Ecology, History, and the Other in Ancient Greece

by

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For my cohort

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Abstract

Ecology, History, and the Other in Ancient Greece reads for the environment in three Greek descriptions of other places and their inhabitants: Herodotus's fifth century BCE *Histories*, Megasthenes' c. 300 BCE *Indika*, and Agatharchides' c. 150 BCE *On the Red Sea*.

Chapter 1 begins by investigating the meaning of *physis* and *natura* in Greek and Roman philosophical texts, arguing that ancient authors include humans within their concept of nature and generally celebrate human activity in the world. I conclude this chapter by proposing ancient ethnography as a source of Greek ecological thinking. In chapter 2 I introduce the three ethnographers under consideration. While ancient ethnographies have often been dismissed as ill-suited to the histories in which they are usually embedded, I argue that Greek ethnographers engage in historical inquiry by presenting geographically distant Others as remnants of their own distant past, and use the *bios*, "way of life," of Others to imagine earlier stages of Greek development.

Chapters 3 and 4 present specific ecological readings of Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides, the first focusing on health and the second on warfare. Ethnic Others who practice pastoralism or hunter-gathering rather than agriculture often enjoy superior health and material contentment, a fact that criticizes the tendency of settled agriculturalism to promote illness, warfare, and greed. I conclude these chapters by arguing that the *Indika* and *On the Red Sea* respond to environmental problems posed in Herodotus's *Histories*, and that these Hellenistic texts criticize the elephant-hunting expeditions of Megasthenes' and Agatharchides' royal patrons.

In conclusion, chapters 5 and 6 consider the meanings that arise from Greek ethnographers' focus on the *bios* of Others. Arresting geographically distant Others at an earlier stage of development allows readers to consider alternate ecologies and engage in self-critique, but this arrest also instrumentalizes Others and denies them the complexity of representation that Greeks and less-distant non-Greeks enjoy. The most potent scenes for generating ecological self-critique, those in which an Other rejects the pleasures of Greek civilization, are easy for readers to dismiss as extreme. The conditions that produce ecological reflection are also those that frustrate its application.

Chapter 1: Classical Antiquity without Nature

How did people in classical antiquity conceive of nature and their relationship with the natural world? Were they good or bad environmentalists? In this chapter, I survey the history of these questions within classical studies, the methodological problems with the way they have been asked, and argue that scholars would benefit from using "ecology" instead of "nature" to frame their environmental readings of ancient texts. Finally, I suggest ethnography as a place to turn for ancient theories of human ecological behaviors and ethics.

Classics and the Environment

Environmental history has its roots in the natural history of the early modern period and the historical geography of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,[1] but widespread anxiety about climate change, pollution, and the depletion of natural resources have led late twentieth and early twenty-first century scholars to investigate the relationship between human beings and the rest of nature with renewed vigor. Some environmental historians today embrace the history of ideas of nature within the scope of their discipline,[2] but "environmental history" still generally refers to the history of physical environmental realities and their effects on human beings.[3]

By contrast, ecocriticism, which dates to the late 1970s and early 1980s,[4] treats nature as

[1] Squatriti 2007, 3.
[2] *ibidem*; Winiwarter 2007, 5.
[3] E.g. Sallares 1991, Horden and Purcell 2000, Thommen 2012.
[4] Squatriti 2007, 1; Glotfelty 1996, xvii.

a literary and intellectual construction. In this sense, "ecocriticism" is a shorthand term for intellectual environmental history, how human beings value and conceive of nature over time. But ecocritics also see their field as the environmentalist equivalent critical race studies, and queer theory, and like politically motivated theorists from those schools often voice their hopes, fears, and opinions about current events in their analysis of "the relationship between literature and the physical environment."[5]

Ecocritics who read literature not only "for" the environment, but also "on behalf of" the environment in a political fashion are perhaps no longer doing historical work, since they have shifted their focus from describing ancient environmental thinking to mobilizing it for environmentalist projects. They might agree with Melissa Lane in the introduction to *Eco-Republic*, her environmental reading of Plato's *Republic*, that "an intuitive and imaginative model inspired by the ancients is what [we] seek to provide."[6] Even if scholars do not pursue this explicitly political method, it is impossible to entirely separate environmental history and intellectual environmental history from political concerns and interpretations; in the academy of the industrialized world, all scholarship that reads for the environment is in some sense reading on its behalf, or will be perceived as so doing by readers. Whether scholars consider environmental realia of the past or, as ecocritics, the relationship between literature and the environment, environmental readings of the past, even the distant past, are now colored by if not in direct dialogue with current debates about the future of humanity and other forms of life on a planet which is rapidly changing as the result of human activity.

[5] Glotfelty 1996, xviii. As Saunders 2006 says, ecocriticism is still unsure of its canon. Kroeber 1994 outlines one lineage, Coupe 2000 another.
[6] Lane 2011, 6.

Ecocriticism is only starting to take root in classical studies,[7] but classical antiquity has played an important role in the ecocritical projects of others. In particular, historians have tended to cast the ancient Greeks and Romans in one of two lights, either as prelapsarian nature lovers away from whose good example we have sadly fallen, or as decadent, proto-industrialist ecocriminals. The Medieval historian Lynn White Jr. famously articulated the first stereotype in his seminal article, "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," which blames Christianity and its dominion theology for the environmental degradation of the past centuries, praises Greco-Roman paganism, and offers St. Francis of Assisi as an alternate exemplum. Of Greco-Roman paganism, he says:

> "In Antiquity every tree, every spring, every stream, every hill had its own *genius loci*, its guardian spirit. These spirits were accessible to men, but were very unlike men; centaurs, fauns, and mermaids show their ambivalence. Before one cut a tree, mined a mountain, or dammed a brook, it was important to placate the spirit in charge of that particular situation, and to keep it placated. By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects."[8]

The environmental historian J. Donald Hughes affirms White Jr.'s praise for Greco-Roman nature spirituality, but places the "fall" within pagan antiquity:

> "Traditionally, the Greeks and Romans regarded the world as a sacred place where the gods of nature, who shared some human qualities, were present. Thus it would be expected that they would treat the environment with awe and care, and this was true to a considerable extent. With the appearance of the philosophers who questioned or denied the activity of the gods in the world, the older attitudes weakened. The new thinkers rejected traditional mythological explanations of the world and instead insisted that the human mind could discover the truth about nature through reason."[9]

In Hughes' account, "traditional" beliefs are correlated with nature spirituality and the proper care of the environment, while philosophical atheism and rationality allow humans to consider themselves supreme over nature and encourage them to exploit the greater world. Traces of these

[7] Saunders 2008, Payne 2010.
[8] White Jr. 1967, 1205.
[9] Hughes 1994, 45.

"traditional" beliefs survive the philosophers, Hughes says, but cannot effectively compete with them:

> "While it would be incorrect to blame the ancient Greeks and Romans for all the defects of the present-day Mediterranean lands, since they have been subjected to successive pressures in medieval and modern times, it seems clear that the ancient peoples in many instances *initiated a process of wearing away* the environment that had supported them" (emphasis mine).[10]

For Hughes and others of his school, ancient Greek and Roman attitudes toward the natural world and use of natural resources "initiated a process of wearing away" that later peoples completed. Both Hughes and White Jr. make classical antiquity the beginning of our environmental story.

Given the western bent of environmentalist discourse, it is perhaps no surprise that Greco-Roman culture should have generated an *aition* for current ecological crises. The uses to which classical antiquity has been and continues to be put by people on all sides of environmentalist debates deserves a book-length study of its own; for present purposes, it is enough to notice the binary opposition at work in these readings of classical antiquity and the way this binary has influenced even politically neutral environmental histories of the ancient world. Inherent in the binary are several crucial assumptions: not only that westerners today should have or maybe did inherit their ecological behaviors from a classical past, but also that the categories of "nature" and "environment" and "environmental degradation" are essential, that nature has a reality separate from human construction or perception, and that it is the same for all people at all times, including in antiquity.

In order to assess this claim, it is important to first consider what western English-speakers usually mean by the word "nature." Though in everyday speech we talk about the

[10] Hughes 1994, 2-3. And cf. Vögler 1997.

nature of a thing, "it is in my nature to do X" or "it is natural to do X," we also speak about nature as a place, as in the phrase "the natural world." Nature in this sense is a place we go to, a place we are not already (so that it generally excludes humans; i.e. a wild place), and a spiritual refuge, a place where we will absorb a transcendent sense of well-being. This idea of nature strongly divides and even opposes human beings and "wild" nature. As William Cronon has said, "[W]ilderness embodies a dualistic vision in which the human is entirely outside the natural. If we allow ourselves to believe that nature, to be true, must also be wild, then our very presence in nature represents its fall. The place where we are is the place where nature is not."[11]

Cronon has argued that the meaning of nature and the natural has changed over time, and that the idealization of nature is the product of the Romantics, especially Thoreau,[12] but his critique has not entirely taken hold. While debates about gender, race, and sexuality have effectively unbalanced the sense of "the natural," at least in the academy, nature as an idealized place endures, and has been deeply reinscribed by environmentalists. There are "nature parks" in many cities, and scientific studies report "the positive impact of being … around natural elements" and "in natural settings."[13] Meanwhile, Bill McKibben warns us to avert, in the title of his book, *The End of Nature*, by which he means the damage humans do to the rest of the planet and its nonhuman inhabitants. This nature is all around you, though it is fast diminishing, and it also excludes you, in part because you are the one whose presence diminishes it.

Timothy Morton has elaborated Cronon's observation about Romanticism as the source of the human-nature divide to argue that the construction of Romantic nature itself impedes good ecological ethics. The fact that people think of themselves as melancholically separated from a

[11] Cronon 1996, 17.
[12] Cronon 1996, 9. For the relationship between Romanticism and the classical tradition, see Saunders et al. 2012.
[13] Ryan 2010, 167.

nature to which they do not belong will not help them "save the planet," he argues; rather, this Romantic ideology of nature reinforces a sense of separateness that has led human beings to neglect the consequences of their ecological behaviors and ruin the natural world that they are themselves a part of. As he says, "putting something called Nature on a pedestal and admiring it from afar does for the environment what patriarchy does for the figure of the Woman. It is a paradoxical act of sadistic admiration."[14] Whether one agrees with Morton or not, his critique reinforces Cronon's thesis that nature as conceived in the industrialized west is idealized, distant, and imperiled.

In an attempt to historicize the concept of nature in antiquity, Classicists have generated a number of new studies on the human construction of landscape.[15] Other writers, meanwhile, have undertaken studies of natural features that describe both human and nonhuman processes,[16] efforts which implicitly trouble the nature-human binary. Nevertheless, the hard work of fully deconstructing the ancient concept of nature has yet to be undertaken, and it is therefore worth explicitly considering what Greek and Roman writers meant by their terms for nature, *physis* and *natura,* and how they would have defined key terms in modern ecological discourse, especially "environmental damage." While this study reads "for" the environment the way that feminist scholarship reads "for" gender, I want to make sure not to efface the differences between my time and the time of my sources. Though I do not attempt to construct a systematic or comprehensive theory of Greek and Roman concepts of nature, the rest of this chapter

[14] Morton 2007, 5. See also Greer 2010, 9-11 for an excellent short history of the phases of environmentalism: from "recreational" to "sentimental" and "apocalyptic."
[15] Papadopoulos and Urton 2012, Mandile 2011, Spencer 2010, Morzadec 2009, Rosen and Sluiter 2006, Leach 1974.
[16] Blouin 2014, Campbell 2012, Bettini 2008, Griffith 2006, Bedon and Hermon 2005, Sallares 2002, Horden and Purcell 2000, Fedeli 1990, Garnsey 1989, Meiggs 1982. The bibliography in Thommen 2012 surveys old and new classical environmental history of several languages.

contributes to that project by examining a few of the major differences between Greco-Roman environmental thinking and environmental concepts in circulation in the industrialized west of today.

Nature in Classical Antiquity

A culture's lexicon is not a complete repository of its beliefs, but the Greek and Latin terms for nature, *physis* and *natura*, offer a place to begin. Since philosophical and scientific texts often discus *physis* and *natura* directly, and since ethnography is often informed by and in dialogue with natural philosophy, these are the texts from which I draw examples.[17] The following discussion aims to be representative rather than comprehensive, and attends especially to how and whether *physis* or *natura* approach nature in the spatial sense contained in our term "the natural world," since it is nature-as-a-space – needing to be saved, available to be exploited, from which humans have been alienated – that is the primary vehicle for the construction of the human-nature binary in current environmental discourse.

Physis

Physis is first and foremost the nature of a thing: an immanent, individual, and generative force that causes it *phyein*, to grow.[18] Aristotle's definition of *physis* in his *Metaphysics* is representative of this core meaning:

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[17] For visual representations of the natural world, see Leach 1988 and Fabre-Serris 2008. Aegean wall painting is scarce but suggestive. See *Nature and Culture* in Morgan 2005.

[18] In this and what follows, I mainly agree with French 1994 and Hadot 2004, though my focus is on the development (or lack thereof) of nature as an alienated space rather than the use of *physis/natura* in ancient science (French) or the long history of the idea of "hidden" nature (Hadot).

> *Physis* means in one sense the generation of growing things … and in another sense that pre-existing [immanent] thing from which a growing thing first begins to grow; and again, what causes the primary movement in each of the things that naturally exist to exist as itself (Arist., *Metaph.* 1014b16-35).[19]

In other instances, *physis* extends beyond inner force to become the product of that force. In the second book of Plato's *Republic*, Glaucon reiterates the argument against justice as a good in itself. He invites Socrates to imagine that both the just and unjust man are allowed to do whatever they wish:

> In that case we should catch the just man in the act of pursuing the very same thing as the unjust man because of the self-advantage which every *physis* pursues as a good, while by the force of *nomos* (law) there is a compulsion to honor fairness (Pl., *R.* 359c).[20]

Here, Glaucon uses *physis* to mean the creature as a product of *physis* rather than the nature of that creature. The inner force of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has become the being that possesses a *physis*.

This passage also demonstrates a crucial but often misunderstood dichotomy in Greek thought between *physis*, "nature," and *nomos*, "law" or "custom" as the product of human culture. The importance of *physis* and *nomos* in human life and society was a topic of major debate among Greek writers, especially in the fifth century BCE,[21] but this debate does not involve *physis* as a wild space that stands in contrast to *nomos* as a cultivated space, as we might infer when *physis* and *nomos* are translated "nature" and "society." When Greek writers debate or contrast the primacy of *nomos* and *physis*, it is in the context of an inquiry into the causes of

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[19] Φύσις λέγεται ἕνα μὲν τρόπον ἡ τῶν φυομένων γένεσις … ἕνα δὲ ἐξ οὗ φύεται πρώτου τὸ φυόμενον ἐνυπάρχοντος· ἔτι ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις ἡ πρώτη ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν φύσει ὄντων ἐν αὐτῷ ἢ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχει·
All translations mine.

[20] ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ οὖν λάβοιμεν ἂν τὸν δίκαιον τῷ ἀδίκῳ εἰς ταὐτὸν ἰόντα διὰ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ὃ πᾶσα φύσις διώκειν πέφυκεν ὡς ἀγαθόν, νόμῳ δὲ βίᾳ παράγεται ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ἴσου τιμήν.

[21] Long 2005; French 1994, 162; Ostwald 1986, 250-273; Kerferd 1981, 111-130; Guthrie 1969, vol. 3, 55-134, Heinimann 1945.

phenomena, including human phenomena and especially human behavior. In these debates, *physis* means the internal nature or inclination of people, whereas *nomos* is what has been prescribed, either by *phyis* or by humans themselves. The *physis-nomos* debate centered on Greek writers' uncertainty about why people behave as they do; is *nomos* necessary or effective for producing virtuous human beings and institutions, they wondered, or does justice derive from *physis*? In these debates, *physis* and *nomos* are forces that shape human society rather than different spaces in which humans operate.[22]

The *physis-nomos* debate does impel Greek writers to theorize a time before laws and other developments in civilization, either because they think humans were more or less virtuous at that time or because they want to distinguish the effect of *nomos* and *physis* on human beings. Plato's *Protagoras* (320c-322d) is a good example. In this section of the dialogue, Protagoras explains the method and virtue of sophistic education by way of a story (*mythos*) about human origins, contrasting the state of vice and helplessness humanity suffered (322a-b) until Zeus established a law (*nomos*) to encourage right behavior and civic arts (322d). Because the early humans Protagoras imagines in this story are less technologically advanced than those who later inhabit cities and practice politics, it is easy to read them as living in a natural space, a "natural world" from which humans have been alienated. But Protagoras' point is not that humans before *nomos* lived in less civilized conditions. The *nomos-physis* argument here and in Greek philosophy generally is not about whether nature-as-a-place suffices for human flourishing, but whether humans in the absence of laws and customs live more just or happier lives, and whether or not *nomos* derives from *physis*. Protagoras' story opposes the spaces of wilderness and the polis, but inasmuch as he constructs the wilderness as an unhuman place, it is unhuman because

[22] Greek and Roman divisions of space will be considered below.

it is anti-human, beast-infested and terrifying, not because it is idyllic and unattainable.

Combining an Aristotelian understanding of *physis* as the nature-of-a-thing and a fifth century anxiety about the relationship between *nomos* and *physis*, Theophrastus characterizes *physis*, the generative and typical nature of plants, and human *geōrgia* or *therapeia*, "cultivation" or "tending," as collaborators.[23] The spontaneous growth of plants is *kata physin*, he says, but so is that which results *ek tēs therapeias*, "for there is fulfillment of the nature [of a plant] when what it lacks is supplied by art, such as food of the proper sort in abundance and the removal of impediments and obstacles" (Thphr. *CP* 1.16.11).[24] *Therapeia* brings the *physis* of a plant into accordance with "our" human *physis* (1.16.1), and also cause the plant itself "to delight," *chairein* (*CP* 2.14). Theophrastus also distinguishes *topos* or *chōra*, the place or region in which a plant grows, from *physis* and human *therapeia*, but as like *therapeia* in being able to bring forth the inner *physis* of a plant (*CP* 1.16, 1.9.2, 1.11.6, 2.7). Though *therapeia* is the domain of human beings, the rest of nature relies on humanity to fully express its inner *physis*, and human intervention benefits both humanity and the plant itself.

Whereas Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and Theophrastus's *On the Causes of Plants* define *physis* as an individual force, whether internal to a creature or identified with that creature, in other texts *physis* begins to transcend the individual. Aristotle's *Politics* distinguishes women and slaves by *physis*, "for *physis* does not make anything in a miserly way, as the coppersmiths make the Delphic knife, but one thing for one purpose[.]" (Arist., *Pol.* 1252b).[25] A

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[23] French 1994, 96. For the cooperation of *nomos* and *physis* in Herodotus, see Thomas 2000, 102-113; Sergueenkova 2009, 47-8.

[24] ἅμα γὰρ καὶ τελείωσις γίνεται τῆς φύσεως ὅταν ὧν ἐλλιπὴς τυγχάνῃ ταῦτα προσλάβῃ διὰ τέχνης οἷον τροφῆς τε ποιότητα καὶ ἀφθονίαν καὶ τῶν ἐμποδιζόντων καὶ τῶν κωλυόντων ἀφαίρεσιν·
Cf. *CP* 1.15.4, 2.1.1.

[25] οὐθὲν γὰρ ἡ φύσις ποιεῖ τοιοῦτον οἷον οἱ χαλκοτύποι τὴν Δελφικὴν μάχαιραν, πενιχρῶς, ἀλλ' ἓν πρὸς ἕν·

Delphic knife is made for multiple purposes, but *physis* makes everything for a distinct purpose. This *physis* seems to govern multiple creatures (one *physis* makes both women and slaves) but even here Aristotle emphasizes how *physis* works differently on individuals.

Greek Stoic understandings of *physis* are difficult to disentangle from their later representation and transformation by Roman Stoics, but Diogenes Laertius says that Xeno, Philodemus, and Chrysippus abstracted *physis* even further, into a force that "maintains the world," and "aims at usefulness and pleasure, as is clear from the workmanship of human beings" (Long and Sedley 1987, 43A).[26] *Physis* here is both fully abstract and fully implicated in human artifice. In all of these cases, then, *physis* is a force, whether within a creature or external to it, or the product of that force; it is sometimes dependent on humans for its full expression, and is totally compatible with human craft.

Natura

Like *physis, natura* can indicate the nature-of-a-thing, and, as in Greek, this is its basic meaning. Whereas Aristotle's *physis* gestures at a transcendent force, French has argued that Lucretius' *natura* is the first fully divine nature.[27] It is difficult to tell whether this is so; Lucretius is of course a primary "translator" of Epicurus, but the divinity of *physis/natura* is not attested in other Epicurean sources.[28] In any case, Lucretius calls *natura* the "creator of all things," *omnia ... rerum natura creatrix* (2.1117, and v. 1.626). Yet *natura* is not the supreme divinity in Lucretius'

[26] φύσιν δέ ποτέ μέν αποφαίνονται τήν συνέχουσαν τόν κόσμον … ταύτην δέ καί τού συμφέροντος στοχάζεσθαι και ηδονής, ώς δήλον έκ τής τού άνθρωπου δημιουργίας.
[27] French 1994, 153.
[28] Bailey 1947, vol. 2, 708, calls this divine characterization of *natura* "marked." Gale 1995, 39-40 notes Lucretius's subversion of this language in other parts of the poem, and his indebtedness to Epicurus (via Cicero and Stobaeus) for the personification of nature (Usener 468 and 469), but the Epicurean fragments she argues from are inconclusive.

cosmos. Instead, *natura* is simultaneously the *creatrix* of all things and subject herself to another divinity, "Venus, who alone governs the *natura* of things," *[Venus] quae ... rerum naturam sola gubernas* (Lucr., 1.21).

Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* proposes a fully divine *natura* that conforms to Greek Stoic notions of the divinity of the world. As Diogenes Laertius (quoted above) says, Xeno, Posidonius, and Chrysippus considered *ho kosmos* divine (Long and Sedley 1987, 43A).[29] *On the Nature of the Gods* stages a debate between members of different philosophical schools on the existence of the gods, the nature of the gods, and the relationship between divine, human, and nonhuman members of the universe. In the second book, Balbus, a representative of Stoicism, characterizes *natura* as the supreme divinity, the governing principle behind the universe, as well as the physical manifestations of which the universe is composed:

> *Natura*, then, is that which contains and protects the whole world, and which is not without sense and reason … it therefore follows that the world is wise, and that this *natura* which holds all things in its embrace excels all in the perfection of its reason, and for this reason the world is divine and the entire strength of the world is contained within *divina natura* (Cic. *N.D.* 2.29-30).[30]

Balbus characterizes *natura* as both divine creator and the totality of creation, and consistently includes human beings in his vision of what we would call "the natural world." When he explains what *natura* is, he says that when Stoics talk about *natura* ordering the universe, they "do not mean that the universe is like a clod of earth or a piece of stone or anything else that had no coherence, but that it is like a tree or an animal, in which not chance but order and something

[29] οὐσίαν δέ θεού Ζήνων μέν φησι τόν όλον κόσμον καί τόν ούρανόν, ομοίως δέ και Χρύσιππος έν τώ πρώτω Περί θεών καί Ποσειδώνιος έν πρώτω Περί θεών

[30] Natura est igitur quae contineat mundum omnem eumque tueatur, et ea quidem non sine sensu atque ratione … quocirca sapientem esse mundum necesse est, naturamque eam quae res omnes conplexa teneat perfectione rationis excellere, eoque deum esse mundum omnemque vim mundi natura divina contineri.

similar to the arts is visible" (Cic. *N.D.* 2.82).[31] Here, *ars*, human skill, is parallel to the growing of a tree or the development of an animal; *natura* not only governs human beings as it governs all else, but human *ars* is helpful for understanding how *natura* operates. The human is very much a part of *natura* in Balbus' thought, not only in the weak sense that humans are a type of animal, but in a much stronger sense as well; it is humans' unique aptitude for *ars* that makes them most like *natura*.

Balbus' theological investment in *natura* and the connection he forges between human beings and the rest of the natural world might lead modern readers to expect Balbus to have some innate reverence for the natural world, to be circumspect about human uses and alterations of *natura*. Yet this is not the case. Instead, Balbus sees humans as an important check on the unwelcome wildness of *natura*:

> What should I say about the human race, who as the (so to speak) designated cultivators of the earth do not allow it to be overrun by the savagery of wild beasts or laid waste by rough weeds? By their labors the fields, islands, and coasts glitter with the adornments of roofs and cities (Cicero, *N.D.* 2.99).[32]

Balbus' defense of Stoic theology finds full flower near the end of book two, in a paean to human ingenuity and technology:

> We enjoy the fruit of the plains and of the mountains; ours are the rivers, ours the lakes; we sow crops, we plant trees, we fertilize the earth by directing water for irrigation, we regulate the rivers, we straighten or divert them; in short, with our hands we endeavor to make as it were a second *natura* within the *natura rerum* (Cic., *N.D.* 2.152).[33]

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[31] Sed nos cum dicimus natura constare administrarique mundum, non ita dicimus ut glaebam aut fragmentum lapidis aut aliquid eius modi nulla cohaerendi natura, sed ut arborem ut animal, in quibus nulla temeritas sed ordo apparet et artis quaedam similitudo.

[32] Quid iam de hominum genere dicam, qui quasi cultores terrae constituti non patiuntur eam nec inmanitate beluarum efferari nec stirpium asperitate vastari, quorumque operibus agri insulae litora que collucent distincta tectis et urbibus.

[33] Nos campis nos montibus fruimur, nostri sunt amnes nostri lacus, nos fruges serimus nos arbores; nos aquarum inductionibus terris fecunditatem damus, nos flumina arcemus dirigimus avertimus; nostris denique manibus in rerum natura quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur.

In this passage, Balbus uses the divinity of *natura* and her creation of human beings to justify human beings' alterations of *natura*. For Balbus, *natura*'s divinity is mirrored in humanity's ingenuity and invention. Human beings, like *natura,* can create their own natural world, their own "second nature," *altera natura*, within the existing world, the *natura rerum*.

Although Pease points out a number of parallels in other authors for the phrase *altera natura*, "second nature," all of these refer to habits, i.e. internal forces, rather than external spaces.[34] It may be that Cicero means here nature-as-a-force as well. On this reading, human hands, like *natura*, create and change the things of the world. They make a second force that affects the world. Yet Cicero's emphasis on the physical changes human hands produce makes it more likely that he means by *altera natura* a second *natura*-like space. *Natura* is the world – or a world – and humans can create their own world within it. If Cicero's *natura* is a world different from the human-made *altera natura*, it is significant that Cicero's humans only improve on *natura*; the second *natura*, is, if anything, more appealing than *natura rerum* by virtue of human influence. In Cicero*, natura* may have become a space distinguishable from human space, but it is not an unhuman space, and there is in fact a profound similarity between human activity and *natura*'s activity, such that Cicero can call the human world "a second nature."

For Pliny the Elder's, *natura* is not only the creator of the world but also the world itself. As he says in the prologue to the second book of the *Natural History*:

> The world and this – by whatever other name it has been pleasing to call the heavens in whose vault all things are enclosed – is suitably believed to be a god, eternal, immeasurable, which neither came into being nor will die. It is not humanity's concern to search out what lies outside it nor can the human mind guess it. It is sacred, eternal, enormous, all in all, or rather itself the all, finite and resembling the infinite, certain of all things and resembling the uncertain, holding within itself all outsides and insides, at the same time the work of *natura rerum* and *natura rerum* itself (Plin., *Nat.* 2.1).[35]

[34] Pease 1955, 945.

[35] Mundum et hoc quodcumque nomine alio caelum appellare libuit, cuius circumflexu degunt

Pliny's *natura* is a space as well as a force, but though *sacer*, "sacred," it is not a space that excludes humans. Pliny's understanding of *natura*, which follows Greek Stoic physics, embraces the whole world, including humanity and human society. This is true both in theory and demonstrated through the *Natural History* itself, which catalogues not only plants, animals, and minerals, but types of people and works of art.

Yet there are moment in the *Natural History* in which humans stand outside of nature-as-a-space, and in this sense, as Mary Beagon has pointed out, Pliny's attention to human activity is markedly different from his Greek Stoic predecessors.[36] In his discussion of quarrying, Pliny says that "nature is laid flat," *rerum natura agitur in planum* (*Nat.* 25.7), and in a criticism of mining, humans "look as conquerors on the ruin of nature," *spectant victores ruinam naturae* (*Nat.* 33.73). Although Pliny elsewhere calls *tellus*, earth, a *pars naturae* distinguishable from *relicta natura* (*Nat.* 2.154), these passages that criticize human use of natural resources assimilate *natura* and *tellus*. Pliny, unlike the other ancient authors surveyed here, represents humans who have damaged their environment as separated from that environment, in the relationship of victor to victim.[37]

Anthropocentrism and the Division of Space

In general, Greek and Roman writers embed humans in nature. The integration of human activity

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cuncta, numen esse credi par est, aeternum, inmensum, neque genitum neque interiturum umquam. huius extera indagare nec interest hominum nec capit humanae coniectura mentis. sacer est, aeternus, immensus, totus in toto, immo vero ipse totum, infinitus ac finito similis, omnium rerum certus et similis incerto, extra intra cuncta conplexus in se, idemque rerum naturae opus et rerum ipsa natura.

[36] Beagon 1992, 27.

[37] The degree to which this alienation from nature-as-a-space is comparable to modern alienation from nature is considered later on.

into the rest of the world does not mean, however, that Greek and Roman writers fail to recognize different kinds of spaces, or to categorize space as more or less civilized. Scholarship has long recognized a distinction in Greek and Roman writing between the country and the city, for example, though this division has been complicated.[38] Another acknowledged distinction is between cultivated and uncultivated land, as Jeremy McInerney has argued, as well as the garden as opposed to the cultivated field or uncultivated land, as Mary Beagon has demonstrated, and cultivatable and uncultivatable space, especially *terra* "earth" vs. *mare*, "sea."[39]

These spaces are distinguished from one another in value not because of how wild they are, as in the Romantic conception, but by whether and how well they support human life. The country is idealized, for example, because it is an escape from the ills of the city and of the civilization of the city, but also as an escape into a different kind of civilized space.[40] Even in golden age descriptions where the earth gives forth abundantly without the need for agriculture or other human arts, it is not the fact that humans are absent that makes the space ideal, but that humans do not have to work for their livelihood. The degree and manner in which a space is civilized is therefore very important, but with the result that civilization contributes to a place's appeal rather than detracting from it. In the classical world, a natural paradise is defined as a place built for human use and pleasure. Like Werner Herzog, Greeks and Romans would call the jungle obscene.[41]

The way Greek and Roman writers divide space is consistent with, and perhaps a manifestation of, their persistent anthropocentrism. As Aristotle says at the end of his survey of

[38] Williams 1973, Rosen and Sluiter 2006 *passim*.
[39] McInerney 2006, Beagon 1992, 79-91 and 159-190, Purcell 2013.
[40] E.g. Horace, *Ep.* 2.
[41] Herzog on December 8, 1980, quoted in Herzog 2009, 17. The Bacchic wilderness is an excellent example of a "spiritual" wilderness in antiquity that was also horrific.

various economies,

> Therefore, if *physis* makes nothing without purpose or in vain, it follows that *physis* made everything for the sake of human beings (Arist., *Pol.* 1256b).[42]

Yet the anthropocentrism of Greek and Roman writers relies precisely on humanity as an integrated member of the cosmos. Aristotle concludes that *physis* has created everything for human use because animals provide their young with the sustenance needed to survive. If *physis* has arranged the lives of nonhuman animals in this way, Aristotle infers, then *physis* must likewise have provided for human beings. Balbus, discussed in the previous section, praises everything humans do in the world because he believes that humans are *divina natura*'s highest creation; it is *natura*'s status as divine that endorses human behavior. In her book on nature in Pliny the Elder, Mary Beagon quotes an especially vivid passage of Manilius in which *natura* "unites the limbs of the universe into a single body" (*diversaque membra ordinibus certis sociaret corpus in unum*, *Astr.* 3.50-51). As anthropocentrics, most Greek and Roman writers would place humanity at the head of this body, but this should not obscure the fact that they see themselves as a member of the body.[43] Just as the modern human-nature divide can lead either to an exploitative or protective attitude to nature, so ancient anthropocentrism does not exclude humans from the category of nature. Classical anthropocentrism constructs a hierarchy in which humans are the best of nature's creations and the purpose for which much of the rest of the world exists, but this is an integrated hierarchy, a body which the head governs but to which it remains firmly attached. Humans are humans' primary concern, but they do not "rule over" a world that exists outside of themselves.

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[42] εἰ οὖν ἡ φύσις μηθὲν μήτε ἀτελὲς ποιεῖ μήτε μάτην, ἀναγκαῖον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἕνεκεν αὐτὰ πάντα πεποιηκέναι τὴν φύσιν.

[43] As Beagon 1992, 36 notes, *Timaeus* 44d imagines the human head as a microcosm of the cosmic sphere. For Greco-Roman anthropocentrism, see Renehan 1981, Calder 2011, Hellmann 2008, Lanata 1994.

When Morton and Cronon lament humanity's alienation from nature, they imply that if people identified better with nature they would take better care of nature. Yet in the ancient world, this is not the case. Greek and Roman writers both include humanity in nature and generally consider human use of natural resources self-evidently justified. The Romantic idea of nature so prevalent in the western, industrialized world may well be a stumbling block to good ecological ethics, but classical antiquity demonstrates that identifying strongly with nature does not necessarily produce desired or helpful ecological ethics. *Natura*'s elevation to the status of a divinity neither distances people from *natura* nor inclines Balbus to advocate for *natura*'s protection. Instead, Balbus sees the divinity of *natura* reflected in human beings, so that *natura*'s elevation also causes humanity to rise, and leads him to cast humanity's alterations of the natural world as improvements. For Romantics, nature is a sublime otherwhere that has the power to impart divine beauty and truth to human beings.[44] Ancient Greek and Roman writers also express their relationship with the world in hyperbolic terms, but make human beings the carriers of the ideal. *Physis/natura* has created humans, for whom all else was made and through whom all may be perfected.

The Question of Damage

Cicero's Balbus argues that humans change their surroundings for the better. Greek and Roman writers also recognize negative anthropogenic change, and their statements to that effect are often held up by scholars as evidence for environmentalism in antiquity. Sometimes the environmentalism of these passages is assumed rather than asserted. David Mattingly, for example, says in his assessment of the environmental impact of Roman mining,

[44] Cronon 1996, 10. Morton 2007, 109-123.

> "That Roman mining activity here extended well into the Byzantine period was both a triumph and a disaster. What we have in the Wadi Faynan is a landscape that was systematically organized and comprehensively despoiled by the Romans. The well-known phrase of Tacitus, "Where they make a desert, they call it peace," [*ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*, *Ag*. 30] has a particular resonance in the context of the evidence for the environmental degradation and pollution in Faynan."[45]

Mattingly makes a convincing case for anthropogenic change in Roman period Jordan, and for him and his modern readers it is clear that Tacitus's comment does indeed "resonate," but the context of this passage of the *Agricola* also demonstrates that it had a very different kind of resonance in antiquity. When Calgacus says that the Romans "make a desert and call it peace," he is concerned with the depletion of natural resources as a form of theft from other people, not a threat to human or nonhuman ecosystems. Calgacus emphasizes human beings as the holders of natural wealth and the ones who will be deprived of it. The Romans create a *solitudo* by "stealing, plundering, and butchering" in the name of empire, (*auferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium*). Calgacus is not concerned with the "depletion" of the earth (*vastantibus defuere terrae*) for its own sake, but because it has prevented him from controlling these resources himself. Tacitus gives no indication that Roman imperialism is an environmental crime; rather, it is a crime against the peoples who own the land the Romans wish to take.

Other passages from classical literature demonstrate an explicit awareness of anthropogenic damage. Plato's *Critias*, for example, in a famous passage, cites clear-cutting as one of the causes of soil-erosion in Attica:

> Since there were many floods during the 9000 years … the earth which broke off from the heights at these times and in these disasters does not form a mass worthy of mention, as in other places, but sliding away perpetually disappears into the deep. And, just as on small islands, what now remains is like the skeleton of a sick body, all the fat and softness of the earth having wasted away, and only the husk of the body remaining. But at that time, the land was untouched, and had high arable hills instead of crags, and plains full of rich soil instead of the so-called "stony fields," and plenty of timber on its

[45] Mattingly 2010, 193.

> mountains, the signs of which are visible even now; for there are some mountains which today provide food only for bees, but there was a time not too far gone when there were trees there, and the rafters of those cut down and used for roofing the biggest buildings are still sound (Pl. *Criti.,* 111a-c).[46]

Plato's emphasis on house construction clearly links deforestation to soil erosion and a consequent loss of arable land. But this awareness of anthropogenic environmental damage is tempered in several ways; first, clear-cutting is introduced as a second cause of the soil erosion – floods, *kataklysmoi*, come first. Perhaps we are supposed to infer that the floods have carried away the soil loosened by over-foresting, but the double causation distracts from humanity's role. Moreover, despite Attica's degeneration, Plato maintains that his country is still productive and even more productive than other lands:

> What now remains of [the soil] is a match for any other; it is productive of all things and full of crops and well-pastured for all kinds of animals (Pl., *Criti.*110e-111a).[47]

Humans have harmed Attica, but not to such a degree that it falls short of its neighbors.

For modern scholars, passages that describe soil erosion have "resonance," to use Mattingly's term, when correlated with the soil erosion that continued apace for centuries.[48] Yet in the ancient world, human beings had only begun to radically alter their surroundings, and this

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[46] πολλῶν οὖν γεγονότων καὶ μεγάλων κατακλυσμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἐνακισχιλίοις ἔτεσι … τὸ τῆς γῆς ἐν τούτοις τοῖς χρόνοις καὶ πάθεσιν ἐκ τῶν ὑψηλῶν ἀπορρέον οὔτε χῶμα, ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις τόποις, προχοῖ λόγου ἄξιον ἀεί τε κύκλῳ περιρρέον εἰς βάθος ἀφανίζεται· λέλειπται δή, καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς σμικραῖς νήσοις, πρὸς τὰ τότε τὰ νῦν οἷον νοσήσαντος σώματος ὀστᾶ, περιερρυηκυίας τῆς γῆς ὅση πίειρα καὶ μαλακή, τοῦ λεπτοῦ σώματος τῆς χώρας μόνου λειφθέντος. τότε δὲ ἀκέραιος οὖσα τά τε ὄρη γηλόφους ὑψηλοὺς εἶχε, καὶ τὰ φελλέως νῦν ὀνομασθέντα πεδία πλήρη γῆς πιείρας ἐκέκτητο, καὶ πολλὴν ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ὕλην εἶχεν, ἧς καὶ νῦν ἔτι φανερὰ τεκμήρια· τῶν γὰρ ὀρῶν ἔστιν ἃ νῦν μὲν ἔχει μελίτταις μόναις τροφήν, χρόνος δ' οὐ πάμπολυς ὅτε δένδρων αὐτόθεν εἰς οἰκοδομήσεις τὰς μεγίστας ἐρεψίμων τμηθέντων στεγάσματ' ἐστὶν ἔτι σᾶ.

[47] τὸ γὰρ νῦν αὐτῆς λείψανον ἐνάμιλλόν ἐστι πρὸς ἡντινοῦν τῷ πάμφορον εὔκαρπόν τε εἶναι καὶ τοῖς ζῴοις πᾶσιν εὔβοτον.

As Thommen 2012, 40-1 says: "While this [passage] reflects contemporary clearing passages, it contains no historical analysis, and at the same time reveals an unbroken admiration for the beauty and fertility of the Attic countryside … [it] gives rise neither to accusations nor to demands for a different kind of behavior."

[48] Hughes 1994, 80-82.

alteration was rarely visible to them. Even writers like Pliny the Elder who explicitly criticize human beings for depleting natural resources do not represent human beings as capable of large-scale environmental damage. Pliny begins his book on metallurgy with a famous and vicious critique of mining (*Nat.* 33.1-2).[49] Mining puts miners and the earth at risk, but it is humanity's greed – for raw wealth (*divitiae*), luxuries (*deliciae*), and weapons (*ferrum*) – and the inadequacy of those reasons, given that the earth is *benigna fertilisque*, that drives the critique. Pliny grudgingly admits that *medicina* is occasionally the goal of mining efforts, but asserts that this is rarely the case. The earth suffers as a result of mining, but it is the contrast between this harm and the little to be gained from it that fuels Pliny's anger. His rhetorical question, "What number have medicine as their reason for digging?" (*quoto cuique fodiendi causa medicina est?*) raises an obvious alternative situation in which humans dig primarily for medicines and are spared Pliny's diatribe. As other scholars have noted, the problem with over-mining, over-fishing, and global imports, according to Pliny, is that they corrupt human virtue,[50] not that they threaten the well-being of *natura.* He vividly imagines this corruption as a corruption of the natural world, but he is not fundamentally worried about the well-being of *tellus* or *natura rerum* as a whole.

In sum, though anthropogenic damage was both possible and recognized in antiquity, it did not have the same significance as anthropogenic damage in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is because of the scale of the change involved and our current awareness of that

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[49] Metalla nunc ipsaeque opes et rerum pretia dicentur, tellurem intus exquirente cura multiplici modo, quippe alibi divitiis foditur quaerente vita aurum, argentum, electrum, aes, alibi deliciis gemmas et parietum lignorumque pigmenta, alibi temeritati ferrum, auro etiam gratius inter bella caedesque. persequimur omnes eius fibras vivimusque super excavatam, mirantes dehiscere aliquando aut intremescere illam, ceu vero non hoc indignatione sacrae parentis exprimi possit. imus in viscera et in sede manium opes quaerimus, tamquam parum benigna fertilique qua calcatur. et inter haec minimum remediorum gratia scrutamur, quoto enim cuique fodiendi causa medicina est?

[50] Wallace-Hadrill 1990, 85-90; Healy 1999, 371-379; Beagon 1992, 41-2. See also Isager 1991. Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 110.10.

change, which are themselves interrelated phenomena. The "Anthropocene" is a term that was introduced in the 1980s and popularized by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer in 2000 to replace the Holocene as the current geological epoch.[51] Those who use the term "Anthropocene" argue that human beings are now the most powerful agents on the planet. The International Union of Geological Sciences is currently contemplating whether to throw their weight behind the Anthropocene, but whatever they decide, the term itself captures a growing awareness among industrialized westerners that humans have radically and perhaps irrevocably altered the climate, landscapes, and biodiversity of Earth.[52] It was only possible to conceive of this scale of anthropogenic damage after large-scale damage had already occurred.

When Balbus celebrates the anthropogenic change in the world he looks like a bad steward of the earth; when Plato and Pliny mourn soil erosion and the effects of mining, they look green. This is because the damaging effects of industrialized human activity are now so apparent, and the future of industrialized human existence is in such peril, that readers who know this cannot help reading ancient texts as speaking to their current condition. Environmental historians are working to document the ways that Greeks and especially Romans changed and sometimes damaged their natural environments,[53] but it is important to recognize that in the classical world, human action was limited[54] and was perceived as even more limited. When Plato and Pliny criticize the environmental impact of human action, their criticism is of a behavior that was bad in itself or for human society, not bad for what it portended about the well-being of nonhuman life on earth or the continuation of humanity as a species. This is because there was

[51] Crutzen and Stoermer 2000. For the consequences of the Anthropocene for historical inquiry, see Chakrabarty 2009.
[52] Stromberg 2013, Steffen et al. 2011.
[53] Mattingly 2010, McCormick et al., 2012, Harris 2013.
[54] Thommen 2012, 2.

neither the technology or population in antiquity to effect massive damage and because ancient ideologies inhibited people from imagining that they could inflict massive damage. Interestingly, these same ideologies allowed Greek and Roman writers to imagine themselves as agents of mass improvement, as Balbus does. The material and ideological conditions of ancient lives being what they were, it is inappropriate to characterize Greeks and Romans as either good or bad environmentalists,[55] though it is perhaps inevitable that Greeks and Romans will look like environmentalists (successful or otherwise) given our own preoccupations. We may get something out of judging ancient people by the standards with which we assess our own environmental behaviors, but this evaluation does not allow us to understand what their behaviors meant to them at the time. Environmentalism as mindset that seeks to preserve the world from large-scale anthropogenic damage, or its absence, is a condition only possible later in time.[56]

If it is a mistake to project our own environmental categories onto ancient peoples, it is equally wrong to conclude that because they "never faced the necessity of fundamentally

[55] Sidenote: This is not to imply that ancient people would have avoided causing large-scale anthropogenic damage if they could have. On the contrary, the robust anthropocentrism in classical antiquity would rather, I suspect, have justified the scale of change that we are now capable of producing. But it is also important to see that philosophies can never bear the full weight of causal explanation. As Hansen 2008 notes, environmentalists have convinced neither themselves, their neighbors, nor their governments to radically reduce consumption of fossil fuels or other natural resources. Ideology can rarely by itself turn people around, especially when their material comforts and pleasures are at stake. See Milton 1996, 114 and Ellen 1986, 11.

