

<sup>95</sup> French 1998, 27.

<sup>96</sup> After the Halys one can find a route back to Kayseri (to rejoin French's route) which matches Herodotus' figures perfectly.



*Appendix 3: The Location of Pteria*

It may be helpful to spell out some facts (and more uncertainties) about three texts bearing on the location of Pteria.

1. 'Pteria is the strongest [part?] of Cappadocia κατὰ Σινώπην πόλιν τὴν ἐν Εὐξείνῳ πόντῳ μάλιστά κη κειμένην' (1. 76). The closest parallels for κατὰ . . . μάλιστά κη are 2. 75. 1 (ἔστι δὲ χῶρος τῆς Αραβίης κατὰ Βουτῶν πόλιν μάλιστά κη κείμενος) and 2. 148. 1 (λαβύρινθον ὀλίγον ὑπὲρ τῆς λίμνης τῆς Μοίριος κατὰ Κροκοδείλων καλεομένην πόλιν μάλιστά κη κείμενον). In both cases the two places in question are very close to one another,<sup>97</sup> so on the face of it the parallels support the view that Pteria was close to Sinope. But it may be fortuitous that the only other times Herodotus says something is 'roughly *kata*' somewhere else are ones involving small distances. Powell translates it as 'in a line with' in all these three passages,<sup>98</sup> associating the usage with κατὰ = 'opposite' rather than = 'near', presumably because one cannot reasonably speak of somewhere being 'approximately near' to somewhere else.<sup>99</sup> Once one has conceded this, there is no intrinsic reason to limit the distances involved, providing that sense can be made of κατὰ, and in the case of Sinope it surely can, given that Sinope marks (for Herodotus) the northern end of a direct line across Anatolia from 'mountain Cilicia', which incidentally is itself roughly (μάλιστά κη) opposite (ἀντί) this time) Egypt (2. 34. 2).

2. Stephanus *s.v.* Πτέριον reads thus: Πτέριον πόλις Μήδων. τίνες δὲ πτερὰ οὐδέτερος τὴν ἀκρόπολιν Βαβυλῶνος. λέγεται δὲ καὶ θηλυκῶς ἡ Πτερία. ἔστι καὶ Πτερία πόλις Σινώπης. τὸ ἔθνικόν τῆς Μηδικῆς Πτερηνός, τῆς δ' ἐν τῇ Σινώπῃ Πτερίος.

Since Πτερηνός is not Herodotean and Herodotus does not call Pteria Median, it is natural to infer the existence of another source speaking of the Pterienoi of (Median) Pterion. There is no way of telling whether this Median Pterion was or was not identical with the Herodotean one and/or Stephanus' own Sinopean Pteria. Sinopean Pteria itself could perfectly well result from a misreading of Herodotus, but the Giessen papyrus (below)—obscure though it is—can be adduced as an argument that this is not the case, i.e. that (here too) Stephanus is reflecting a text other than Herodotus.<sup>100</sup>

3. PbuG 40 (*olim* P. Giess. 307b = Hellenicus 4 F 201 bis), republished in 1994,<sup>101</sup> contains two badly preserved columns from what is assumed to be a scholiast (on Simonides?). Column 2, as restored, mentions Pteria three times in three lines (in one case—perhaps a parenthetic gloss on the first occurrence of the name—described, according to tentative supplements, as ἡ Μή[δων πόλις] or ἡ μη[τρόπολις]), refers to someone sailing to Karussa in the next line, and has οἱ ἐν Περσίδι καὶ οἱ ἄλλῃ in the line after that. Karussa perhaps = Karousa (modern Gerseh), a place on the Black Sea 150 stades south-east of Sinope (*cf.* Ps.-Scylax 89, Arrian *PE* 14 and other periplous-texts; it also appears in the Athenian Tribute Quota Lists). The fact that the reference sits between allusions to Pteria and the allusion to people in Persia does

<sup>97</sup> *Cf.* Lloyd 1975/88.

<sup>98</sup> Powell 1938 *s.v.* κατὰ; 1949, 38; so too Macaulay 1904, 37 (at 109 he rightly remarks that Sinope is 50 miles [80 km] west of the Halys, so that if Pteria is east of the river it cannot in any case be 'near' Sinope); de Selincourt 1972, 71; Waterfield 1998, 34.

<sup>99</sup> Legrand (1946, 79: 'est située à peu près vers la ville de S.') evidently thought otherwise. Others who (effectively) translate κατὰ as 'near' omit or mistranslate μάλιστά κη: Rawlinson 1880, 202; Sayce 1883, 45; Stein 1901, 95; Godley 1921, 95. Cary (1901, 93) and Marg (1973, 42) produce non-committal translations.