[56] For nature in the middle ages, see Epstein 2012. Thomas 1983 has demonstrated that modern European alienation from nature and impulses towards conservation started in 1500, reinforced, Grove 1995 argues, by the colonialist expansion of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. On colonialism and global environmental history, see Radkau 2008, 152-194, and Heringman 2013. It was not until the ninth century CE that Eriugena distinguished between a *natura* which creates and that which is created, a philosophy Spinoza developed in the seventeenth century under the terms *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. For an introduction to Eriugena, see O'Meara 1988 and Carabine 2000; for Spinoza on *natura naturans* and *natura naturata,* see Giancotti 1991, 99.

reconsidering their relationship towards nature,"[57] that they never theorized their use of natural resources. Environmental thinking in antiquity is often dismissed as only "moral" because it is not about the fear of substantive environmental damage,[58] but this distinguishes ancient concerns with personal and social virtue from their reflections on human use and abuse of natural resources in an artificial and anachronistic fashion. The fear of substantive damage is critical to current environmental thinking and its absence in antiquity, as I have argued, means that modern scholars should not characterize ancient peoples as environmentalists, good or bad. Nevertheless, ancient people thought and worried about how humans should use natural resources, and considered the consequences of natural-resource management for both humans and nonhumans. Therefore, while it is inappropriate to look for "environmentalism" in ancient writing, we can confidently discuss "ecology" in antiquity, the relationship between humans and nonhuman nature. Although the concept of ecology is often associated with modern science and environmental movements, it is a term that is broad and neutral enough to be useful to ancientists.

Ecology

If "nature" needs to be historicized, so too does "ecology," a term coined in the nineteenth century and used to describe the relationships of nonhuman life forms.[59] In the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries scientists typically studied human beings apart from the rest of nature, and the study of ecology reflected this until wide-spread anthropogenic damage, initiated by the Industrial Revolution, became undeniable. As James Worster has argued, it was the North

[57] Thommen 2012, 2.
[58] Wallace-Hadrill 1990, 86.
[59] Worster 1977, 192, 217-218; 316-338.

American Dust Bowl of the 1920s and 1930s that fundamentally changed both the study of ecology and the practice of conservation. After the Dust Bowl, human power to destroy biotic communities could no longer be ignored.[60] For some, the recognition of anthropogenic damage exiled humanity even more completely from the concept of nature; after the 1930s, conservationists conceived of "nature" as a space that human beings could and would "disturb" given enough time, and focused on protecting wild spaces from them.

Yet in the wake of the Dust Bowl, others argued that humans should be integrated into the study of ecology. As A.G. Tansley said in 1935:

> "It is obvious that modern civilized man upsets the 'natural' ecosystems or 'biotic communities' on a very large scale. But it would be difficult, not to say impossible, to draw a natural line between the activities of the human tribes which presumably fitted into and formed parts of 'biotic communities' and the destructive human activities of the modern world … Regarded as an exceptionally powerful biotic factor which increasingly upsets the equilibrium of preexisting ecosystems and eventually destroys them, at the same time forming new ones of very different nature, human activity finds its proper place in ecology."[61]

Tansley convinced most of his fellow scientists, and in the second half of the twentieth century ecology evolved into the study of biotic interrelatedness and interdependence, including the way human beings relate to nonhuman nature.[62] Thus, while the Dust Bowl and other anthropogenic disasters led conservationists to construct nature as a nonhuman space, ecology as it was reinvented in the early twentieth century worked against this alienation by studying human and nonhuman nature holistically.

"Ecology" has also recently taken on a philosophical meaning. In Timothy Morton's most recent book, *The Ecological Thought*, he argues that Romantic nature has come not only to limit but to thwart the best aims of environmentalists. People must get beyond the human-nature

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[60] *Ibid.*, 221-253.
[61] Quoted in Worster 1977, 239-240.
[62] Worster 1977, 316-380.

divide before they can begin to address current environmental crises, and he advocates "ecology without nature," as an ideological remedy. To think the Ecological Thought is to consider oneself in relationship to nonhumans without having a concept of a nature from which human beings are separate.[63] Morton and others' deconstruction of the human-nature binary necessitates a profound paradigm shift. Instead of nature as something "over there" that is in need of protection, available for exploitation, or available as a spiritual therapy, human and nonhuman members of reality exist on a relatively egalitarian plane of interaction. The various interactions are still called "ecology," but this ecology is not centered in a certain kind of natural space. This is "ecology without nature."

Perhaps counterintuitively, humanists have started to apply this "posthuman" perspective to human art and culture. Among premodernist disciplines, Medieval studies is the most fertile area of posthumanism,[64] but posthumanism has much to offer classical studies as well. Greeks and Romans were not posthumanists, but there is an affinity between their ecology and that of these new approaches. Though ancient people had no word for the scientific interrelatedness of organisms, they assumed it. Philosophically, ancient ecology was an "ecology without nature," if by nature we mean one alienated from human beings. It was an ecology in which human beings and other organisms were all governed by *physis* or *natura*, rather than one in which humans occupied a civilized space entirely separate from natural space. It was also an ecology in which

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[63] Morton 2010.

[64] Especilly Eileen Joy, J.J. Cohen, and Karl Steel as they publish in the journal *Postmedieval*, the blog *In the Middle*, and *Punctum Books*, e.g. J.J. Cohen 2013 and Joy, Klosowska, Masciandaro, and O'Rourke 2013. Posthumanism is a broad term that is more and more broadly applied; here, it refers to the decentering of humanity in scholarly inquiry, and the act of troubling, if not jettisoning, the human-nature binary. Posthumanism is distinct from, but related to, the philosophical movements of Speculative Realism and Object Oriented Ontology. Much of this work is being done online, e.g. by Levi Bryant (http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/), but foundational publications include Meillassoux 2006, Harman 2009 and 2010, Bryant 2011, and Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman 2011. See also Bennett 2010 for a political application.

human beings were not seen as capable of radically disturbing a natural equilibrium. Although ancient people experienced and were aware of causing small-scale natural disasters, including deforestation, soil erosion, and animal depopulation,[65] they could not conceive of a disaster like the Dust Bowl, which made an entire region uninhabitable, let alone global climate change or mass extinction. This inability to conceive of large-scale anthropogenic damage makes ancient people seem appropriately premodern, but they also appear surprisingly postmodern in their insistence that humans and nonhumans are governed by the same force, *physis/natura*, and share common space.

Building on this theoretical foundation and the distinctions I have made between ancient and modern concepts of nature, it is now possible to consider what ancient writers thought to be better and worse relationships between humans and nonhumans. Though Greeks and Romans did not write explicit ecological treatises, I suggest that they theorized ecology through their writing about other peoples.

Ethnography and Ecology

This chapter began by observing that modern scholars have often characterized the classical past in one of two ways: either people in classical antiquity were green primitives whose fall laid the ideological groundwork for the environmental horrors of industrialism, or they were the first ecocriminals, our own (western industrialized) ideological forebears. The first stereotype emphasizes Greco-Roman paganism and animism, the latter focuses on the sophistication of Greco-Roman technology and global trade.

Since characterizing ancient peoples as good or bad environmentalists is anachronistic,

[65] Thommen 2012, Hughes 1994, Glacken 1967.

one might suspect that the tendency to think through environmental anxieties by means of another culture is also an artifact of the modern world. However, the chapters that follow argue that ancient writers themselves used other peoples and other societies to think through their own environmental behaviors and imagine alternatives to them. When ancient writers looked to ethnic Others to describe these alternatives, they were not impelled, as industrialized westerners are now, by a pressing need to change their use of natural resources. Instead, they thought about how their use of natural resources affected their individual virtue and health, the effectiveness of their social structures, and their relationship to the past.

Classicists have already begun to use natural scientific, pastoral, and agricultural genres to write environmental intellectual history, [66] but ethnographic writing can also speak to how Greeks and Romans thought about the natural world. In fact, ethnography is a particularly good instrument for understanding Greek and Roman ecological ideas. Greco-Roman ethnographies, like their modern counterparts, describe foreign human behavior and foreign institutions, but Greco-Roman ethnography is also intimately connected to genres that describe the physical environment, including geography, climatology, botany, and zoology. Not all ethnographic writing intersects with all of these other areas of inquiry, but most interact with at least one. It has been known for a long time that Greek and Roman writers organized their descriptions of other peoples around the use of natural resources. As Richard Thomas observes,

> "[Ethnography] as it is understood in reference to Greek and Latin literature embraces both geographical and ethnological detail, and comprises (however brief the treatment) the following elements:
>
> 1.) Physical geography of the area
> 2.) Climate
> 3.) Agricultural produce, mineral resources, etc.
> 4.) Origins and features of the inhabitants

[66] E.g. Glacken 1967, Leach 1974, French 1994, Saunders 2008.

5.) Political, social and military organization."[67]

The issue of physical space and the effect of space on the development and behavior of human beings is, as Thomas says, a central conceit of Greco-Roman ethnographic writing. This conceit leads classical ethnographers to meditate extensively on ecologies that are very different from their own. One trope in ancient ethnographic material is the "noble savage," as others have observed,[68] and this trope depends to a certain degree on the Other's environmental behaviors, but no one has yet offered an in-depth ecological reading of classical ethnography. Rather than taking it for granted that ancient ethnographers embed other peoples in a environment and describe the ecologies between humans and nonhumans in that environment, I take this convention of the genre as a significant choice and an opportunity to investigate Greek environmental thinking through these texts.

In the chapters that follow, I build upon Thomas' understanding of Greco-Roman ethnography as a genre that situates other peoples in their environments by examining how others peoples' ecological behaviors are represented in three Greek ethnographers of the classical and Hellenistic periods: Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides. My project is historical in considering how Greeks think about nature through other cultures, but also analogical (though not explicitly comparative), an attempt to understand why people like to think about ecology through other peoples, and what the consequences are for both self-definition and the definition of Others.[69] This project can thus be seen as an investigation into premodern "naturecultures," Donna Haraway's term for human cultures as embedded in nature, and culture as both a product

[67] Thomas 1982, 1, following Trüdinger 1918, 175.
[68] Lovejoy and Boas 1935, 287-367. For a critique of this trope in modern anthropology, see Milton 1996, 109-133.
[69] A still popular method. See Diamond 2012.

and producer of nonhuman nature.[70] In attending to the classical and Hellenistic representation and appropriation of the ecologies of Others, my project aims both to bring ecocritical theory into Classics and classical texts to bear on the questions of ecocriticism.

Conclusion

"Nature" in Greco-Roman natural philosophy is a force that governs humans and nonhumans, and, for some authors, a transcendent, divine force that maintains the world and is identified with the world. Nature is described as involved in and similar to human art, but stands in contrast to "custom," what is imposed by human society. Unlike the Romantic nature of the present-day industrial west, Greco-Roman nature is not a place to which human beings have been alienated and long for as a spiritual refuge. Greek and Roman writers distinguish between more and less civilized spaces, and have a concept of wilderness as modern people do, but these spaces threaten human life and are inferior to habitable spaces. Greek and Roman writers were aware of anthropogenic change and damage to their environment, but not of its scale or its implications, and it is thus anachronistic to evaluate them as environmentalists. Instead of looking for our concept of nature or environmentalism in antiquity, we should investigate ecologies – human/non-human relationships – in ancient texts, and ethnographies in particular. As a mode of writing that situates humans in an environment and reflects on the ways they influence and are influenced by that environment, ethnographies are a prime place to discover environmental thinking in classical antiquity.

[70] Haraway 2003.

Chapter 2: Mapping Time

This chapter provides an introduction to ancient ethnography and the particular authors under discussion: Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides. After reviewing the ways that scholars have dismissed ethnography as ahistorical, I re-theorize ethnography as a tool for accessing the deep past. Greek descriptions of other places functioned as depictions of other times by representing foreign peoples at different stages of early human development. This "staging" maps phases of time onto geographical areas, and correlates those times with different *bioi*, or methods of subsistence.

Genre, Method, and Particular Authors

The Greeks and Romans have left us many representations of other peoples. From "cowardly Phrygians" (E. *Or.* 1351) and other ethnic stereotypes in tragedy, to dying Gauls sculpted in stone, we have a great deal of "ethnographic" material from the ancient world.[71] For the purposes

[71] Scholarship on this wide-ranging material is usually divided by medium or people. For foreign peoples in Greek tragedy, see Hall 1989; for Others in Greek art, Cohen 2000; for Egyptians, Froidefond 1971; for blacks, Snowden 1970; for peoples from the central Appenines, Dench 1995; for Others in the fourth century CE, Chauvot 1998; for Roman enemies in general, Ferris 2000. Isaac 2004 discusses stereotyping material from many sources and times. Sassi 1988 considers bodily difference generally.

For the modern concept of "race" as distinct from the ancient (and slippery) concept(s) of ethnicity, see Kennedy, Roy, and Goldman 2013, xiii-xv. Though McCoskey 2012 makes a persuasive case for using "race" to describe ancient categories of human difference, I prefer "ethnic Other" as a term that emphasizes the disjunction between ancient and modern racial and ethnic thinking, highlights the constructedness of ancient (and modern) racial and ethnic categories, and pays particular attention to the primary distinction made in ancient sources between "Self" and "Other." In Greek thinking, an "ethnic Other" is a non-Greek, a human being

of this study, however, "ethnography" will be understood as a subset of this larger body of representations. An ethnography or ethnographic treatise is an extended description of another people, usually in prose.[72] Although this definition of ethnography reproduces the word's typical associations with modern anthropology, it does not assume the accuracy or intentions of ancient ethnographers.

The twenty-first century has been very good to classical ethnography, with scholarly attention ranging from Rosalind Thomas's 2000 study of ethnographic and natural scientific material in Herodotus, *Herodotus in Context*, to Greg Woolf's 2011 *Tales of the Barbarians*, which considers Roman ethnographies in the West. Over that decade, author studies have given way to more synthetic works, including those that examine several authors across time, set Greek and Roman writing about other peoples in geographic context, and put ethnographies in conversation with modern history.[73]

The question of whether and how Greeks and Romans "othered" other peoples, either by denigrating or elevating them, is one prominent theme in this scholarship. While earlier Classicists emphasized Greco-Roman ethnocentrism,[74] most recent scholars have taken a different approach, arguing, like Nancy Shumate 2006 and Erich Gruen 2011, that Greeks and Romans expressed mixed feelings about barbarians, or like Eric Adler 2011 that they often held

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who is perceived as different from the Greek self in origin, bodily appearance, and/or customs. Ethnic Otherness is to some degree inherited and to some degree performed, and thus can sometimes change.

[72] On the modern construction of ethnography as a genre, see Hartog 1980, chapter 1; Woolf 2011, 13-19; and Skinner 2012. Jacob 1991 and Dihle 1994 trace the history of Greek ethnography, while Müller 1970 surveys both Greek, Roman, and Byzantine ethnographies. For ethnography specifically in late antiquity and the Byzantine period, see Kaldellis 2013.

[73] Single-author studies: Munson 2001, Thomas 2000, and Murphy 2004; multiple author studies and edited volumes: Woolf 2011, Gruen 2010, Almagor and Skinner 2013; geographical context: Parker 2008; modern historical context: Shumate 2006 and Krebs 2005. This trend follows Momigliano 1975, sometimes explicitly: Gruen 2010, 3.

[74] Hartog 1980; Hall 1989.

them in explicit esteem. Just as the denigration of the Other leads to the elevation of the Self, so too the elevation of the Other, Adler argues, constitutes a criticism of the Self.[75] When Romans esteem others, he claims, they become vehicles for Roman self-criticism.[76] James Romm has made a similar argument from a Greek perspective. When Greeks praise Others, he claims, this praise not only illustrates the values of Greek culture but also criticizes lapses in those values; he calls this phenomenon "ethnologic satire."[77] The last chapter will consider how and to what degree the ethnographies under discussion criticize Greek ecological norms and behaviors.

Though cultural and intellectual historians have done much to broaden the scope of research into ancient historiography, questions of accuracy still exert a powerful force on the structure and direction of scholarly inquiry. Klaus Karttunen's masterful discussion of Megasthenes' *Indika*, for example, though explicitly aware of and interested in *interpretatio Graeca*, rhetoric, and literary play, nevertheless begins by lauding Megasthenes' correct observations and separating out these facts before turning to and trying to account for those elements of the text that are not historically verifiable.[78]

While acknowledging that some ethnological information in ancient histories is verifiably accurate or inaccurate, and that ideology often motivates the distortion of events and phenomena in ancient texts (as in modern ones), I do not try to separate the "real" from the "fabricated" in

[75] Although earlier scholars certainly noticed moments of explicit critiqiue, as in the *Germania* (Wolff 1934, Lund 1988), Adler 2011 considers the critical force of enemy speeches in Roman historiography generally, and as separable from the intentions or political program of the author.
[76] Isaac 2004, who emphasizes ancient ethnocentrism, is an important exception to this trend. Cf. Bottineau 2014.
[77] Romm 1992, 45-81. For the mirroring of the Self in the Other, see Hartog 1980 and Pelling 1997.
[78] Karttunen 1997, 76-82; cf. Kuhrt 2002 on Babylonians and Ivantchik 2001 on Scythians and Cimmerians. In a related but different vein, Moyer 2011 and Török 2014 correlate Herodotus's accounts against material from the places he describes; see also Dillery 1998. For an early critique of Classicists' obsession with accuracy, see Myers 1908, 123-4.

the works of Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides. Rather, it is assumed that everything these authors report, whether verifiable or not, accurate or not, has been shaped and conditioned by various forces, including but not limited to the generic expectations of history, ethnography, and inquiry into other places; Greek conceptual categories; and the irrecoverable intentions of the author and/or transmitter.

Before beginning, it is important also to acknowledge the odd texture of classical writing about other peoples. The ethnographies we have do not rely exclusively on the writer's own observation of peoples and places; although many writers claim to have seen some of what they record, most rely either in part or in full on the observations of others.[79] The tendency of editors to collect the fragments of earlier authors cited and paraphrased by later ones obscures the fact that ethnography was a tradition that covered its tracks.[80] Indeed, the obscurity of ethnographers' sources is one of the most maddening problems for those who wish to pin down those sources and evaluate them (on whatever grounds).

As Greg Woolf has observed, Greek and Roman ethnographers explained the origin, situation, and behavior of other peoples in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways in the same text.[81] The tendency of ethnographies to blend different lines of reasoning is mirrored in their treatment of source material, which combines direct observation with the reports of contemporaries and the writings of earlier ethnographers. Direct observation, although an important original and mythicized source for ethnographic writing, became less important over time as other kinds of sources, especially the tradition of ethnographic writing itself, went into circulation. Over time, ethnography became an accretive, scholarly genre, not opposed to new

[79] Momigliano, 1958, 130.
[80] Woolf 2011, 12, following Norden 1920.
[81] Woolf 2011, 32-58.

evidence or the autopsy of the author, but ever concerned with reading past ethnographers and integrating their research into one's own. Just as different lines of reasoning coexist in the same ethnographic text, so too do data gleaned from different sources. The heterogeneity that Woolf has observed in ethnographic reasoning can thus be extended to characterize ethnography as a whole.

Understanding ethnographic writing as a heterogeneous tradition can also account for the presence of marvels[82] in ethnographic writing and the perceived naiveté of ethnographers. Ethnographers record incredible phenomena not because they are liars or want to perpetuate lies, but because they believed, as T.P. Wiseman has so pithily said, that "some credible things are not worth relating, and some incredible ones are."[83] Ethnography describes other peoples by combining autopsy with credited and uncredited reports, other writers' accounts, and creative extrapolation.

Megasthenes, Agatharchides, and the Herodotean Tradition

Like the synthetic monographs of the last decade, I treat three ethnographic texts side by side: Herodotus of Halicarnassus's fifth century BCE *Histories*, Megasthenes' c. 300 BCE *Indika*, and Agatharchides of Cnidus's c. 150 BCE *On the Red Sea*. Herodotus's *Histories* is not a stand-alone ethnography, but rather a history of the events of the Greco-Persian Wars and an ethnographic survey of the non-Greeks either involved in the conflict, conquered in the course of Persian expansion, or brought to Herodotus's attention in the course of his inquiries. These

[82] For the history of paradoxography, see Gabba 1981. For *thaumata* in Herodotus and those who follow him, see Munson 2001 and Priestley 2014, 51-108.
[83] Wiseman 2011, 327. On the difference between the modern concept of "objectivity" and the ancient devotion to "truth," see Gabba 1981, Luce 1989.

include peoples as far east as India, as far north as Scythia, and as far south as Aithiopia.[84] The ethnographic passages dominate in books one through four and the beginning of five, though ethnographic details appear throughout.[85]

Megasthenes' *Indika* and Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea* survive only through the quotations and citations of later authors.[86] Megasthenes was widely influential in antiquity, and is transmitted through a variety of authors, especially Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Arrian. Agatharchides was less popular, and is transmitted only through Diodorus Siculus and Photius, the learned ninth century patriarch of Constantinople. The fragments that survive indicate that both the *Indika* and *On the Red Sea* were heavily ethnographic, but perhaps not exclusively so – all we know for certain is that they were valued for being ethnographic, since ethnographic fragments are largely the ones that survive.[87] Megasthenes appears to have travelled to India with Alexander the Great or directly following his conquests, either as a member of the court of Seleucus I Nicator, satrap of Babylonia, or Sibyrtius, satrap of Arachosia and Gedrosia.

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[84] I transliterate "Aithiopia" and "Aithiopes," as well as "India" and "Indoi" because these places and peoples draw much of my attention later on and because if left as "India/Indians, Ethiopia/Ethiopians," might remind the reader too much of modern nation-states. Though the transliterations are clunky and stand out from other Anglicized names, I hope these designations are an aid rather than a stumbling block. Otherwise, my orthography has aimed to be as conventional as possible, using Latinized forms unless doing so would be unusual (e.g. *Indika*).

[85] See Immerwahr 1966, 318 for a list of Herodotus's ethnographic *logoi*. Major monographs on Herodotus's ethnographies include Hartog 1980, Thomas 2000, Munson 2001, and Munson 2005. For other aspects of the *Histories*, see Immerwahr 1966, Lang 1984, Flory 1987, Lateiner 1989, Evans 1991, Bakker et al. 2002, Dewald and Marincola 2006, Baragwanath 2008, Branscombe 2013, and Munson 2013.

[86] I rely on the fragments as edited by Duane Roller 2010 (whose numbering follows Jacoby), and Stanley Burstein 1989, respectively. Fragment numbers refer to their editions, with the cover-text indicated subsequently.

[87] In addition to this source problem, it is difficult to account for the tendency of modern scholars to want to legitimate ethnographies by imagining them as ancillary to histories. For example, Burstein 1989, 23 argues that the ethnographic sections of Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea* were "merely an appendix to what was essentially a historical work," but this amounts to wishiful thinking.

Agatharchides, on the other hand, relied exclusively on documentary evidence and oral reports available to him as a member of the court of Ptolemy VI.[88]

Herodotus is a natural place to ground a study of Greek ethnography. Although Herodotus may himself be greatly indebted to earlier writers, especially Hecataeus of Miletus and Skylax, his success so thoroughly eclipsed his predecessors' that he often appears entirely original.[89] My decision, however, to include two poorly known Hellenistic ethnographers in this study warrants explanation.

Whether or not ancient ethnography constituted a consciously-described genre in antiquity,[90] the close relationship between Herodotus's text and Hellenistic ethnographic writing means that it is appropriate to speak of a genre of Herodotean-inspired ethnography in the Hellenistic period. As Oswyn Murray has demonstrated, Herodotus's *Histories* had a sustained impact on the Hellenistic geographers, ethnographers, and historians who succeeded him, whether or not they acknowledge that impact or had a favorable view of their august predecessor.[91] Jessica Priestley has expanded and deepened Murray's observation in a monograph study of Herodotus and Hellenistic authors, including Agatharchides. Paul Kosmin,

[88] For Megasthenes' life, see Roller 2010, and for his dating see Kosmin 2014, 261-271. For Agatharchides' life, see Burstein 1989. Neither author is well covered, but important studies include, for Megasthenes, Bosworth 1996 and 2003, Brown 1955 and 1957, Dahlquist 1962, Kartunnen 1989 and 1997, Zambrini 1982, 1983, and 1985, Thapar 2000, Parker 2008, and Kosmin 2014; and for Agatharchides, Gozzoli 1978, Longo 1987, Alonso-Núñez 1997, Marcotte 2001, and Ameling 2008.

[89] For more on Herodotus's prose influences, see Fowler 2006. We can observe the tension between Herodotus's symbolic status as the Father of History and how little is actually known about his influences in, for example, Momigliano 1958, 129. Momigliano says that "the almost total loss of the geographical and ethnographical literature that preceded and accompanied Herodotus's work makes it impossible for us to assess exactly how much he owed to earlier and contemporary writers" and, in the same breath, that "there was no Herodotus before Herodotus."

[90] For which, see Woolf 2011, 14-17.

[91] Murray 1972.

meanwhile, has discovered allusions to Herodotus in Megasthenes.[92] Thus, this study juxtaposes Herodotus as the father of ethnography with two of his Hellenistic descendants, Megasthenes and Agatharchides, in part to contribute to the history of the influence of Herodotus in the Hellenistic period. As I argue in chapter 4, Megasthenes' and Agatharchides' texts offer solutions to the problem of "soft lands producing soft peoples" articulated in the *Histories*. Yet mine is not primarily a study of Herodotus's influence on Megasthenes and Agatharchides; because my theme is ecology, and because Herodotus has not been treated ecocritically, I consider the *Histories* as a source as much to be explicated as the *Indika* and *On the Red Sea*.

Ethnography and the Reader

Two strains dominate the interpretation of Greco-Roman ethnography. One mines it for verifiable data about ancient non-Greek and non-Roman societies, and the other, following Hartog, values ethnography for what it can say about Greek and Roman self-definition. Newer approaches have focused on the dialogic nature of ethnography, its reliance on and preservation of native sources and native agency (Moyer 2011), and wider political and social context (Kosmin 2014). My study also focuses on a dialogue, but of that between text and reader. Although I will sometimes consider the relationship of ethnographies to their context of production, my interpretations treat Herodotus's, Megasthenes', and Agatharchides' texts as independent agents that interact with readers to make meanings. My eye is trained especially on Greek readers of these works, and in this sense I am more indebted to Hartog than not. But I am interested primarily in the questions ethnographies raise, especially ecological arguments, and the answers readers might have constructed in return. In this dialogue, the Self is not stable in relation to the Other, but is

[92] Priestley 2014, Kosmin 2014, 31-58.

provoked by the Other into self-interrogation, self-assessment and, possibly, change. On my reading, ethnographies are not documents of a static self-definition but tools for dynamic and ongoing self-creation.

My focus on the reader follows Reader-response criticism, which emphasizes the reader's ability, given the constraints of the text and armed with her own cultural and individual experience, to make meanings.[93] While Reader-response is prevalent in interpretations of classical literary texts,[94] it has not affected many studies in classical historiography.[95] Following Emily Baragwanath, who has recently applied Reader-response to Herodotus's *Histories* as a whole,[96] I suggest that ethnography provokes readers to interact with it in particular ways. Greek ethnographies make ecological arguments not explicitly, by stating a consistent or approved philosophy, but by staging encounters between different peoples that highlight their ecological differences. The descriptions of these differences cue readers to examine themselves and to assess their own ecological behaviors. Although it is impossible to know whether ancient readers in fact interpreted ancient ethnographies this way, I investigate the ecological meanings available to readers of Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides.

Reader-response is especially helpful when it comes to fragmentary authors like

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[93] I use "her" to describe the reader throughout. This is partly because I am drawing on my own experience as a reader who uses this pronoun and partly to counterbalance the male writers and masculine pronouns that dominate ancient sources.

[94] E.g. Slater 1990, Doherty 1996, and Wheeler 1999. For seminal theory, see Iser 1976 and Jauss 1977.

[95] But see Grethlein 2013, and Moles 2002, 33: "Modern critics seek to interpret texts rather than uncover their writers' beliefs."

[96] Baragwanath 2008. Rood's suggestion that ethnographies are moments of pause which "can be read as a sign of resistance on the level of the narrative to the forward momentum of Persian expansion" or which otherwise "pander[] to the spirit of Persian expansion … [by] highlight[ing] what is at stake for the Persai" (2007, 125) illustrates how this kind of interpretation can work. Different meanings are made by different readers, but the number of readings is not infinite and it is possible – even appropriate – for the critic to highlight certain possible readings over others.

Megasthenes and Agatharchides. Christopher Baron has recently argued that it is irresponsible to study fragments in the collections, i.e. Jacoby's, to which scholars have become accustomed. While I agree with Baron that "we can only attempt to reach larger conclusions about major historians or historical writing in general when we have fully accounted for the distortion of the cover-text and attempted to re-contextualize the fragments,"[97] my way of reading is different. Instead of drawing conclusions about the *Indika* or *On the Red Sea* as they existed when Megasthenes and Agatharchides wrote them, which would indeed require a full account of their cover-texts, my readings reflect the meanings that can be made from the texts as we have them. My interpretations are nevertheless conservative. I confine my major arguments about Megasthenes to fragments transmitted by multiple later authors, and I favor Diodorus's transmission over Photius's, not because it is earlier (*recentiores non deteriores*) but because his cultural milieu and bias will be easier for Classicists to assess.[98]

For most of the history of classical scholarship, "ethnography" has meant "Herodotus" and the perceived problem of the relationship between Herodotus's ethnographic writing and historical account of the Greco-Persian Wars. Below, I deconstruct this debate in order to propose a new, eco-historical function for ethnography in Greek writing at large.

Ethnography vs. History

In his 1913 entry on Herodotus in the *Realencyclopädie*, Felix Jacoby famously divided the *Histories* into dependent halves, the first largely ethnographic and the second historical: "We have from Herodotus a series of stand-alone works about barbarian lands … which were all then

[97] Baron 2013, 5.
[98] Sacks 1990 is particularly helpful.

inserted as digressions from the history of the Persians."[99] Jacoby goes on to describe Herodotus's process of composition as follows:

> "Herodotus began as a traveller like Hecataeus, with the intention of producing a description of the inhabited world in the manner of Hecataeus; only better than his, with a different geographic rationale, perhaps even (the Egyptian *logos* speaks to this) with the intention of more strongly highlighting the historical moment, especially to the extent that his account referred to buildings and royal monuments. Likewise, he may have often collected things which only later found their true use in a larger context. Then, wherever he travelled, he found traces of the great war and memories about it in many regions[.]"[100]

Jacoby's narrative imagines a young Herodotus traveling the world in Hecataeus's footsteps (metaphorically, at least) before developing a truly historical perspective. Why Herodotus should have retained this earlier, juvenile material in his final product is unclear. Perhaps, like many scholars, Herodotus could not resist the temptation to include the background of his project in the project itself; Jacoby speculates that Herodotus's travels inspired his later interest in the Greco-Persian Wars.

Jacoby's division of the *Histories* into ethnography and history – the characterization of the *Histories* as somehow "double," "Doppelgesicht," "Ianuskopf" – and his teleological account of the work's composition have colored the reception of Herodotus and the historians who emulated him ever since. François Hartog noted that the division between Herodotus the historian and Herodotus the ethnographer predates Jacoby by at least a century, but that the prominence of Jacoby's article on Herodotus for the original *Pauly*, supported by the

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[99] Jacoby 1913, 352: "Wir haben von H. eine Reihe selbständiger Arbeiten über Barbarenländer … die jetzt alle als Exkurse der Geschichte Persiens eingefügt sind."

[100] Jacoby 1913, 353: "H. hat begonnen als Reisender wie Hekataios, mit der Absicht, eine Beschreibung der bewohnten Erde zu liefern wie Hekataios; nur besser als er, mit einer andern geographischen Grundanschauung, vielleicht gleich (der ägyptische λόγος spricht däfur) mit der Absict, das historische Moment stärker zu betonen, insbesondere soweit es sich an Bauten und Königsdenkmäler knüpfte. Manches auch mag er damals schon gesammelt haben, was später erst seine eigentliche Verwertung in größerem Zusammenhang fand. Denn wer damals reiste, fand in vielen Gegenden Spuren des großen Krieges und Erinnerungen daran…"

evolutionary theory Jacoby constructed to rationalize "the two Herodotuses," elevated this interpretation of the *Histories* into an orthodoxy.[101] Jacoby's prominence in Hartog's survey further concretized this division. Hartog responds to Jacoby by deconstructing and then reassembling the "Ianuskopf" as a "Miroir," which reflects not only Herodotus the "father of history/father of lies" in ancient writing about Herodotus, but the *Histories* as written by two Herodotuses, one "the historian of the Persian Wars, and another who is above all the Herodotus of Others, of non-Greeks."[102]

Hartog is careful to credit Jacoby's many critics, including Immerwahr, Pohlenz, and others who have tried to trouble Jacoby's division of the *Histories.* Yet these and later champions of the unity of Herodotus's narrative find themselves at a loss to account for his ethnographic material.[103] Immerwahr, following Pohlenz 1937, was the first to convincingly account both for the paratactic texture of the *Histories* and argue for its coherence. On Immerwahr's account, the ethnographies, like the other *logoi* of which the *Histories* is composed, serve Herodotus's main story, the conflict between Europe and Asia. Immerwahr rightly points out that the ethnographies are introduced in the course of Herodotus's description of the progression of Persian conquest,[104] and makes many meaningful observations about the way the ethnographies illuminate the conflict-narrative, but his theory falls down in light of book two, the Egyptian *logos*.[105] He

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[101] Hartog 1980, 49.
[102] "L'historien des guerres médiques et un autre Hérodote, avant tout celui des autres, des non-Grecs" Hartog 1980, 49. For more aspects of Hartog's "mirror," see pp. 51-53.
[103] For an excellent introduction to the interpretation of Herodotus's narrative style, see de Jong 2002, 245-266.
[104] Immerwahr 1966, 318.
[105] As he himself recognizes: "The length of the Egyptian Ethnographic *Logos*, which fills the whole of Book 2, may seem to obscure the unified structure of this account" Immerwahr 1966, 95. *Nomos* (custom) produces ethnic character and thus can explain some of the Greek-Persian conflict that Immerwahr argues is Herodotus's primary concern (315), but he is unable to account for the fact that many of the *nomoi* (customs) Herodotus relates do not speak directly to the

acknowledges that his study "has the effect of isolating the purely historiographical aspects of the work, together with their philosophical foundations, to the detriment of its anthropological, geographical,[106] ethnographic, and essentially anecdotal features" (i.e. moralizing and religious reflection), but excuses this shortcoming because "Herodotus is not principally a moralist, a theologian, or an anthropologist, but a historian."[107] Although Immerwahr's thesis flattens the *Histories* into a series of equal, interdependent *logoi*, his sense of Herodotus's project necessarily sidelines the ethnographic and moral material of the *Histories*.[108]

Neither can de Jong's more recent, temporal approach to Herodotus's narrative cope with ethnographic passages. De Jong argues that the *Histories* are "anachronical": "like Homer, [Herodotus] has restricted the time span of his main story, but has included a much larger period in the form of anachronies: analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (flashforwards)."[109] Nevertheless, she does not include ethnographic material in this scheme: "What about the ethnographical and geographical [digressions]? … All narratives contain descriptions." De Jong's "description" is another name for what cannot be explained, though she does believe, like Immerwahr, that these descriptions play their part in the narrative.[110] Like Immerwahr, de Jong sees ethnography as the handmaiden of history. Though she abandons the language of

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conflict at hand.

[106] Herodotus's use of geography is often subsumed under the (perceived) problem of his use of ethnography, but the issues are very different. See Purves 2010, 118-234, for her excellent discussion of Herodotus's "prose geography" and argument that geography is inherent to the *Histories*' structure and style.

[107] Immerwahr 1966, 308.

[108] Immerwahr 1966, 315 concludes by arguing that ethnography is the autopsy that backs up the hearsay from which Herodotus constructs much of what he relates about the Persian Wars, neglecting the fact that Herodotus also acquires much of his ethnographic material through ἀκοή.

[109] de Jong 2002, 253.

[110] de Jong 2002, 254: "The analepses and prolepses introduce the necessary background information on people and places, while the descriptions set the stage on which the events of the main story will be played out or provide the narratees with the information which they need to appreciate what follows."

"digression," and strives to discover the value of the ethnographic material as description, setting, and background, she too is unable to explain the abundance of this material in the *Histories*.

It is clear that Herodotus's ethnographic material disturbs even the most strident defenders of his narrative style, strengthening the sense of the ethnographies as "digressions" and vestiges of the author's juvenilia even for scholars most concerned with reading the *Histories* as an integrated whole. The modern historian's response to the relationship between ancient ethnography and history resembles the way ancient scholars describe the satyr play, as both interlude in the serious affairs of tragedy (Diomedes *GL* 3) and as a developmental step in the evolution of tragedy (Arist. *Poet.* 1449a 19-21). On the modern account, ethnography apes history just as satyr play apes tragedy, taking up space in a historical narrative without rising to the lofty heights of real history.[111]

History and the Inaccessibility of the Past

Modern scholars' efforts to explain or explain away the ethnographic material of Herodotus's *Histories* have produced unsatisfying results. The ethnographers who immediately succeeded Herodotus, including Megasthenes and Agatharchides, pose the same problem for modern readers; whether or not their ethnographies were embedded in event-based histories, what they wrote about India and the Red Sea Region has been dismissed as nonhistorical. In order to better address this modern debate over ethnography and history, I turn to a different problem, one that preoccupies ancient writers themselves.

Greek historical writers often begin their works by lamenting the inaccessibility of much

[111] My thanks to Matt Cohn for sharing his work on the Satyr play.

of human history. Thucydides' comments (1.1.3, 1.21.1) are the best known, but, as Denis Feeney has shown, epistemological anxiety both precedes Thucydides and is replicated throughout the historical writing that follows him.[112] Herodotus, who "is playing off a Homeric conception of the deep past as a time inaccessible to normal human knowledge," also grappled with the boundary between mythical time, *spatium mythicum*, and historical time, *spatium historicum*.[113] But chronology, the ordering of events in time, is only one of the tasks of history, and the methods that different authors develop for dividing chronological history from the often unorderable realms of myth do not prevent them from reporting information that falls outside the boundaries they set. Herodotus, for example, includes "mythic" moments in his account of the past, but does not try to integrate these moments into a comprehensive chronology with a single claim on the truth.[114] Herodotus is invested in the difference between what he can know with certainty and what he cannot know with certainty, but acknowledges that some material falls in the middle; it can be reported, but not integrated into a secure ordering of the past. Though committed to historical time and its demarcation, Herodotus is also sensitive to the ways in which that boundary is both mobile and porous, and is constantly trying to reach beyond it to enfold even more of time into history.

Both before and especially after Herodotus, Greek writers took another approach to the deep past, imagining it as a series of stages characterized by the gradual acquisition of technology, culture, and refinement. This mode of writing did not constitute a defined genre in antiquity, but has been designated as "historical anthropology" or "cultural history" by modern

[112] On the stratification of time in Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, and those who come after them, see Feeney 2007, especially 72-86. To the authors Feeney discusses we can also add Plato, *Tim*. 22e-23c.
[113] Feeney 2007, 74, referring to *Iliad* 2.485-86.
[114] Feeney 2007, 72-76.

scholars.[115] Descriptions of the deep Greek past begin with Homer, Hesiod, and the Presocratics, though elements of their thinking are also evident in tragedy, and the discipline culminates in the now lost treatises by Democritus and Dicaearchus. Embedded cultural histories were conventional in both prose histories (Diodorus Siculus 1.8) and later poetry (Lucretius book 5),[116] and cannot be designated as clearly fictional or not. Ancient cultural histories do not derive from scientific studies of the deep past, though they may contain genuine, culturally transmitted memories of centuries past; rather, ancient cultural history is a hybrid of history and philosophy, a creative theory extrapolated from the known.

"Cultural history," which is what I will call this mode (rather than "historical anthropology," which may remind the reader too much of ethnography as a method of modern anthropology), imagines many aspects of the deep past, from technology to politics, clothing to marriage. But it also deeply interested *bios*, "livelihood," "way of life," or "method of subsistence." Ethnographers too are interested in *bios*, and I will discuss this connection as the chapter proceeds, but not all ethnographers use the word *bios* when they describe "way of life." Though this term is used by both Megasthenes and Agatharchides, in Herodotus, *bios* is used exclusively to denote "life" as the span of one's living (e.g. 1.32), or "livelihood" as an extension of one's profession (e.g. 2.47, 8.26). Herodotus uses *diaita,* on the other hand, to designate a way of life (e.g. 1.215, 3.102, 4.78, 4.116) or, occasionally, a specific form of subsistence (3.23, 4.109). In what follows, however, I speak of *bios* and "*bios* characterization" in all three writers.

In his *Works and Days*, Hesiod describes shared human prehistory as a succession of *genē*, or races. These *genē* degenerate from a Golden Race who live lives of ease, nourished by

[115] The terms "cultural history" and "historical anthropology" are modern. For a brief introduction to this mode of writing in antiquity, see Saunders 2001, 237-239.
[116] Cf. Lovejoy and Boas 1935, Blundell 1986, Cole 1967, Edelstein 1967. Cole 1967, 5 notes the consistent Presocratic interest in cultural origins, despite the absence of systematic treatises.

the fruit of the earth, to an Iron Race that must toil for its subsistence (109-201). Hesiod does not confine his characterization of the *genē* to questions of *bios*, but *bios* plays an important role in demarcating especially the deep past inhabited by the Golden Race and the present Iron Race to which Hesiod belongs. The importance of *bios* is confirmed by the opening of the poem, in which Hesiod anticipates the Ages narrative by describing what life was like before and after Prometheus's crime as the difference between humans having a secure *bios* and then losing it (42-93). Hesiod's theorization of stages of human history is picked up next by Plato in the *Laws* (3.677-682). There, the interlocutors are primarily interested in stages of government, but discuss as well the methods of subsistence and technological skill of people at various stages of development.[117]

At the same time as these writers were staging history, others used *bios* to think about different economies. Aristotle's *Politics* describes distinct *bioi* of pastoralism, hunting and fishing, and raiding (1256a-b).[118] Just as there are carnivores and herbivores among the earth's nonhuman animals, Aristotle says, so too do human *ethnē* vary in their mode of subsistence. Though Aristotle does not present the *bioi* of Others as developmental stages, his schema offered his student, Dicaearchus of Messana, a base for articulating his three stages of human development in the *Life of Greece*. None of Dicaearchus's works are extant, but he was a prolific and wide-ranging scholar active c. 300-320 BCE and popular through the Roman period. Although fragmentary, we know that his *Life of Greece* quoted the *Works and Days* and adapted Hesiod's ages through Aristotle's economies, describing human development as a progression from a golden age of gathering, to an intermediate stage of pastoralism, and a final stage of

[117] See Lovejoy and Boas 1935, 155-191, for Plato's cultural history and Cole 1967, 97-106, for this passage of the *Laws*.
[118] See Shaw 1982/3, 17-19 for a discussion of these *bioi* in relation to Herodotus.

agriculturalism.[119]

As the influence of Aristotle's ethnic *bioi* on Dicaearchus's temporal *bioi* makes clear, cultural history and ethnography were related and mutually influential disciplines. Even before Dicaearchus, Greek writers were combining ethnic and temporal thinking. A symbiosis of the two, the so-called "comparative method," as it is known in anthropology,[120] compared past Greek time to living peoples. Thucydides says that "there are many … respects in which a striking resemblance might appear between the old Greek way of life and present barbarian practice" (1.6.6).[121] Plato, in the passage of the *Laws* just cited, notes that earlier forms of government are preserved in other parts of the world (680b), and Megasthenes compares early Indoi to living Scythians through their shared *bios*:

> Long ago the Indoi were nomadic, just like the non-agricultural Scythians, who wander in their wagons and exchange one part of Scythia for another, neither dwelling in cities nor revering the temples of the gods (F12 = Arrian 7.2-4).[122]

Other comparisons of old Greek and current non-Greek *nomoi* focus on attitudes to nakedness (Pl., *Rep.* 452c), religion (Pl. *Crat*. 397d), linguistics (*Crat.* 421d), or military practice (Ar. fr. 160).[123] Plato, for example, says that "not too long ago it seemed embarrassing and ridiculous, as it seems to many barbarians now, for men to be seen naked (*Rep.* 452c)."[124]

Herodotus is not usually considered a proponent of the comparative method because he

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[119] Burstein 1989, 27. For the *Life of Greece*, see Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf 2001. Cf. Philochorus *FGrH* 328 F2 for nomadism preceding agriculturalism. For Dicaearchus's relationship to Plato and Aristotle, see Cambiano and Repici 1989.

[120] Bock 1966 surveys the history of the idea.

[121] πολλὰ δ' ἂν καὶ ἄλλα τις ἀποδείξειε τὸ παλαιὸν Ἑλληνικὸν ὁμοιότροπα τῷ νῦν βαρβαρικῷ διαιτώμενον.

[122] πάλαι μὲν δὴ νομάδας εἶναι Ἰνδοὺς καθάπερ Σκυθέων τοὺς οὐκ ἀροτῆρας, οἳ ἐπὶ τῆισιν ἁμάξησι πλανώμενοι ἄλλοτε ἄλλην τῆς Σκυθίης ἀμείβουσιν, οὐτε πόληας οἰκέοντες οὐτε ἱερὰ θεῶν σέβοντες·

[123] These and other examples collected at Tuplin 1999, 61, n.38, and discussed in Rood (forthcoming).