<sup>100</sup> The brief references to Pterion/Pteria in Herodian *peri katholikes prosodias* 299, 359 add nothing to what appears in Stephanus.

<sup>101</sup> Kuhlmann 1994.

perhaps make it difficult simply to say either (a) that the reference to Karussa belongs to some different scholiastic train of thought from the one about Pteria or (b) that the Pteria in question is simply Stephanus' supposed Sinopean one and none of the passage has anything to do with Cyrus and Croesus; and in any case the appearance both before and after the lines already mentioned of the phrase ἱερὸν ἀκρεμόνα ('holy bough') suggests that the entire section of which our passage is part may be part of a single comment. But this does not make comprehension any easier. The length of the lines is unclear and Kuhlmann rightly says that the content of our column 'remains dark'. It serves as an indication that Sinopean Pteria could be a location on or near the Black Sea (*cf.* §2) but does not convince me that this is where the armies of Croesus and Cyrus confronted one another. (I would add that the impression created by the truncated preserved lines that 'the people in Persia and those elsewhere' sailed to Karussa seems to put before us a scenario too peculiar to be capable of casting light on our problem. But no doubt this would be called a *petitio principii* by those determined to position Pteria near Sinope.) So, unless a Pteria located near the mouth of the Halys gave its name to a huge and geographically diverse region stretching as far as Kerkenes or indeed even further (something which Herodotus failed to understand), I cannot see any way of reconciling the papyrus with the Herodotean evidence.

#### *Addendum*

Since the paper was submitted several new articles have appeared based on new findings. The Gordion team, using C 14 analysis, has dated the Gordion destruction level to between 830 and 800 BC (S.W. Manning *et al.*, 'Anatolian Tree Rings and a New Chronology for the East Mediterranean Bronze-Iron Ages'. *Science* 294, 2532–35). Some scholars disagree (O.W. Muscarella, 'The Date of the Destruction of the Early Phrygian Period at Gordion'. *Ancient West & East* 2.2 [2003], 225–52; D.J. Keenan, 'Radiocarbon Dates from Iron Age Gordion'. *Ancient West & East* 3.1 [2004], 100–03). The last two years of excavation at Kerkenes Dag have demonstrated that the city was most probably Phrygian (G.D. Summers and F. Summers, 'The Kerkenes Project'. *Anatolian Archaeology* 9 [2003], 22–24; G.D. Summers, F. Summers and S. Branting, 'Megarons and Associated Structures at Kerkenes Dag: An Interim Report'. *Anatolia Antiqua* XII [2004], 7–41). A Median identity for Kerkenes Dag has also been rejected by R. Rollinger ('Kerkenes Dag and the Median Empire'. In Lanfranchi *et al.* 2003, 321–26). The contents of two further papers by Rollinger, 'The Median "Empire", the end of Urartu and Cyrus the Great's campaign in 547' and 'Das Phantom des Medischen "Grossreichs" und die Behistun-Inschrift' ([www.achemenet.com/ressources/souspresse/annonces/annonces.htm](http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/souspresse/annonces/annonces.htm)) are also relevant—and reconcilable with the thrust of the present paper. Deioces is the subject of a brief new monograph: M. Meier *et al.*, *Deiokes, König der Meder* (Stuttgart 2004).

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*ABL* R.F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters* (Chicago 1892–1914)  
*AchHist* *Achaemenid History* I–VIII (Leiden 1987–1994)  
*AJA* *American Journal of Archaeology*  
*AMI* *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*  
*ANET* J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed.: Princeton 1969)  
*AnSt* *Anatolian Studies*  
*BCSMS* *Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies*  
*CAD* *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago 1956–)  
*DB* Darius Behistun Inscription: see R.G. Kent, *Old Persian* (New Haven 1953) or R. Schmitt, *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great: Old Persian Text* (London 1991) or P. Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide* (Paris 1997)  
*HChI* F.W. König, *Handbuch der chaldäischen Inschriften* (Graz 1957)  
*IEJ* *Israel Exploration Journal*  
*IrAnt* *Iranica Antiqua*  
*JNES* *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*  
*LAA* *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*  
*NABU* *Notices assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires*  
*RA* *Revue d'Assyriologie*  
*RC* C.B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven/Prague 1934)  
*RLA* *Real-Lexikon der Assyriologie* (Berlin 1932–)  
*SAAB* *State Archives of Assyria: Bulletin*  
*VDI* *Vestnik drevnei istorii*  
*WdO* *Welt des Orients*  
*ZA* *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*

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