[124] οὐ πολὺς χρόνος ἐξ οὗ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐδόκει αἰσχρὰ εἶναι καὶ γελοῖα ἅπερ νῦν τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν βαρβάρων, γυμνοὺς ἄνδρας ὁρᾶσθαι

does not state it explicitly, but Tim Rood has argued that the *Histories* contain close parallels to Thucydides 1.6.6.[125] Herodotus relates past Greek and current non-Greek writing habits, for example:

> And the Ionians call papyrus sheets skins, as they have done from antiquity, because at that time they used to use goat and sheep skins for want of papyrus. And many barbarians write on such skins even today (5.58.3).[126]

Whether or not one agrees with Rood that this statement of Herodotus counts as a fully-fledged application of the comparative method, it is an example of the general association in Greek thought between distant times and distant places,[127] an association that goes back at least as far as Hesiod, who placed the remnant of an older race at the edges of the earth (*WD*, 168). Herodotus, scholars have noted, characterizes distant peoples as occupying a blessed, golden-age existence. The Aithiopes, for example, who occupy "the ends of the earth," *ta eschata gēs* (3.25.5) and eat milk and meat rather than bread (3.23.1), are tall and beautiful (3.20.1), scrupulous (3.21.2), long-lived (3.21.3), and despise luxury (3.22). The Aithiopes' food-source is half-golden and half-pastoral; it appears spontaneously for the common Aithiopian people (3.18), as in the golden age, though the food is in fact the product of pastoralism. Nevertheless, the abundance of their food and the ease in which they enjoy it is mirrored in Hesiod's Golden Race,

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[125] Rood, 16-19 (forthcoming).

[126] Καὶ τὰς βύβλους διφθέρας καλέουσι ἀπὸ τοῦ παλαιοῦ οἱ Ἴωνες, ὅτι κοτὲ ἐν σπάνι βύβλων ἐχρέωντο διφθέρῃσι αἰγέῃσί τε καὶ οἰέῃσι· ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πολλοὶ τῶν βαρβάρων ἐς τοιαύτας διφθέρας γράφουσι.

[127] The resemblance between distant times and distant places in Greek thought has been long-recognized. According to Romm 1992, 47: Greek writers "correlate historic time with geographic space …. thereby locating the earliest stratum of cosmic evolution beyond the edges of the earth." Almost a century earlier, E.E. Sikes 1914, 5 made a similar claim: "[T]he outer world was either filled with semi-human monsters, or with people who, in some measure at least, still enjoyed the Golden Age." As Sauer 1992, 117 says, Posidonius and other writers who describe the *Keltoi* as Homeric heroes, "align geographic and temporal distance." ("Ces auteurs font coïncider l'éloignement géographique et la distance temporelle.") See also Rosselini and Saïd 1978.

as in subsequent imagined golden ages.[128]

These general associations between distant peoples and past times are well-known, but Herodotus's engagement with the emerging discipline of cultural history is more thorough-going than has been recognized. Like ancient cultural historians who describe the stages of Greek prehistory in terms of a series of *bioi*, Herodotus often characterizes ethnic Others by their method of subsistence, their *diaita*. Of the Persians who did not join Cyrus, he says that "all [are] tillers of the soil [*arotēres*]," except "the Dai, the Mardi, the Dropici, the Sagartii, all wandering herdsmen [*nomades*]" (1.125).[129] There are marsh-dwelling Indoi who subsist on raw fish (3.98), nomadic ones who eat raw flesh, including human flesh (3.99), and vegetarians (3.100). This attention to *bios* places Herodotus in a larger conversation about the relationship between subsistence, ethnicity, and development over time, a conversation that would produce full articulations of the comparative method in the authors who immediately followed Herodotus, including Thucydides and Plato, and cultural histories in the generation after him. Though Herodotus has been seen as just another writer, like Hesiod, who associated Greek past and non-Greek present, the *Histories* were instead a bridge between archaic correlations of time and place and late-classical applications of this correlation to the study of the distant past. Herodotus may or may not have himself been trying to theorize the Greek past through the non-Greek present, but his text was available for Greek readers to interpret this way, and for cultural historians after him to draw upon.

Seeing the *Histories* as proto-cultural history can help those scholars who have struggled to account for the purpose of Herodotus's ethnographies. Above, I noted de Jong's account of the

[128] Feeney 2007, 116. Gatz 1967.
[129] οὗτοι μὲν πάντες ἀροτῆρές εἰσι, οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι νομάδες, Δάοι, Μάρδοι, Δροπικοί, Σαγάρτιοι (1.125).

structure of Herodotean narrative. Though de Jong does not address ethnographic material, ethnography fits quite well into her temporal understanding of Herodotean narrative. If Herodotus's narrative is enriched and complicated by prolepses (flash-forwards) and analepses (flash-backs) it is possible to categorize ethnographic *logoi* as a kind of analepsis, a looking backward to an earlier time by depicting a distant people who practice an earlier *bios*. Like contemporary Pelasgians whom he uses to imagine the language of past Athenians (1.57), Herodotus's characterization of present-day non-Greeks in the language of the deep Greek past allows his readers to partially access that past. Ethnography is a way of surpassing the limits of history to imagine what people were like and what society was like at earlier points of time. The events of those times cannot be known, but the quality of human life can be known. This is not true in all cases, of course. Ethnographies that do not "stage" Others at a moment of human development do not have historical valence, unless readers have a temporal schema of developmental stages in mind. Rather, ethnographies have the potential to look into the past and do so more or less emphatically depending on how much their language overlaps with the language of cultural history and thus the degree to which readers are primed to read ethnic Others as inhabiting past times. For readers familiar with cultural histories embedded in other texts or persuaded by the comparative method as deployed by historians, ethnic Others who are represented as practicing an earlier *bios* will act as a calque for the Greek past.

Turning from the correlation of time and space to the specifics of this dynamic, I next argue that ethnographies actually map time, that is, that Greek writers imagined the peoples surrounding them not only as occupying earlier strata of time, but progressively more distant times.

Ethnography as a Recursive Map of History

As Klaus Müller noted in his study of ancient ethnography, Herodotus places other peoples in concentric circles around Greece at the center of the world, with each circle representing a more remote stage of human history: *Wildbeuter* (hunter-gatherers) at the edges, *Viehzüchter* (cattle-grazers), farther in, and *Bauern* (farmers) surrounding the *Hochkultur* at the center.[130] The most remote, like the Aithiopes, gather their food from a freely-giving earth,[131] but peoples at less remote distances rely on increasingly refined methods of technology; if the golden age is characterized by lacking certain things, then peoples close to the center of the earth possess more and more of those things.

Ethnography maps time, but the movement of other peoples through time is not as perfectly linear as Müller assumes. Though ethnographers do generally locate less developed peoples farther from themselves, Brent Shaw has observed that Herodotus's tendency to categorize his ethnographic subjects by mode of subsistence[132] applies to his description of a "single" people as well; there are nomadic Scythians, pastoralist Scythians, and Scythians who farm; development increases as they approach the sea.[133]

Herodotus applies this internal differentiation to several other *ethnē*. Whereas the majority of the Babylonians are agriculturalists,

> There are three clans of Babylonians that eat nothing but fish. After catching them, they dry them in the sun, and do the following: they put the fish in a mortar, pound it with pestles, and sift it through a fine-meshed cloth. And according to their individual wishes, they either knead the meal into a cake and eat it, or else bake it into bread (1.200).[134]

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[130] Müller 1970, vol. 1, 121.
[131] Herodotus rationalizes this superabundance (3.18) but provides no ultimate origin for the food.
[132] Shaw 1982/3, 8.
[133] Shaw 1982/3, 11. See also Hartog 1980, 310.
[134] Εἰσὶ δὲ αὐτῶν πατριαὶ τρεῖς αἳ οὐδὲν ἄλλο σιτέονται εἰ μὴ ἰχθῦς μοῦνον, τοὺς ἐπείτε ἂν θηρεύσαντες αὐήνωσι πρὸς ἥλιον, ποιεῦσι τάδε· ἐσβάλλουσι ἐς ὄλμον καὶ λεήναντες

Likewise, the marsh-dwelling Egyptians "have discovered a manner of subsistence that is cheaper" than what the rest of the Egyptians possess. Some eat water-flowers and papyrus, while others "live on fish alone" (2.92).[135] The Babylonians and Egyptians are generally agriculturalists, but Herodotus's description of them is bordered by nonagricultural fishers and gatherers. The succession of *bioi* that characterizes Herodotus's world as a whole can be found in miniature within the ethnography of a single region. Müller's schema for understanding Herodotus's world is generally correct, but misses the way individual peoples and regions are further subdivided in the *Histories*.

This recursive patterning is visible also in Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea*. Stanley Burstein has already noted Agatharchides' employment of Dicaearchus's three *bioi* of gathering, pastoralism, and agriculturalism to classify different peoples living around the Red Sea.[136] In addition to classifying people by *bios*, Agatharchides also describes them in a geographical succession:

> [Agatharchides says] that in the southern bend of Egypt there are four big groups: one that lives close beside the rivers, and sows sesame and millet; one that lives around the marshes, and gathers reeds and tender undergrowth; one that wanders where it wills, and subsists on meat and milk; and one that is based on the coast, and catches fish (F30a = Photius *Bibl*. 250.33, 449a).[137]

In this passage, Agatharchides describes his ethnographic subjects in reverse developmental order, from most advanced, the Sabaeans, who cultivate sesame and millet; to the least, the Fisheaters who catch fish. Although the gatherers and pastoralists have switched places, the

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ὑπέροισι σῶσι διὰ σινδόνος· καὶ ὃς μὲν ἂν βούληται αὐτῶν ἅτε μᾶζαν μαξάμενος ἔδει, ὁ δὲ ἄρτου τρόπον ὀπτήσας.

[135] ἀτὰρ πρὸς εὐτελείην τῶν σιτίων τάδε σφι ἄλλα ἐξεύρηται. Οἱ δέ τινες αὐτῶν ζώουσι ἀπὸ τῶν ἰχθύων μούνων.

[136] Burstein 1989, 27.

[137] Ὅτι παρὰ τὴν νότιον τῆς Αἰγύπτου κλίσιν τέσσαρά ἐστι φῦλα τὰ μέγιστα, τὸ μὲν τοῖς ποταμοῖς παρεζευγμένον, ὃ σπείρει σήσαμον καὶ κέγχρον, τὸ δὲ περὶ τὰς λίμνας οἰκοῦν, ὃ τοῦ καλάμου καὶ τῆς ὕλης ἅπτεται τῆς ἁπαλῆς, τὸ δὲ εἰκῇ πλανώμενον, ὃ σαρκὶ καὶ γάλακτι παραπέμπει τὸν βίον, τὸ δὲ ἐκ τῆς παραλίας ὁρμώμενον, τοὺς ἰχθύας ἀγρεῦον.

general succession is preserved. The Fisheaters might be classed as "gatherers" like the group that gathers reeds, but, as Agatharchides goes on to describe, their way of life is almost golden: the fish they catch wash up on the shores twice a day, into their waiting laps (F32b = DS 3.15.3). At another point he says that "they rely on food sources that are unfailing and always at hand, as though Poseidon and Demeter had swapped places" (F34b = DS 3.16.4).[138] Asserting the "unfailing" nature of their food supply again associates the Fisheaters with the golden age, while the comparison between Poseidon and Demeter emphasizes the sufficiency of fish as a replacement for agricultural products, and clearly demarcates agricultural and nonagricultural *bioi*.

Within the relatively small Red Sea region, Agatharchides reproduces the range of *bioi* that Herodotus mapped onto the whole world. But the Fisheaters themselves are differentiated into more or less developed subgroups as well. The Fisheaters within the straits (i.e. above the southern opening of the Red Sea) subsist on fish, but the Fisheaters who live beyond the straits, in the Horn of Africa, get all of their nutrition and water from fish; their diet is even simpler than that of the Northern Fisheaters, and like the earliest humans, these Southern Fisheaters do not possess spoken language.[139] Like Herodotus, Agatharchides maps *bioi* onto the space of the land he is investigating, and then differentiates subgroups of a given *ethnos* by characterizing them as more or less advanced than one another.

Megasthenes' Indoi are more homogenous than Herodotus's Scythians, Babylonians, and Egyptians, or Agatharchides' Fisheaters. Nevertheless, Megasthenes represents the full range of *bioi* in the social structure of the Indoi, in their *merē*, also called *genē,* or "classes":

[138] ὡς ἂν τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος τὸ τῆς Δήμητρος ἔργον μετειληφότος
[139] For lack of language as a time marker, see Ameling 2008, Gera 2003.

> [The first *genos*,] the wise men, pass their lives naked … and they eat fruit in season and the bark of trees, and the bark is no less sweet and nutritious than palm-dates.[140] And the second is the farmers … and the third are the herders, shepherds and cowherds. They dwell neither in cities nor in towns, but are nomadic and live in the mountains. They pay taxes on their herds and hunt birds and wild beasts throughout the country (F19a = Arrian 11.7-11).[141]

Although not presented in developmental order, the first three *merē* of Indian society reproduce the three basic *bioi* of agriculture, pastoralism, and golden age abundance. The Indoi as a whole employ agriculture, but retain the other *bioi* in their social structure. The *merē* in Megasthenes' *Indika* have often been read as early evidence for the modern Indian caste system,[142] and this is one possibility. Another is that Megasthenes filtered a proto-caste system through Greek *bioi*; because there is no other ancient text as early as Megasthenes' to confirm the theory of caste, it is impossible to know what Megasthenes intended. Instead, the interpretation of the *merē* depends on the individual reader's perspective. For modern readers familiar with

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[140] Roller notes that the nakedness and bark-eating, here and in F33, may be Nearchus's contribution rather than Megasthenes'. Either way, it is signifant that the early *Indoi* in F12 (= Arrian 7.3) also eat bark; bark-eating is a characteristic of early development in this text.

[141] οὗτοι γυμνοὶ διαιτῶνται οἱ σοφισταί … σιτέονται δὲ <τὰ> ὡραῖα καὶ τὸν φλοιὸν τῶν δένδρων, γλυκύν τε ὄντα τὸν φλοιὸν καὶ τρόφιμον οὐ μεῖον ἤπερ οἱ βάλανοι τῶν φοινίκων. δεύτεροι δ' ἐπὶ τούτοισιν οἱ γεωργοί εἰσιν … τρίτοι δέ εἰσιν Ἰνδοῖσιν οἱ νομέες, οἱ ποιμένες τε καὶ βουκόλοι. καὶ οὗτοι οὐτε κατὰ πόληας οὐτε ἐν τῇσι κώμησιν οἰκέουσι, νομάδες δέ εἰσι καὶ ἀνὰ τὰ ὄρεα βιοτεύουσι. φόρον δὲ καὶ οὗτοι ἀπὸ τῶν κτηνέων ἀποφέρουσι, καὶ θηρεύουσιν οὗτοι ἀνὰ τὴν χώρην ὄρνιθάς τε καὶ ἄγρια θηρία.

The language differs somewhat in the fragments from Diodorus and Strabo. In the fragment from Diodorus, *genē* are instead called *mere*; the first class are "τὸ τῶν φιλοσόφων," the fourth is that "τεχνιτῶν," the fifth "στρατιωτῶν," the sixth "ἐφόρων," and the seventh are "τὸ βουλεῦον μὲν καὶ συνεδρεῦον τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν βουλευομένοις" (F4 = DS 2.40-41). In Strabo, the third *meros* is "τὸ τῶν ποιμένων καὶ θηρευτῶν," the fourth are "τοὺς ἐργαζομένους τὰς τέχνας καὶ τοὺς καπηλικοὺς καὶ οἷς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἡ ἐργασία," the fifth are, as in Arrian, "τὸ τῶν πολεμιστῶν," and the seventh are "οἱ σύμβουλοι καὶ σύνεδροι τοῦ βασιλέως, ἐξ ὧν τὰ ἀρχεῖα καὶ δικαστήρια καὶ ἡ διοίκησις τῶν ὅλων" (F19b = Strabo 15.1.39-49).

[142] Karttunen 1997, 82-7 gives an overview of the prevailing theories. As Karttunen notes, although Megasthenes may have derived the number of Indian *genē/merē* from Herodotus, the categories themselves must originate elsewhere. See Thapar 2000, 488-512, for an update to her own views, including an interesting argument about Megasthenes' interaction with Aristotle.

India's later castes, understanding the *merē* in the *Indika* as castes is almost irresistible. For Greek readers, this possibility is more remote, though not impossible; there is much that we do not know about what ancient readers knew or imagined about their world. For readers familiar with Greek cultural history and stagings of the Greek past, as well as Herodotean and other ethnographic correlations between living peoples and past times, the ecological aspect of the *merē* would have stood out, making the *merē* living reminders of Indian (and Greek) prehistory. The wise men live like gatherers, while the farmers and pastoralists practice developmentally later *bioi*.

There is evidence within the *Indika* that this reading was not only available but primary for Greek readers. In describing early Indian history, Megasthenes says that:

> Long ago the Indoi were nomadic, just like the non-agricultural Scythians, who wander in their wagons and exchange one part of Scythia for another, neither dwelling in cities nor revering the temples of the gods (F12 = Arrian 7.2).[143]

This explicit comparison of early Indoi to living Scythians is picked up by a verbal echo between the early Indoi and the living Indian sages. Just as the early Indoi "wore the skins of wild animals they had killed and ate the bark of trees," (F12 = Arrian 7.3),[144] so too do the living sages, members of the first *meros*, "eat what is in season and the bark of trees" (F19a = Arrian 11.8).[145] This is paralleled in other transmissions as well. In Diodorus's version of the *Indika*, the earliest Indoi "used the skins of native animals for clothing, just like the Greeks did," (F4 = DS 38.2)[146] while Strabo tells us that the sages "spend time in a grove outside the city in a suitable enclosure,

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[143] πάλαι μὲν δὴ νομάδας εἶναι Ἰνδοὺς καθάπερ Σκυθέων τοὺς οὐκ ἀροτῆρας, οἳ ἐπὶ τῆισιν ἁμάξηισι πλανώμενοι ἄλλοτε ἄλλην τῆς Σκυθίης ἀμείβουσιν, οὐτε πόληας οἰκέοντες οὐτε ἱερὰ θεῶν σέβοντες·

[144] ἀμπίσχεσθαι μὲν δορὰς θηρείους ὅσων κατακάνοιεν, σιτέεσθαι δὲ τῶν δενδρέων τὸν φλοιόν·

[145] σιτέονται δὲ <τὰ> ὡραῖα καὶ τὸν φλοιὸν τῶν δένδρων

[146] κεχρῆσθαι … ἐσθῆσι δὲ ταῖς δοραῖς τῶν ἐγχωρίων ζώιων, καθάπερ καὶ παρ᾽ Ἕλλησιν·

living simply, on beds of straw and skins" (F33 = Strabo 15.1.59).[147] Wearing animal skins and eating bark are associated both with early Indian/Greek history and the current *bios* of the first *meros*.

Within the *meros* of the wise men there is further differentiation according to development:

> Of the Garmanes, [Megasthenes] says that the most honored are those called the Forest-dwellers, who live in the woods on leaves and wild fruit [Hylobioi], clothed in bark and eschewing wine and sex … Second in honor to the Forest-dwellers are the doctors … [who] live simply but not in the wild, and eat rice and barley (F33 = Strabo 15.1.60).[148]

Like the Indoi of early history (F12 = Arrian 7.3), the most honored Garmanes eat wild foods and use bark. The doctors, on the other hand, eat cultivated crops as most "modern" Indoi do. Similarly, the other group of philosophers, the Brachmanes, live simply and in the open in their young adulthood, and then graduate to linen clothing and meat eating at the age of 37 (F33 = Strabo 15.1.59). Like Herodotus and Agatharchides, Megasthenes uses *bios* to distinguish and characterize subgroups of the Indoi, and strongly primes readers to interpret these subgroups as remnants of early history. The *Indika* bears the marks of cultural history as the *Histories* and *On the Red Sea* do, and shows how ethnographers could use bios-characterization to achieve various ends.

Ethnographers beginning with Herodotus map stages of universal human development onto existing non-Greeks, and then distinguish individual *ethnē* by further dividing them according to *bios*. This recursive mapping turns the world into a fractal, a shape whose overall pattern is repeated in its constituent parts. The shape of time in ethnography has implications for

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[147] διατρίβειν δὲ τοὺς φιλοσόφους ἐν ἄλσει πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ὑπὸ περιβόλωι συμμέτρωι, λιτῶς ζῶντας ἐν στιβάσι καὶ δοραῖς

[148] τοὺς δὲ Γαρμᾶνας, τοὺς μὲν ἐντιμοτάτους ʽΥλοβίους φησὶν ὀνομάζεσθαι, ζῶντας ἐν ταῖς ὕλαις ἀπὸ φύλλων καὶ καρπῶν ἀγρίων, ἐσθῆτος φλοιῶν δενδρείων, ἀφροδισίων χωρὶς καὶ οἴνου … μετὰ δὲ τοὺς ʽΥλοβίους δευτερεύειν κατὰ τιμὴν τοὺς … λιτοὺς μέν, μὴ ἀγραύλους δέ, ὀρύζηι καὶ ἀλφίτοις τρεφομένους…

how we understand and categorize texts in the genre. Traditionally, ethnographies have been studied by region or regional discourse – the terms "Orientalism" and "Borealism" have been especially popular.[149] People of the East often share characteristics, as do people of the West and North, but the development of these peoples, and, especially, their relative development, is as important as their geographic location. When ethnic Others are characterized by *bios* readers can understand them as representative of the part of the world they live in – as Easterners, Africans, etc. – or as representatives of a universal stage of human development. When a single *ethnos* is differentiated by *bios*, geographic identity recedes and developmental identity comes to the fore.

The mapping of developmental stages onto space is also highly significant for how those stages will be interpreted. Though there was general consensus in antiquity that diet, warfare, technology, and other markers of civilization grew more complex as time went on, Greek writers expressed two primary opinions as to the quality of that process. Some writers, like Hesiod (*WD* 109-201), and, later, Dicaearchus in his *Life of Greece*, characterized the earliest human existence as blessed, a "golden age," which preceded successive periods of decline; these writers are "pessimistic" in their evaluation of the succession of human ages. Others, like the chorus of the *Antigone* (332-75), Prometheus of *Prometheus Bound* (447-68; 478-506), and the writer of the Hippocratic *On Ancient Medicine* (3.26) are "progressivist."[150] They represent early human life as generally miserable, and celebrate what they consider to be advances in human skill and craft; as Prometheus says in the *Prometheus Bound*, before he taught humans house-building they lived "like puny ants in the sunless corners of caves" (452-3).[151]

Whereas cultural histories usually value one stage over another, ethnographies map time

[149] Said 1978, Krebs 2010.
[150] See Lovejoy and Boas 1935, Cole 1967, 1-13 for an introduction to these two versions of the deep past.
[151] ἀήσυροι/ μύρμηκες ἄντρων ἐν μυχοῖς ἀνηλίοις

onto the level plane of the earth, allowing readers to interpret the development of peoples in multiple ways. If the edges of the world are barbaric, then movement towards the center of the world is "progress"; if the edges preserve a golden age of lost bliss, then movement towards the center represents degeneration. Readers who were persuaded by the vision of human progress outlined in the *Ode to Man* or *Prometheus Bound* would read travel from Greece as a regression into primitive misery, while those who subscribed to Hesiod's myth of ages would read in the second way, experiencing distance from Greece as an escape from the "evils" of civilization. The "progressive" and "pessimistic" narratives of human movement through time are usually seen in conflict with one another, but the mapping of time through ethnography allows them to coexist by leaving both kinds of pasts open for readers to experience.[152] If the divide between "progressivist" and "pessimistic" authors in other genres demonstrates the ambivalence in Greek culture generally about the nature of human history, ethnography enacts this ambivalence by supporting both narratives at once.

The recursive mapping of *bioi*, however, complicates how readers navigate the past. When Herodotus places the least developed people at the edges of the world, the distance between the Greek and, for example, Aithiopian way of life, is stressed. When he places agricultural and nomadic Scythians side by side, or when Agatharchides juxtaposes language-less Fisheaters with those who possess language and a more complicated diet, time collapses and the reader moves through history at a rapid rate. For readers who interpret the *bioi* of Others as a peek into the process of history, the difference between one stage and another will appear less vast in these cases, and if readers are engaging in self-critique, the *bioi* of Others will seem literally closer to their own.

[152] On ethnocentrism and its inverse see Romm 1992, 46. For the co-construction of narratives of senescence and progress, see Feeney 2007, 113-14.

Irvin Schick uses the term "technology of place," to "describe the discursive instruments and strategies by means of which space is constituted as place, that is place as socially constructed and reconstructed."[153] *Bios* is both a technology of place and of time, a way of constructing time and place that relates them to one another. By mapping *bioi,* Greek writers explore the past through the world, and the world through their understanding of the past. *Bioi* are also a technology of spatio-temporal difference, a way of creating and marking the difference between past and present, Greek and non-Greek, and within non-Greek communities. Above, I placed Hesiod at the beginning of a genealogy of cultural history that informed fifth century historians' use of the comparative method to compare living non-Greeks to the Greeks of the past. Although it is difficult to precisely trace lines of influence between cultural history and ethnography, I suspect that it would be most accurate to say that Greek ethnography and cultural history, Greek thinking about distant places and distant times, constructed one another in the classical period,[154] eventually merging in the universal history of the late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods.[155]

Pessimistic and Progressive Pasts

Understanding ethnography alongside cultural history can help to explain why distant peoples who have the features of past times are sometimes characterized as fortunate and other times as unfortunate. In Megasthenes' *Indika*, India has many features of the golden age. The land is

[153] Schick 1999, 9.
[154] Much as Thomas 2000 argues that ethnographic and medical theories co-constructed one another in the fifth century BCE.
[155] *Contra* Ameling 2008, 52 who sees Agatharchides as the first Greek writer to bring ethnologic "proof" to bear on cultural historical theory: "Agathrchides succeded in furnishing historical proof and secure knowledge in a field that until now had defied any proof and knowledge." On universal history, see Alonso-Nuñez 1990 and 1997.

preternaturally fertile, yielding a variety of wild foods and minerals, plenty of fresh water, and two crops that can be successful harvested every year (F4 = DS 35.3-6). The Indoi know the arts of war, but seldom need to practice them, since they are protected by the impenetrability of their land and native elephants (F4 = DS 37.3).[156] In short, Megasthenes' India is a country of comparative peace and abundance. Moreover, among the ecologically differentiated *merē* of India, the most primitive, the sages, are also the most honored.

Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea* also depicts human communities that enjoy an abundance of produce. The Root-eaters, for example, are peaceful and, like the Indoi, have a ready source of food. Nevertheless, many of them are killed by lions, and Agatharchides points out that this is a direct result of their lack of technology (F51b = DS 3.23.1-3). The Root-eaters are not fortunate the way the Indoi are; they do not appear to occupy a living "golden age," even though aspects of their life recall depictions of the golden age. In the terms of cultural history, Megasthenes' *Indika* reflects a pessimistic philosophy, one that associates the loss of the golden age as a detriment, while Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea* reflects a generally progressive one, that emphasizes the poverty of previous times.

Herodotus, on the other hand, represents the same *bios*, that of pastoralists, from both a pessimistic and progressivist point of view. Because they live at the edges of the earth, the Aithiopes and Scythians are characterized by a developmentally earlier *bios*: both peoples subsist on milk and meat, the food of pastoralism. But although they are both pastoralists, Aithiopes and Scythians are valued very differently in the *Histories.* Herodotus's Aithiopes are tall and beautiful, scrupulous, and despise luxury (3.20-1). The Scythians, on the other hand, are brutal towards foreigners and one another, and even practice human sacrifice (4.62-5). As Shaw

[156] The *Indika*'s elephants will be picked up in chapter 4.

notes,[157] this savagery is directly tied to their pastoral *bios* (4.2). While acknowledging the negative ideology of the pastoralist that Shaw traces, it is important not to ignore the positive portrait of pastoralism which the Aithiopes embody.[158]

Above I noted that Herodotus is particularly concerned with what he can and cannot know and with the insufficiency of his knowledge, especially of the deep past. Herodotus uses the Aithiopes and Scythians to imagine two possible histories: one in which early Greeks lived a blessed and virtuous Aithiopian-like existence, nurtured by simple food and free from excessive desires, and another in which, like the Scythians, they wandered and warred deprived of the civilizing effects of settled agriculturalism. Not only do Herodotus's ethnographies imagine inaccessible times, they also reflect Greek ambivalence about whether things have gotten better or worse since that time. By simultaneously elevating the Aithiopes, who recall the Greeks' lost golden age, and denigrating the barbaric Scythians, symbols of the evils of civilization, Herodotus leaves both pasts open.

Though subsequent chapters will complicate this general picture, Megasthenes and Agatharchides emphasize pessimistic and progressivist philosophies of history, respectively. Why is this? One reason may be that these texts as we have them treat circumscribed regions whereas Herodotus inquired into the peoples of his entire world. Agatharchides also wrote an *Affairs in Europe* and *Affairs in Asia*;[159] if these texts or the rest of the *Indika* survived they might reproduce Herodotus's ambivalence about the nature of the past. I think it is more likely, however, that Megasthenes and Agatharchides equivocate less about the quality of the past because of their own place in history. As noted above, Megasthenes' *Indika* explicitly employs

[157] Shaw 1982/3, 11.
[158] Cf. Bartra 1997.
[159] Burstein 1989, 18-21.

the comparative method, while Agatharchides was informed by Dicaearchus. Cultural history was a much more developed mode of writing in the fourth and third centuries BCE, when Megasthenes and Agatharchides were writing, than in the fifth. Moreover, both Megasthenes and Agatharchides had Herodotus's versions of the past to draw upon. Instead of mirroring his ambivalence, they developed one strand of his thinking about earlier *bioi.*

Conclusion

In the last chapter, I argued that ethnography, because it situates humans in an environment in order to describe them, is an excellent body of texts through which to investigate ancient environmental thinking. In this chapter, I have argued that ethnographies not only describe different ecologies, but that these ecologies, represented as *bioi*, correspond to the phases of development that Greeks theorized when imagining their own deep past. Thus, the dimension of environmental thinking that comes through most clearly in Greek ethnographies is its temporal dimension, the fact that past *bioi* can be imagined and explored through those living people who still practice them. In particular, ethnic Others who embody past *bioi* offer Greek writers evidence for different theories of the past, either pessimistic or progressivist. Looking at ethnography through the lens of cultural history can explain why historians, including Herodotus, include so much seemingly superfluous ethnographic descriptions in their narration of events: as remnants of the distant past, Others rightly belong in event-based histories.

Cultural historians use *bioi* to describe stages of human development, but a *bios* is essentially an ecology, a method of human subsistence that consists of a certain relationship between humans and their environment. When Greek writers map *bioi* onto distant, living communities, they are investigating not only phases of their own past but the ecologies in which

they used to participate and that still exist in other parts of the world. In the next two chapters, I examine the ecological dimension of *bioi* and the effects of different *bioi* on human health and warfare.

Chapter 3: A Diet for the Ages

"Environmental determinism" is the idea that climate, geography, or other environmental factors make people look and behave the way they do. Scholars of classical antiquity have seen this theory at work especially in the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places*, but also in Herodotus's *Histories* and the ethnographic texts that follow him.[160] As Rosalind Thomas has shown, ancient Greek authors often associated environmental factors, especially climate, with certain health outcomes. The ethnic Others who were thought to inhabit markedly different climates were therefore prime material for theorizing the effect of environment on health; to Greek writers' use of ethnic Others to theorize health Thomas gives the name "the ethnography of health."[161] Greek writers also associated good health with their own earlier stages of development. Hesiod's golden race, for example, neither grows old nor suffers physical ailments (Hes. *Op.* 109-120).

In the last chapter, cultural history was used to illuminate ethnography. In this chapter, I use ethnography to reflect on cultural history, specifically to try to understand why the earliest stage of human development was considered to be either a healthier time, by pessimists, or a time of illness, by progressivists. I argue that ancient Greek writers believed health to be an outcome not only of certain environmental accidents, such as climate, which humans must suffer passively, but also of the ecologies that characterize each *bios* of human history, which some living peoples still practice at the edges of the earth. I then consider to what extent these

[160] See McCoskey 2012, 46-49 and Isaac 2004, 55-168 for an overview of the history of this theory in classical scholarship and the classical tradition. For a recent discussion of environmental determinism and human agency in *AWP*, see Presti 2012.
[161] Thomas 2000, 28-74.

ecologies of distant times and far-off places could be abstracted from time and space and applied in the Greek present. In Greek classical and Hellenistic thinking about good health, human interventions play as great a role as environmental accident, and in some cases Greek writers represent good health as largely under human control.

Health in Dicaearchus's Golden Age

In his third century CE *On Abstinence*, Porphyry uses Dicaearchus's fourth century BCE *Life of Greece* to support his argument against eating meat.[162] In this work, as discussed in the last chapter, Dicaearchus adapts Hesiod's metallic races to divide early Greek history into three distinct ecological phases marked by a particular mode of subsistence: life under Cronus, *ho epi Kronou bios*, the pastoral life, *ho nomadikos bios*, and the agricultural life, *ho geōrgikos bios*. In Dicaearchus's scheme, Greeks degenerated as they proceeded through these stages. The first *bios* was "the best" and the people who lived then were "the most excellent." Quoting Hesiod's *Works and Days*, Dicaearchus says that they were rightly considered a "golden race."[163]

According to Dicaearchus, the earliest Greeks were vegetarians who ate the spontaneously growing fruits of the earth.[164] This was not an ethical vegetarianism, however, but an incidental one, since human beings had no art with which to cultivate food or herd animals.

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[162] For Dicaearchus's effect on Roman theories of the past, via Varro, see Purcell 2003.

[163] As Ax 2001 and Saunders 2001 demonstrate, the question of Dicaearchus's "primitivism" has not been settled. Although I am comfortable calling his account of Greek history a decline narrative and his philosophy pessimistic, this is not essential for my argument. All one must agree to is that health declines as time proceeds, and that Dicaearchus's text expresses nostalgia for this aspect of the earliest *bios*.

Dicaearchus's emphasis on spontaneous, "automatic" generation and the absence of *technē* also links this version of the earliest period of Greek history with the *automatos bios* well known from Old Comedy, for which see Ruffell 2000. See also Vidal-Naquet 1978.

[164] Saunders 2001, 244. F56B = Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 2.13 confirms that in Dicaearchus's *aureum saeclum* "nullum comedisse carnem."

As Dicaearchus says:

> All things are reasonably said to have grown spontaneously [*automata*]; for human beings did not procure anything themselves, being still ignorant of agriculture or any other art [*technē*]. This very thing was the reason for their being at leisure, living life without toil or care, and, if it is appropriate to assent to the opinion of our most accomplished doctors, the reason why they didn't get sick. For one could find no precept more conducive to their health than to avoid the production of excesses, from which they kept their bodies entirely pure. For they neither consumed food that was stronger [*ischurotera*] than their nature but only such that their nature could overcome, nor more than is moderate because of its ready availability but for the most part less than would seem sufficient because of its scarcity … But to those coming after, who pursued great things and fell into many evils, this way of life naturally became desirable. The simple [*litos*] and spontaneous [*autoschedios*] food of earlier people is made clear in the later saying 'enough of oak,'[165] which is what the first person who changed [from the earlier way of life] probably said (F56A = Porph. *De Abst.* 4.2).[166]

While the golden age is idealized in general, Dicaearchus's emphasis on health is striking. What about the "spontaneous" food of the earliest Greeks makes it so healthy?

One way to understand this passage is by comparing it to discussions of health in the Hippocratic corpus, a collection of medical texts written between 430 and 400 BCE.[167]

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[165] Acorns had a mixed reputation in archaic, classical, and Hellenistic sources. As food for pigs (e.g. *Od*. 10.242, 13.409; Arist. *HA* 603b 31) their consumption by human beings could carry negative connotations, but they were also associated with the city of peace in Hesiod (*Op.* 233), and the Hippocratic writers recommended them both raw and boiled in different circumstances (*Vict.* 55.28). Theophrastus describes several varieties, some of which are "sweet" and others toxic even to animals (*HP* 3.8.7; see Amigues 2003, 148 for modern species equivalents). As bitter and difficult to process, acorns stood for the undesirable, "primitive" past imagined by progressivists. When "sweet," they stood for the abundant food of the golden age imagined by pessimists. See Dalby 2003, 2.

[166] αὐτόματα μὲν γὰρ πάντα ἐφύετο, εἰκότως· οὐ γὰρ αὐτοί γε κατεσκεύαζον οὐθὲν διὰ τὸ μήτε τὴν γεωργικὴν ἔχειν πω τέχνην μήθ' ἑτέραν μηδεμίαν ἁπλῶς. τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ τοῦ σχολὴν ἄγειν αἴτιον ἐγίγνετο αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῦ διάγειν ἄνευ πόνων καὶ μερίμνης, εἰ δὲ τῇ τῶν γλαφυρωτάτων ἰατρῶν ἐπακολουθῆσαι δεῖ διανοίᾳ, καὶ τοῦ μὴ νοσεῖν. οὐθὲν γὰρ εἰς ὑγίειαν αὐτῶν μεῖζον παράγγελμα εὕροι τις ἂν ἢ τὸ μὴ ποιεῖν περιττώματα, ὧν διὰ παντὸς ἐκεῖνοι καθαρὰ τὰ σώματα ἐφύλαττον. οὔτε γὰρ τῆς φύσεως ἰσχυροτέραν τροφὴν ἀλλ' ἧς ἡ φύσις ἰσχυροτέρα προσεφέροντο, οὔτε τὴν πλείω τῆς μετρίας διὰ τὴν ἑτοιμότητα, ἀλλ' ὡς τὰ πολλὰ τὴν ἐλάττω τῆς ἱκανῆς διὰ τὴν σπάνιν … τοῖς δὲ ὑστέροις ἐφιεμένοις μεγάλων καὶ πολλοῖς περιπίπτουσι κακοῖς ποθεινὸς εἰκότως ἐκεῖνος ὁ βίος ἐφαίνετο. δηλοῖ δὲ τὸ λιτὸν τῶν πρώτων καὶ αὐτοσχέδιον τῆς τροφῆς τὸ μεθύστερον ῥηθὲν ἄλις δρυός, τοῦ μεταβάλλοντος πρώτου, οἷα εἰκός, τοῦτο φθεγξαμένου.

[167] Jouanna 1990, 85 dates *VM* to the end of the fifth century. See Jouanna 1992, 523-63 for the

Dicaearchus does not mention Hippocratic doctrine explicitly, but other scholars have noted that he uses Hippocratic vocabulary to explain the healthiness of this first diet, and have read the *Life of Greece* as influenced by the earlier Hippocratic writings. In Hippocratic theory, some foods are stronger than others and food competes with other aspects of regimen to determine the health of the body.[168] Yet despite the fact that Dicaearchus explains the healthiness of the earliest diet by way of Hippocratic theory, the life of Greeks under Cronus is difficult to map directly onto Hippocratic regimen, which is much more contingent on other variables than Dicaearchus's model allows. In the Hippocratic corpus, foods are rarely good or bad *per se*; they are good or bad for certain constitutions and in certain seasons. Furthermore, Hippocratic medicine makes subtle distinctions not only between agricultural or pastoral products, or even land and sea animals, or fruits and vegetables, but between barley as opposed to wheat, pork as opposed to beef (Hp. *Acut*. 2.39ff.). If Dicaearchus's regimen were simply Hippocratic, we would expect a more detailed breakdown of particular foods.

Moreover, when uncultivated foods are discussed in the Hippocratic corpus, they are emphatically not recommended:

> [The people of the past, who ate what the earth produced] suffered many terrible things from their excessive and beast-like way of life, ingesting things raw and untempered and those possessing strong powers [*megalas dunamias*]. Those [then] suffered just as they would suffer now, falling into severe pains and illnesses, and quickly into death … For this reason I think that [the people of the past] harmonized their food with their natures and discovered the sort of food which we now eat. From wheat, after soaking, pounding, grinding, sifting, mixing, and baking it, they made bread (Hp. *VM.* 3.4-5).[169]

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dates of all the Hippocratic treatises.

[168] Saunders 2001.

[169] Ὡς γὰρ ἔπασχον πολλά τε καὶ δεινὰ ἀπὸ ἰσχυρῆς τε καὶ θηριώδεος διαίτης, ὠμά τε καὶ ἄκρητα καὶ μεγάλας δυνάμιας ἔχοντα ἐσφερόμενοι, οἷά περ ἂν καὶ νῦν ὑπ' αὐτέων πάσχοιεν, πόνοισί τε ἰσχυροῖσι καὶ νούσοισι περιπίπτοντες, καὶ διὰ ταχέος θανάτοισιν … Διὰ δὴ ταύτην τὴν χρείην καὶ οὗτοί μοι δοκέουσι ζητῆσαι τροφὴν ἁρμόζουσαν τῇ φύσει, καὶ εὑρεῖν ταύτην, ἣ νῦν χρεόμεθα· ἐκ μὲν οὖν τῶν πυρῶν, βρέξαντες καὶ πτίσαντες καὶ καταλέσαντες πάντα, καὶ διασήσαντες, καὶ φορύξαντες, καὶ ὀπτήσαντες, ἀπετέλεσαν … ἄρτον.

When Dicaearchus talks about the food of the first *bios* not being "stronger" than the constitution of the people of that time, he is alluding to Hippocratic teaching about the "strong qualities," *megalai dunameis*, of certain foods also explored in this passage. But a close comparison of the two reveals that Dicaearchus disagrees with the Hippocratic opinion of ancient diet. Whereas *On Ancient Medicine* argues that ancient diet overpowered a good proportion of people (whose constitutions, of course, differed), Dicaearchus says that the ancient diet benefitted people precisely because it did not overpower them. In *On Ancient Medicine*, health progressed because people adopted diets that harmonized with their different constitutions, eschewing *akratos*, "untempered" foods animals eat "such as those that grow from the earth: fruits, bark, and grass," in preference for bread, which is produced by "soaking, pounding, grinding, sifting, mixing, and baking." By contrast, the *Life of Greece* associates good health with foods that spring spontaneously from the earth and without the application of human art. Though the *Life of Greece* and *On Ancient Medicine* both discuss "strong qualities" in foods and their effect on health, they have opposing philosophies of human progress. For Dicaearchus, a pessimist, health has declined as human diet has advanced; for the author of *On Ancient Medicine*, a progressivist, uncultivated foods are "raw" and "untempered," and good health is the result of the *technē* of later times. Dicaearchus applies some Hippocratic vocabulary, but his theory of nonagricultural diet is incompatible with the Hippocratic treatment of the same subject in *On Ancient Medicine*.[170]

However, there is another set of texts we can use to contextualize Dicaearchus, texts that,

[170] There is another important difference between the *Life of Greece* and *On Ancient Medicine*. Whereas the former discusses agriculture alone, the latter implies that both agriculture and cooking are significant refinements to diet. For more on cooking in *On Ancient Medicine*, see Rosen (forthcoming), Totelin 2009, and Schiefsky 2005, 152-160.

like the *Life of Greece*, describe health in general terms and attribute health or illness to the characteristics of groups rather than individuals. In what follows, I examine two ethnographic accounts, one in Herodotus's *Histories* that preceded Dicaearchus's *Life of Greece*, and another in Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea* that followed it, posing new answers to the logic of health behind Dicaearchus's work and exploring the interaction among these three texts. As described in the last chapter, ethnographies express philosophies of human development very like the progressivist and pessimistic philosophies characteristic of cultural history, and make arguments to their readers about the advisability of certain diets just as the *Life of Greece* and *On Ancient Medicine* do.

Herodotus's *Histories*: Meat, Milk, Bread, and Wine

In the third book of Herodotus's *Histories*, the Persian king Cambyses sends a delegation of Icthyophagoi, "Fisheaters," to the Aithiopes, a people living in Africa. While ostensibly there to extend the hand of Persian friendship, the Icthyophagoi have in fact been sent to spy.[171] Herodotus says that Cambyses is especially interested in whether the Table of the Sun really exists, a table that is supposed to produce food spontaneously for the Aithiopes year round. The scene unfolds comically as the Aithiopes systematically reject most of the gifts the Persians present, thereby providing a running commentary on Persian (and also Greek) culture which James Romm has aptly dubbed "ethnologic satire."[172] Particularly interesting for present purposes are the Aithiopian king's comments on Persian diet:

> And when he came to the wine and learned how it was made, he took exceeding great

[171] I use the Greek transliteration to distinguish these Fisheaters from those we will encounter later. For the Icthyophagoi as cultural ambassadors, see Longo 1987, 20. For this episode as a digression in Cambyses' biography, see Török 2014, 95.
[172] Romm 1992, 59; Romm 1996.

> pleasure in it, and asked what the Persian king ate and what the highest age a Persian man could attain was. And they said that he ate bread, explaining the nature of [the growing of] wheat, and that 80 years of life was the greatest measure allotted to a man. To these things the Aithiopian said that if they ate shit [*kopros*] it was no wonder they lived so few years; for they would not be able to live even that long if they didn't sustain themselves with this drink (indicating to the Icthyophagoi the wine): for in this they had been beaten by the Persians. To the Icthyophagoi asking in turn about their way of life and life-span, the king said that most of them reached 120 years, and some lived even longer, and that their food was boiled meat and their drink milk (Hdt. *Hist.* 3.22.11-3.23.5).[173]

Although the Aithiopian king appreciates the gift of wine, he calls bread, the staff of both Persian and Greek life, *kopros*, "shit," and attributes the Persians' relative short-livedness to this dietary mistake.[174] The Aithiopes, by contrast, consume only meat and milk, the products of pastoralism rather than agriculture, and it is to their diet that they attribute their longevity. Just as Dicaearchus placed good health in a nonagricultural time, so does this passage of Herodotus's *Histories* locate good health in a nonagricultural space, Aithiopia, where people do not cultivate crops. Although neither the Persian delegation nor the Aithiopian king align their diets with particular temporal phases of cultural development, the scene juxtaposes the pastoral food of the Aithiopes with the agricultural food of the Persians in the same way that temporal schemas like Dicaearchus's account of Greek *bioi* juxtapose phases of civilization characterized by different diets.

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[173] Ὡς δὲ ἐς τὸν οἶνον ἀπίκετο καὶ ἐπύθετο αὐτοῦ τὴν ποίησιν, ὑπερησθεὶς τῷ πόματι ἐπείρετο ὅ τι τε σιτέεται ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ χρόνον ὁκόσον μακρότατον ἀνὴρ Πέρσης ζώει. Οἱ δὲ σιτέεσθαι μὲν ὁκόσον μακρότατον ἀνὴρ Πέρσης ζώει. Οἱ δὲ σιτέεσθαι μὲν τὸν ἄρτον εἶπον, ἐξηγησάμενοι τῶν πυρῶν τὴν φύσιν, ὀγδώκοντα δὲ ἔτεα ζόης πλήρωμα ἀνδρὶ μακρότατον προκεῖσθαι. Πρὸς ταῦτα ὁ Αἰθίοψ ἔφη οὐδὲν θωμάζειν εἰ σιτεόμενοι κόπρον ἔτεα ὀλίγα ζώουσι· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν τοσαῦτα δύνασθαι ζώειν σφέας, εἰ μὴ τῷ πόματι ἀνέφερον, φράζων τοῖσι Ἰχθυοφάγοισι τὸν οἶνον· τοῦτο γὰρ ἑωυτοὺς ὑπὸ Περσέων ἐσσοῦσθαι. Ἀντειρομένων δὲ τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἰχθυοφάγων τῆς ζόης καὶ τῆς διαίτης πέρι, <εἶπε> ἔτεα μὲν ἐς εἴκοσί τε καὶ ἑκατὸν τοὺς πολλοὺς αὐτῶν ἀπικνέεσθαι, ὑπερβάλλειν δέ τινας καὶ ταῦτα, σίτησιν δὲ εἶναι κρέα ἑφθὰ καὶ πόμα γάλα.

[174] Finch 2010, 370 suggests that *kopros* is an allusion to manure, and that "the implication that the Persian's bread was dirty because it was made from grain grown in manured soil refers to the common practice to improve crop yield by manuring the soil with dung from domestic animals or human night-soil." While this may be so, I think that we should still take the insult to apply to agriculture in general, rather than a particular agricultural practice.

The encounter Herodotus stages between the Persian envoys and Aithiopian king is not only an ethnologic satire, but also a biting parody of culture-heroism; here, the Persian delegation, like Dionysus or Heracles, brings agricultural products to the Aithiopes, but these products are mostly rejected. Rather than validating Greek agriculturalism and civilization as scenes of culture-heroism typically do, this encounter between Aithiopes and Persian envoys calls into question whether Greeks should have adopted agriculture or should continue to practice it now.

On the other hand, elements of the Aithiopian way of life distinguish the Aithiopes very clearly from those who inhabit Dicaearchus's golden age. The majority of Aithiopes may believe that The Table of the Sun produces food for them spontaneously, but Herodotus tells us that this is a trick of the Aithiopian leadership. Of the Table, he says:

> There is a meadow in the area surrounding the city quite full of boiled meats of every sort of quadruped. At night, it is each time the duty of those in office to place the meats on the table, and during the day everyone who wishes to comes and feasts. But the locals say that the earth yields these things each time (Hdt. *Hist.* 3.18).[175]

The Aithiopes eat pastoral products which seem to them to spring spontaneously from the earth but are in fact supplied secretly by the Aithiopian leadership. For most Aithiopes, there is little practical difference between a truly spontaneous, "golden" diet and what they experience, but this difference – and the deceit it involves – undercuts the Aithiopes as a paradigm to be emulated.

The fact that the Table is not what it seems also affects Cambyses and his army. After Cambyses' spies return to him and report what they have seen and heard, Cambyses becomes enraged and sends his troops against Aithiopia. This march is a complete disaster.

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[175] Λειμών ἐστι ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ ἐπίπλεος κρεῶν ἑφθῶν πάντων τῶν τετραπόδων, ἐς τὸν τὰς μὲν νύκτας ἐπιτηδεύοντας τιθέναι τὰ κρέα τοὺς ἐν τέλεϊ ἑκάστοτε ἐόντας τῶν ἀστῶν, τὰς δὲ ἡμέρας δαίνυσθαι προσιόντα τὸν βουλόμενον· φάναι δὲ τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους ταῦτα τὴν γῆν αὐτὴν ἀναδιδόναι ἑκάστοτε.

Cambyses, who had before been so keenly interested in the Table of the Sun, ironically fails to provision his army appropriately.[176] As a result, they march desperately backward into a developmentally earlier way of life:

> Before his army had completed a fifth part of the journey, suddenly all of the food they had brought ran out, and after the food was gone they ate the pack-animals, until they also ran out … As long as the soldiers could get anything from the earth they survived by eating grass; but when they came to the desert, some of them did a terrible thing, selecting by lot one man from each ten and eating him (Hdt. *Hist.* 3.25.13-23).[177]

This passage is not only a famine narrative, but also an imagined journey into a nightmarish version of human beginnings.[178] Herodotus does not explicitly compare the army's declining diet to the dietary phases of cultural histories, but he employs the same language to imagine the scene. Instead of eating animals raised for that purpose, like goats or sheep or cows, the soldiers eat their horses. Instead of gathering berries and other products of the earth, as in the golden age, they eat grass. Finally, they arrive at the point where human diet collapses in on itself, and consume one another. As in *On Ancient Medicine*, where the earliest humans ate "fruit, bark, and grass," so too are the Persians forced to eat grass as a last resort before turning to cannibalism. Cambyses troops have not only marched into the past, they experience the worst version of the past imagined by progressivists.

It is impossible to determine the direction of influence, but *On Ancient Medicine* is an important intertext for another Herodotean famine narrative. In book 8, Xerxes' retreating army

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[176] Romm 1992, 59.

[177] Πρὶν δὲ τῆς ὁδοῦ τὸ πέμπτον μέρος διεληλυθέναι τὴν στρατιήν, αὐτίκα πάντα αὐτοὺς τὰ εἶχον σιτίων ἐχόμενα ἐπελελοίπεε, μετὰ δὲ τὰ αὐτοὺς τὰ εἶχον σιτίων ἐχόμενα ἐπελελοίπεε, μετὰ δὲ τὰ σιτία καὶ τὰ ὑποζύγια ἐπέλιπε κατεσθιόμενα … Οἱ δὲ στρατιῶται ἕως μέν τι εἶχον ἐκ τῆς γῆς λαμβάνειν, ποιηφαγέοντες διέζωον· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐς τὴν ψάμμον ἀπίκοντο, δεινὸν ἔργον αὐτῶν τινες ἐργάσαντο· ἐκ δεκάδος γὰρ ἕνα σφέων αὐτῶν ἀποκληρώσαντες κατέφαγον.

[178] Vernant 1972, xvii; Flory 1987, 117; Romm 1992, 59.

falls ill and dies after consuming a diet of grass and bark (8.115, 117).[179] Like *On Ancient Medicine*, both famine narratives in the *Histories* denigrate nonagricultural diets and associate them with particular foodstuffs, especially bark and grass. Rather than promoting health as they do in the *Life of Greece* and Herodotus's Aithiopia, nonagricultural foods in these passages lead to illness and death.

Although the famine that afflicts Xerxes' army in book 8 occurs at a distance from Cambyses' embassy to the Aithiopes in book 3, Cambyses' army experiences their own famine directly after the embassy and perhaps as a result of the misinformation the Persian envoys take to him about the Table of the Sun. Herodotus recognizes the true nature of the Table, but the Persian envoys probably do not. Cambyses' foolishness is of course not confined to this episode, but inasmuch as he has been misled by the incomplete report of the Icthyophagoi and seduced into believing that all of Aithiopia is a land of natural abundance, the famine his troops suffer results from his misplaced confidence in the Aithiopian diet. The Aithiopian king has made an argument for a meat-based diet over a bread-based one. Cambyses' army's fate, however, especially read in conjunction with Xerxes' army's decline in book 8, places a strong limit on this advice. Readers who look back on book 3 in light of these later famine narratives might conclude that meat-based diets are too risky to be attempted. They can lead not only to illness, but also cannibalism, the confusion of appropriate and inappropriate "meats."

An army marching on foraged foods is not going to get very far, as Herodotus's readers probably knew, even if they might not have known that human beings cannot digest grass and bark (as *On Ancient Medicine* implies). However, when read in concert with the Aithiopian-Persian exchange in book 3, these famine narratives activate readers' questions about the

[179] As Thomas 2000, 39-40 argues, following Demont 1988, Herodotus here makes use of Hippocratic theories about the illness that can result from a change in regimen.

different diets that are explicitly discussed by the Aithiopian king. Readers who, after encountering the Aithiopian criticism of Persian bread, wonder whether agricultural foods threaten their health and longevity, are perhaps comforted by the fate of Cambyses' and then Xerxes' armies. At the very least, these famine narratives can lead readers to question the Aithiopian king's assertion about the connection between bread and ill health, especially when Herodotus's revelation about the deception behind the Table of the Sun has primed them to mistrust the king.

The fact that the Aithiopian king approves of the gift of Persian wine complicates this set of passages further. The Aithiopian king elevates milk and meat over bread, but admits that wine has ameliorated the Persians' otherwise poor diet: "The Aithiopian said that if they ate shit it was no wonder they lived so few years; for they would not be able to live even that long if they didn't sustain themselves with this drink (indicating to the Icthyophagoi the wine): for in this they had been beaten by the Persians." Bread is definitely bad for one's health, but wine is not; it is in fact conducive to health. The Aithiopes' appreciation for Persian wine is an ethnographic trope, but also, as James Romm points out, evokes the Cyclopes of *Odyssey* 9 in particular.[180] Like the Aithiopes, the Cyclopes are nonagricultural pastoralists, and like them they too have a fondness for wine. But the reference to *Odyssey* 9 is more troubling than it may first appear. Readers who have the Polyphemus episode in mind will remember the juxtaposition of pastoralism and cannibalism in Homer's text – Polyphemus washing down Odysseus' men with milk (9.296-7) –

[180] Romm 1992, 57-8 ties the wine in the Aithiopian episode to the Cyclopes in *Odyssey* 9 and Cambyses' later intoxication and madness in the *Histories*. He says: "Alcohol can be a medicinal beverage to the Ethiopians because, in their golden-age innocence, they do not crave it immoderately; only for "advanced" races like the Persians does it pose a hazardous temptation." For an alternative reading of this passage see Vernant 1979. For wine in ethnography, see Lenfant 2002. Mash 2010, 109 points out that the wine, being *phoinikēiou* (3.20), may imply a further joke: if the wine is not just palm wine, but Phoenician, the Persian's best gift is not even really Persian!

before the Cyclops is "beaten" by Odysseus's gift of wine (9.347ff.). Whether or not the Homeric passage has provided Herodotus with an explicit model in the Aithiopian episode, the parallels between the two further undermine the Aithiopian king's advice, or at least how to apply it. The episode opposes pastoral and agricultural diets through the comparison of bread and meat (and milk), and then complicates this opposition with the Aithiopes' and Persians' shared appreciation for wine. The Aithiopian king's concession that wine is a true pleasure – and even a healthful one – underlines his denigration of bread, but it means that neither he nor the reader can place agricultural *bios* entirely beneath pastoral *bios.* The *Histories* draws attention to the problems with agriculture but does not adjudicate between *bioi* or advocate consistently for one over the other.

In cultural histories, works like *On Ancient Medicine*, *Works and Days*, and the *Life of Greece*, the writer's philosophy of progress is consistent and unified. But different episodes of Herodotus's *Histories*, and even different aspects of the same episode, echo different philosophies of human progress simultaneously. As I argue in the following section, Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea* is ambivalent about human progress as well.

Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea*: Fish vs. Locusts

In Agatharchides, we meet the Icthyophagoi, or "Fisheaters" again, this time themselves the ethnographic subject.[181] The Fisheaters are in fact not a single people and Agatharchides begins, in Diodorus's telling, with those who live right along the coast of the Red Sea. The Fisheaters, as their name implies, generally eat fish and only fish, and though they must take trouble to prepare their food and occasionally turn to mussels instead, they never go hungry. In the general course

[181] Although Herodotus' and Agatharchides' *Icthyophagoi* are lexically identical, I will call the people in Agatharchides "Fisheaters" to distinguish them for the reader.

of events, the ocean brings to shore every day and even twice a day, an *apiston plēthos pantoiōn ichthuōn,* "an unbelievable abundance of every sort of fish" (F32b = DS 3.15.4). The "unbelievable abundance of every sort of fish" the Fisheaters gather verbally echoes the Aithiopes' meadow "quite full of boiled meats of every sort of quadruped" in Herodotus (3.18), discussed above. Unlike Herodotus's Aithiopes, Agatharchides' Fisheaters must gather their food themselves, but the abundance of their food supply associates their lifestyle with the life under Cronus Dicaearchus describes. Agatharchides concludes his description of these Fisheaters:

> Thus, the people who inhabit the coast between the straits live in this way. Because of the simplicity [*haplotēs*] of their diet they rarely fall ill, but they are much shorter-lived than we are (F39b = DS 3.17.5).[182]

Agatharchides attributes the good health of the Fisheaters to the *haplotēs* of their diet, its "simplicity," or "singleness." They eat a simple, unrefined food, and only one kind of it. This simplicity is paralleled in the diet of Dicaearchus's earliest Greeks, who are said to eat food that, though unspecified, must be kept simple, *litos*, by humanity's ignorance of art in general and agriculture in particular.

Agatharchides' Fisheaters are, however, not quite exempla of well-being. Their simplicity of diet wards off illness, but they are not as long-lived as "we" Greeks are, Agatharchides says, or as Herodotus's long-lived Aithiopes are. Like the Aithiopes whose diet seems spontaneous but is not, the Fisheaters' diet is abundant and healthy, but only up to a point. Agatharchides does not say why the Fisheaters die young in Diodorus's telling, though Photius says that it is from lack of toil:

> Because of the *haplotēs* of their diet they succumb to few diseases, but they are deprived of years of life inasmuch as they maintain a way of life that is less arduous than others'

[182] Οἱ μὲν οὖν τὴν παράλιον τὴν ἐντὸς τῶν στενῶν κατοικοῦντες οὕτω βιοῦσι, νόσοις μὲν διὰ τὴν ἁπλότητα τῆς τροφῆς σπανίως περιπίπτοντες ὀλιγοχρονιώτεροι δὲ πολὺ τῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ὄντες.

(F39a = Phot. *Bibl*. Cod. 250.40, 450a).[183]

Whatever the reason, this disjunction between the Fisheaters' good health and short lives, between what the simplicity of their diet achieves for them and what it fails to achieve, associates the Fisheaters with the golden age and at the same time distances them from this ideal.

On Photius's reading of Agatharchides, it is possible to maintain the link between the simplicity of the Fisheaters' diet and good health, and to quarantine their short life span as a result of their idleness, though this too may ultimately be seen as an effect of their overly-abundant source of food. Later in Diodorus's telling, Agatharchides offers a much clearer counter-argument to simplicity of diet as a promoter of health. The Locusteaters, who live on the border of the desert west of Agatharchides' Fisheaters and Aithiopes, eat only locusts, just as the Fisheaters eat only fish:

> For in the springtime in their land, powerful west winds drive out from the desert an unspeakable multitude of locusts, distinct for their size and with ugly, dirty-colored wings. From this source they have abundant food for their whole life (F59b = DS 3.29.1-2).[184]

Like the Fisheaters, who enjoy an "unbelievable abundance of every sort of fish," the Locusteaters feast on an "unspeakable multitude of locusts." But the Locusteaters die from a most terrible disease, eaten from the inside out by *pterotoi phtheires*, "winged worms" or "lice":

> With such a dissolution of their bodies these people bring their lives to an unhappy end, happening upon such a reversal either because of the peculiarity [*idiotēs*] of their food or the air (F59b = DS 3.29.7).[185]

This illness, which seems to be the universal cause of death among the Locusteaters,

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[183] Καὶ νοσήμασι μὲν διὰ τὴν ἁπλότητα τῆς διαίτης σπανίοις περιπίπτουσι, τοσούτῳ δ' ἀφαιροῦσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ χρόνου τῶν ἐτῶν, ὅσῳ περ ἀπονωτέραν τῶν λοιπῶν ἔχουσι τὴν ἀναστροφήν.

[184] κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐαρινὴν ὥραν παρ' αὐτοῖς ζέφυροι καὶ λίβες παμμεγέθεις ἐκριπτοῦσιν ἐκ τῆς ἐρήμου πλῆθος ἀκρίδων ἀμύθητον, τοῖς τε μεγέθεσι διαλλάττον καὶ τῇ χρόᾳ τοῦ πτερώματος εἰδεχθὲς καὶ ῥυπαρόν. ἐκ τούτου δαψιλεῖς τροφὰς ἔχουσιν ἅπαντα τὸν βίον.

[185] οὗτοι μὲν οὖν εἰς τοιαύτην διάλυσιν τοῦ σώματος καταστρέφουσι τὸν βίον δυστυχῶς, εἴτε διὰ τὴν ἰδιότητα τῆς τροφῆς εἴτε διὰ τὸν ἀέρα τοιαύτης τυγχάνοντες περιπετείας.

Agatharchides attributes either to bad air or to the "peculiarity" of their diet. Although he is uncertain of the cause, the fact that the Locusteaters, who depend on insects, themselves die as nourishment for other insects seems to point to their diet as the culprit; the association at least casts a pall over what they eat. In any case, inasmuch as their diet is a source of their illness, Agatharchides places a limit on the effectiveness of the simplicity of diet. A food can be very simple, singular, and nonagricultural, like the locust, but still inappropriate for human consumption.

With the exception of *On Ancient Medicine*, all of the texts I have examined in this chapter associate health with the nonagricultural diets of earlier times and distant places, even if that association is sometimes qualified. In Dicaearchus, relative health is located at the edges of time, when humans did not know about agriculture, and in Herodotus and Agatharchides at the edges of the earth, places where some people have not adopted agriculture. The healthy foodstuff in these text varies from naturally occurring vegetation in Dicaearchus to meat and milk in Herodotus and fish and fish alone in Agatharchides, and varies also in what makes them healthy. Whereas Herodotus's Aithiopes attribute their health to a meat-based diet rather than a bread-based one, Dicaearchus and Agatharchides attribute health as much to the absence of *technē,* expressed in Dicaearchus by the adjective *litos* and in Agatharchides by the adjective *litos* and the noun *haplotēs*, as to a particular foodstuff. The ethnographies also helpfully outline failed diets, those of Cambyses' and Xerxes' famished army and of the Locusteaters, placing explicit limits on the simplicity of healthy eating. The question then becomes: what argument do these texts make to their Greek readers? If agricultural food can cause illness, do these texts suggest that Greeks should abandon agriculture or at least agriculturally produced foods, that they should no longer be "eaters of bread"? Does it matter that the healthy diets of the ethnic Others I have

examined are somewhat compromised, by the Aithiopian king's participation in the deception of his people and appreciation for wine, in Herodotus, and the short life-span of the Fisheaters, in Agatharchides?

The Ecology of Health and Environmental Determinism

My discussion thus far has analyzed Dicaearchus, Hippocrates, Herodotus, and Agatharchides without much attention to genre. This has revealed larger patterns that in some cases associate nonagricultural foods with spontaneous abundance and health, and in others associate them with illness and death, regardless of whether modern scholars classify the text in question as cultural history (Dicaearchus), medical writing (the Hippocratic *On Ancient Medicine*), or ethnography (Herodotus and Agatharchides). This connection between health, diet, and ecology constitutes a discourse that transcends modern genre constructions. In her study of Herodotus and the Hippocratic corpus, Rosalind Thomas has demonstrated that medical and ethnographic texts in the fifth century BCE show evidence of having influenced one another. Cultural histories should be added to this mix.

Attending to chronology can illuminate how this discourse developed over time. While Dicaearchus could not have influenced Herodotus and most of the Hippocratic corpus, I suggest that Dicaearchus's text was influenced by them – not only by the Hippocratic corpus, as others have argued, but by ethnographic texts as well. Nor was this influence unidirectional. As Stanley Burstein has observed, Dicaearchus's cultural history went on to influence Agatharchides' later ethnography.[186] Agatharchides, like many Hellenistic ethnographers,[187] is himself indebted to Herodotus and thus participates in this web of influence twice, through the ethnographic tradition

[186] Burstein 1989, 26-27.
[187] Murray 1972, Priestley 2014.

and via Dicaearchus. I would like to call this web "the ecology of health," an extension of Thomas' term, "the ethnography of health," which she uses to describe the way that both ethnographic and medical writers use ethnic Others to think through medical theory.

Understanding cultural histories as a part of the Greek discourse about health and difference reveals the complexity of Greek environmental thinking. In the ecology of health, diet is not something that humans usually manipulate at will, nor is it represented as something they suffer passively, like climate. Rather, diet is correlated with certain modes of subsistence, automatic, pastoral, or agricultural, and these modes of subsistence themselves imply different ecological arrangements between humans and the rest of nature. In the ecology of health, ethnographic accounts are not only a place for Greek writers to think through medical theories and vice versa (as they are in Thomas' ethnography of health), but they and cultural histories are modes of writing in which Greek writers theorize how the environment in which humans live and the way human relate to that environment affect human health.

The ecologies that affect human health are imagined in a variety of ways, from Dicaearchus's three *bioi* to dependence on a single animal or insect in Agatharchides, but diet is always imagined as part of a larger life-system. In most of the texts I have discussed, the central contrast among these systems is between simplicity and refinement, with refinement often identified with agriculture. In Dicaearchus and the Hippocratic corpus, which are temporally oriented, earlier humans consume nonagricultural foods while later ones consume the products of agriculture. Even though Dicaearchus and the Hippocratic writers imagine different health outcomes for later, agricultural humans, they both make agriculture the turning point of health and emphasize agriculture as a process, a *technē*, as much as a product. Writers who are geographically oriented locate agriculture and its absence in certain places rather than in certain

times, but the contrast between agricultural foods and nonagricultural foods still operates. When Agatharchides characterizes the Fisheater diet as "simple," *litos*, he echoes Dicaearchus's *Life of Greece*, which uses the same word to describe the earliest Greek *bios*, and, like Dicaearchus, connects "simplicity" of diet, nonagricultural diet, and good health.

The encounter Herodotus stages between the Aithiopian king and the Persian delegation is slightly different. While the Aithiopian king clearly distinguishes between his own meat and milk diet and the Persian diet of bread, he does not reject agricultural *technē* outright. His appreciation of Persian wine, which has presumably resulted from cultivated fruits, is significant. He does not reject agriculture *in toto* but bread in particular, and argues that a meat-based diet is more healthful. Through the Table of the Sun, this meat-based diet is associated with what is imagined to have been the Greeks' first, spontaneous way of life, but the Aithiopian king stresses product rather than process; readers can assimilate the Aithiopes to an earlier stage of Greek life, but neither Herodotus nor the Aithiopes make this connection explicit. Nevertheless, the Aithiopian king's criticism of Persian civilization is not confined to diet alone. He also rejects the dyed cloth, incense, and golden jewelry the Icthyophagoi have brought as gifts (3.21). He singles out bread as the cause of the Persians' relatively short life-span, but makes it clear that he would not adopt Persian customs even if the Persians and Aithiopes ate the same diet. Although Herodotus emphasizes agricultural product over agricultural process, agricultural products cannot be entirely isolated from the life systems in which they are embedded. The fact that the Persians rely on bread is connected to the way they clothe, adorn, and feed themselves, how they worship, and the natural resources they use in the process. Persian wine, of which the Aithiopes approve, is also embedded in this life system, and this further troubles readers trying to translate the Aithiopian king's comments for themselves.

In general, there is one important way in which ethnographic accounts differ from others that investigate the connection between ecology and health. Above I discussed the two main Greek views of human progress, one which celebrates *technē* and the other which does not. Herodotus's and Agatharchides' descriptions of distant diets resemble this scheme for evaluating the diets of distant times, but, perhaps surprisingly, do not adopt a single pessimistic or progressivist philosophy. In both writers' ethnographic descriptions, nonagriculturalism can have a positive or negative outcome, or both. While Herodotus's Aithiopian king prefers meat and milk to bread, the famine narratives that follow this episode explain health and illness differently, and cast doubt on the Aithiopian diet. In Agatharchides, health is associated first with a "simple" and nonagricultural diet of fish, and later with the avoidance of another simple and uncultivated diet, locusts. This ambivalence manifests within episodes as well as across them. Herodotus's Aithiopes emphasize their diet in explaining their longevity to the Persian delegation of Icthyophagoi, but then show them a spring that Herodotus claims is the real reason for Aithiopian longevity:

> If this water is as it is said to be, making such use of it would be the reason why [the Aithiopes] are long-lived (Hdt. *Hist.* 3.23.9).[188]

The Locusteaters' illness in Agatharchides also receives a double explanation. They grow ill and die "either because of the peculiarity of their food or the air" (F59b = DS 3.29.7), as we saw above. The dual or competing explanations that both authors provide are part of a larger phenomenon in ethnographic writing.[189] Whereas cultural histories like the *Life of Greece* and the passage of *On Ancient Medicine* examined above advocate unequivocally for a pessimistic or progressivist view of human development, the ethnographies remain polyvocal and ambivalent

[188] Τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ τοῦτο εἴ σφί ἐστι ἀληθέως οἷόν τι λέγεται, διὰ τοῦτο ἂν εἶεν, τούτῳ τὰ πάντα χρεώμενοι, μακρόβιοι.
[189] Woolf 2011, 32ff.

about agriculture, and this changes how readers respond to their claims about diet and health.

In his criticism of Persian diet, the Aithiopian king implicitly assumes that the Persians could change their diet if they wanted to. In as much as health depends on diet, bread-eaters like the Persians can choose to eat milk and meat. But if Aithiopian health is just as much about a magic spring as their consumption of nonagricultural food, there is not much that the Persians can do to achieve their level of health. In Agatharchides, a similar problem arises. If the Locusteaters sicken and die because they eat peculiar food, readers looking for healthy diets know that they should not eat locusts when looking for a "simple" diet. But if the Locusteaters die because of the air they breathe, diet is no longer a guarantee of health, and the health-seeking reader is left wondering: should I eat unrefined foods, or not? Am I doomed to ill health because of my climate, or can I control my physical well being by eating differently?

The health of Agatharchides' Fisheaters is not explained in multiple ways, but the fact that they are short-lived is significant. As we saw above, "because of the simplicity of their diet [the Fisheaters] rarely fall ill, but they are much shorter-lived than we are" (Agatharch. F39b = DS 3.17.5). This short life-span may be the result of the immoderateness of their eating and drinking cycle,[190] or the fact that they do not toil, as Photius argues,[191] but the end result is that readers cannot have complete confidence in the Fisheater diet. Although not denigrated as "peculiar", the "simplicity" of this diet does not appear entirely attractive, in large part because Agatharchides' statements about the Fisheaters' health and short life-span stand side by side. The Fisheaters' short life-span may not be the result of their diet, but Agatharchides does not say for sure and the reader is invited to associate diet with both good health in the short term and a short life in the long term.

[190] Agatharch. F39b = DS 3.17.5
[191] Agatharch. F39a = Phot. *Bibl. Cod.* 250.39, 450a

Like the double explanations that account for the Locusteaters' illness and the Aithiopes' health, the conflict between the Fisheaters' good health and short life represents these ethnographers' engagement with a type of inquiry and method of argumentation that multiplies explanations. These doubled and absent explanations are more than a curious feature of ethnographic reasoning; they also shape how readers will evaluate the advisability of adopting other diets and engaging in other ecologies. In the case of the Aithiopes and Locusteaters, diet is contrasted with a specific environmental factor (the Aithiopian spring; the bad air in the land of the Locusteaters) that would be difficult for a reader to replicate. Compared to these environmental factors, diet may seem more abstractable from environment and adoptable by readers who encounter the diets of geographically distant Others. But the environmental factors themselves are so specific that, if they cast doubt on whether diet or environment leads to certain health outcomes, readers may conclude that the health of ethnic Others is unavailable to them. In ethnographies, the ecologies that produce health are very difficult to determine. Human actions, including the *bios* humans adopt, make a difference, but environmental factors beyond human control continue to assert themselves.

Readers' doubts about these specific diets in Herodotus and Agatharchides are amplified by the fact that these authors present peoples whose lives support both a pessimistic and progressivist view of agriculture. Even if a reader concludes that the pastoral Aithiopian diet in Herodotus is superior to their own, the famines that the Persian troops suffer present an alternative, negative evaluation of nonagricultural diet, and the fact that one of these famine narratives is linked directly to Cambyses' misunderstanding of Aithiopia's resources invites readers to read the famines against the Aithiopian *logos.* The same is true for readers of Agatharchides, who encounter both Fisheaters and Locusteaters. Not only is the healthiness of

these peoples' individual diets uncertain, so is the advisability of adopting an agricultural or nonagricultural diet in general. Readers may choose to focus on one strain of thinking, either progressive or pessimistic, and order their lives accordingly, but they must actively ignore the other strain to do so.

The *Life of Greece* and *On Ancient Medicine* do not present the same problems for readers. In these texts, a single either pessimistic or progressivist view of nonagricultural foods is advanced and this diet is tied either to health in the former or illness in the latter. Eating the right foods or foods produced in the right way ensures good health without the complications of multiple explanations or environmental factors beyond human control. Health or illness is diet-dependent but it is not dependent on a certain climate or place. This is reflected in the universalizing features of time-bound rather than place-bound imaginings of nonagricultural ways of life. Although ostensibly about the Greek way of life, the *Life of Greece* describes the earliest life-style of human beings at large, as does *On Ancient Medicine.* This universalizing ties these texts to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which Dicaearchus self-consciously adapts. Although comprised of metallic *genē*, "races" rather than ages, as we tend to speak of them, Hesiod's *genē,* with the exception of the demigods, populate the entire earth in turn. This universalizing releases health from the specific environmental factors of climate and place.

However, health in the *Life of Greece* and *On Ancient Medicine* remains strongly tied to certain time-bound ecologies. In Dicaearchus, the best *bios* is associated with a god, Cronus, whose time has certainly passed and with the absence of a *technē*, agriculture, which present-day Greeks have indubitably acquired. For Dicaearchus, *bios* is both a temporal category that describes different stages of human development and an atemporal "way of life" that can be abstracted from the stream of time and, at least theoretically, adopted by people at any time. The

succession of *bioi* Dicaearchus describes, each one replacing the other in turn, points to the first, temporal meaning of *bios*, while the connections he draws between the health of the earliest *bios* and the advice of contemporary physicians points to the possibility for the second. But the fact that the diet of the earliest, healthiest Greeks depends on humans' ignorance of the art of agriculture makes it difficult to experience this historical *bios* in subsequent times, including the time of Dicaearchus's fourth century BCE readers; how does one unlearn agriculture? In this sense, the first *bios* and its attributes are indeed lost. In *On Ancient Medicine*, health is also time-bound, but bound to the present and to the *technē* of agriculture, which is available to *On Ancient Medicine*'s Greek readers. In progressivist texts like *On Ancient Medicine*, health is more attainable than in pessimistic texts like the *Life of Greece* which connect health to a lost golden age.

In Dicaearchus's *Life of Greece*, good health belongs definitively to a lost, preagricultural past. In Herodotus's and Agatharchides' ethnographies, aspects of that past live on in other places. Like Hesiod's demigods who survive at the ends of the earth (*Op.* 170-173), some ethnic Others eat nonagricultural diets which spring, if not entirely spontaneously, then at least abundantly and without refinement from the earth and sea. Nevertheless, the tendency of ethnographic texts to omit or double explanations makes it impossible for readers to gauge the degree to which environmental factors, rather than diet, determine the health of these "golden" *genē*. Ethnographic texts tease their readers, first offering a path to golden-age blessedness and then withdrawing it by tying good health to environmental factors that lie outside human control.

In the ecology of health, temporal and geographic distances play a crucial role. Both types of distance encourage the imagining of alternative ways of being, including being in a particular environment. Distance provides the freedom to imagine alternatives, but it also

frustrates Greek readers' application of those alternatives. The health-giving or health-preventing characteristics of past times and distant places are to some degree specific to those times and places, and are to that same extent forever out of reach.

Porphyry's Application of Dicaearchus

In the last section I described the temporal and geographic constraints on health in the imagination of Greek Classical and Hellenistic writers. When these writers locate health in a developmentally earlier time or distant, environmentally different place, health is difficult for Greek readers to abstract and adopt for themselves. A notable exception to this is the Hippocratic *On Ancient Medicine*, which, because it ties health to agriculture, makes health accessible to its readers, who already practice agriculture. Another, more interesting exception is Porphyry's third century CE *On Abstinence*, the cover-text for the version of Dicaearchus's *Life of Greece* with which I have been working.[192] Although Porphyry lies outside my temporal bounds, the logic of *On Abstinence* further illuminates the ecology of health I have described at work in earlier periods.

Porphyry's aim in *On Abstinence* is to convince his friend Firmius Castricius, the work's addressee, to abstain from killing and eating animate beings. Porphyry quotes Dicaearchus at the beginning of the fourth and last book, concluding that the earliest humans' happiness resulted from their abstinence from meat, and that meat-eating went hand in hand with increasing war and injustice (Porph. *Abst.* 4.9). For Dicaearchus life under Cronus was probably vegetarian, it is true, but we have seen how the diet of this earliest phase of human life depended at least as much on abstinence from agriculture as on an accidental vegetarianism. Yet Porphyry elides this fact,

[192] For "cover-text" to describe the text that transmits a fragment, see Baron 2013, 4.

collapsing the distinction between the first *bios* and later agriculturalism which Dicaearchus works so hard to establish. The difference between Porphyry and Dicaearchus is made especially clear at the end of *On Abstinence* 3, where Porphyry quotes the same passage of Hesiod's *Works and Days* upon which Dicaearchus based his life under Cronus, but comes to a different conclusion:

> We will imitate the golden race, we will imitate those who have been set free. For Aidos and Nemesis and Dike were their friends because they were satisfied with the fruit of the earth, for "the fruitful land bore for them of its own accord and with great abundance" (Porph. *Abst*. 3.27).[193]

Like Dicaearchus, Porphyry considers the earliest human beings blessed, and calls for his readers to imitate them. But he reinterprets the significance of their diet. For Dicaearchus, the automatic abundance of the earth has been lost to human beings through pastoralism and the art of agriculture. For Porpyhry, agriculture is precisely how people of his own time and place can become golden once more. The earth no longer spontaneously produces food for human beings, but Porphyry evokes the spontaneity of the golden race as a promise to his readers: if you, like them, restrict yourselves to vegetarian food, i.e. agriculturally produced crops, you will be as abundantly satisfied as if the earth really were providing for you of its own accord.

Unlike Herodotus and Agatharchides, who associated nomadic and other pastoral diets with the golden age, Porphyry does the opposite. Because flesh-eating, rather than agriculture, is the defining contrast he draws between good and bad diets, these peoples' dependence on meat, however abundant, associates them in Porphyry's thinking with the corrupt present rather than the blessed past. In *On Abstinence* 4, Porphyry holds up a variety of ethnic Others, including Egyptian priests, Ioudaioi, and Indian Brahmans for his readers to imitate, but anticipates the

[193] Μιμησώμεθα τὸ χρυσοῦν γένος, μιμησώμεθα τοὺς ἐλευθερωθέντας. μεθ' ὧν μὲν γὰρ Αἰδὼς καὶ Νέμεσις ἥ τε Δίκη ὡμίλει, ὅτι ἠρκοῦντο τῷ ἐκ γῆς καρπῷ· καρπὸν γάρ, σφισιν 'ἔφερεν ζείδωρος ἄρουρα αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον.'

arguments of those who would offer "the customs of Nomads, Troglodytes, or Fisheaters" in contradiction to his arguments. These peoples, Porphyry says, have been forced to eat meat "from necessity," because their land is unsuitable for tilling, and are as much to be imitated as cannibals (4.21).

Porphyry simultaneously valorizes the preagricultural past and the agricultural present rather than opposing them as Dicaearchus and Hippocrates do. He harmonizes the past and present by making meat-eating, rather than agriculture, the crucial difference between phases of human development, and by associating the automatic abundance the earth literally produced in the past with the moral abundance he promises to his readers if they stop eating meat. Vegetarianism as Porphyry imagines it is limited to certain environments, but can be easily accommodated within the existing and dominant agricultural *bios* of his readers. Some nomadic peoples are environmentally prevented from being satisfied with agricultural products, but the abundant, cultivated earth in which he lives invites his readers to eat bread as the vegetarians they have chosen to become.

Conclusion

Health was a shared concern of Greek writers working in a variety of modes: cultural history, history of medicine, and ethnography, and was conceived of as an effect of *bios*, so that it is helpful to talk about an interest in the "ecology of health" across these different disciplines.

Health in Greek cultural histories and the history of medicine efface environmental and cultural differences to articulate a uniform and universal history of humanity's progress (or decline) through a series of ecological stages. Greek ethnographies, by presenting these stages as existing simultaneously in different and specific places, raise questions about how

environmentally determined these stages are, and whether they are the product of human *technē*. Greek writers' exploration of human difference invites readers to reflect upon their own customs, including their ecological practices, but ambivalence about the causes of difference among humans leaves readers with very few definite answers about how to achieve for themselves the advantages, including the health advantages, of other ways of life.

Porphyry, whose *On Abstinence* transmits Dicaearchus's *Life of Greece*, offers an example of how writers can reconcile the degeneration of well-being over time with their inescapable agriculturalism. Although Porphyry subscribes to Dicaearchus's pessimism, he is able to rehabilitate agricultural *bios* as vegetarian, and to persuade his readers that they can achieve the blessedness of the *automatos bios* by eating a selective agricultural diet. Instead of taking Dicaearchus as a criticism of agricultural *bios* itself and responding to it by embracing an entirely different ecology, Porphyry directs his readers to modify the prevailing *bios* to suit their vegetarianism. The ecological critique that arises from reflection on *bios* can be easily side-stepped.

Chapter 4: War and Gardening[194]

In chapter three, I argued that agriculture is a hinge between two versions of the Greek past, one in which a diet of cultivated foods produced by labor leads to health and long life, and the other in which the refinements of an agricultural diet cause illness and shorten life. In the Greek imagination, agriculture is also closely connected with warfare and its absence. As we will see, agriculture is characterized as the opposite of war because it is the activity of peace, but the advent of agriculture and the greater variety of products it makes available is also seen to encourage greed and produce war.

The ancient Greek association between farming and fighting had a material basis. Before the professionalization of the army in the Hellenistic period, the soldiers who went out to fight were men who would return (if they did return) to being farmers and land-owners in peacetime.[195] The weapons of war could be beaten into the tools of farming, or vice versa,[196] and

[194] Churchill to Siegfried Sassoon in 1918, quoted in Jablonsky 1991, 69: "War is the natural occupation of man…war—and gardening."

[195] Nelson 1998, 90: "Farming is the opposite of war, requiring and fostering peace, destroyed by violence. But the 'farmers who are gone' are gone to become soldiers. The farmer who is opposed to the soldier also *is* the soldier."

While Hanson 1995 argued that most Greek hoplites were middling land-owners and cultivators of their own plots, this view has been largely discredited. Van Wees 2013, 241: "For a century and a half since the introduction of the hoplite shield and body armor, circa 700 BC, hoplite militias … consisted of leisure-class landowners. Working yeomen farmers began to join their ranks only from 550 BC onward." For an in-depth consideration of the wealth of hoplites in the classical period, see van Wees 2001.

[196] A modern parallel is the Haber process, a nitrogen-fixing method orginally developed in WWI to produce explosives that dramatically increased the carrying capacity of the planet later in the twentieth century.

Classical Greek writers stressed the overlap of agricultural and military skill.[197] This interdependence of farming and fighting also pitted soldiers against farmers. The provisioning of troops posed a major obstacle to large-scale invasions in antiquity, and, partly as a result, soldiers frequently looted or ravaged their enemies' crops. War could thus pose a significant threat to local agricultural ecologies.[198]

The citizen-farmer-soldier in archaic and classical Greece gave way to increasing military specialization in the fourth century, so that by the Hellenistic period "military service in most Hellenistic *poleis* was no longer the fundamental requirement for citizenship rights."[199] Militarism remained integral to social life and identity in many places, and was still required of citizens in certain *poleis*, like Crete, Sparta, and Boiotia, but, in general, Greeks of this time no longer expected soldiers and farmers to be the same people. Yet philosophical and ethnographic texts of this period, as we will see, advocate strongly for different divisions of martial and agricultural labor, so that even when the categories of farmer and soldier were opposed they remained in relationship with one another. In this chapter, I describe the tension between war and agriculture in Hesiod, Herodotus, and Dicaearchus, and consider how Megasthenes and Agatharchides responded to this theme and the authors who treated it before them.

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[197] See Xenophon *Oec*. 6.8-10 for the landowner soldier ideal, Aristotle *Pol*. 4.1291a.31-33 (cf. 4.1297b.15-18) for farmers as soldiers, Xenophon *Oec*. 5.13-14 for overlap of skills and tools, and Hanson 1995, 240-242, for further literary sources. Megasthenes F12 = Arrian 7.7 connects the implements of war and agriculture. Betensky 1979 analyzes the overlap of farming and warfare imagery in the *Georgics*.

[198] Foraging for provisions and ravaging crops to hurt the enemy seem to have been relatively common in Greek warfare at all periods, and of concern to Greek writers (Xenophon *Mem*. 2.1.13, Plato *Rep*. 470A-471B) regardless of the scale of the damage, which scholars debate. See Pritchett 1971, pt. 1, 38-41 and van Wees 2004, 121-126 on the prominence of foraging and ravaging in war, and Garlan 1974, 19-86, and Ober 1985 for strategies of defense. Hanson 1998 (revision of 1983) argues that wartime ravaging did not pose a significant threat to agriculture, Foxhall 1993 and Thorne 2001 disagree.

[199] Chaniotis 2005, 20.

Strife in Hesiod and Dicaearchus

Hesiod's *Works and Days* begins by correcting the characterization of strife found in the poet's other work, the *Theogony*. There is not only one strife, Hesiod says, but two, one which urges men to *kakos polemos* (13), and the other to a laudable *ergon* (19). Koning argues that Hesiod's characterization of the two strifes participates in what he calls the "ideological opposition of fighting and farming," which correlates agriculture with peace and denigrates war as its opposite.[200] The opening of the poem also offers farming as a method for amassing wealth and status: the second, "good" strife encourages even lazy people to work when they see "a rich man hastening to plough and plant and manage his household well. So neighbor vies against neighbor in pursuit of wealth" (21-24).[201]

Dicaearchus, whose *Life of Greece* quotes and then adapts the myth of ages in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, credits the last *bios* of human development, *ho geōrgikos bios*, not only with the introduction of illness into human life, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also with the advent of war. During the earliest, *automatos bios*:

> Neither war nor dissention existed between people. For no exceptional prize was set amongst them for the sake of which someone might stir up disagreement, so that life consisted mainly in leisure, relaxation from necessary things, health, peace, and friendship (F56A = Porph. *De Abst.* 4.2).[202]

In Dicaearchus's cultural history, the ability to produce a greater abundance and variety of food in the agricultural *bios* leads humans to desire even more, and ultimately to go to war to acquire

[200] Koning 2010, 276-295. Cf. Marsilio 2000, 59.
[201] εἰς ἕτερον γάρ τίς τε ἰδὼν ἔργοιο χατίζει/ πλούσιον, ὃς σπεύδει μὲν ἀρώμεναι ἠδὲ φυτεύειν/ οἶκόν τ' εὖ θέσθαι· ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονα γείτων/ εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ'·
[202] ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ πόλεμοι αὐτοῖς ἦσαν οὐδὲ στάσεις πρὸς ἀλλήλους· ἆθλον γὰρ οὐθὲν ἀξιόλογον ἐν τῷ μέσῳ προκείμενον ὑπῆρχεν, ὑπὲρ ὅτου τις ἂν διαφορὰν τοσαύτην ἐνεστήσατο. ὥστε τὸ κεφάλαιον εἶναι τοῦ βίου συνέβαινεν σχολήν, ῥᾳθυμίαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀναγκαίων, ὑγίειαν, εἰρήνην, φιλίαν.

the possessions of others.[203] The positive ambition of *eris* in Hesiod led people to vie productively with one another to secure their livelihoods and positions. In Dicaearchus, agriculture disrupts the peace that prevailed when human beings had equal access to the same, limited but satisfying array of products. In later ages, it is the individual's application of labor and ingenuity that produces different amounts of wealth and better qualities of life, and people inevitably desire what their richer neighbors possess. Dicaearchus grafts Hesiod's interest in *bios* at the beginning of the *Works and Days* onto the pessimism of the myth of ages to produce a decline narrative in which way of life marks the transition from age to age and the reason for their degeneration.

After associating war with the agricultural *bios* in this way, Porphyry says that Dicaearchus placed the beginning of strife in the pastoral *bios*, when humans first began to desire *perittotera ktēsis*, "excessive," or "superfluous" possessions. They perceived the utility of some animals, which they tamed, and the dangers posed by others, which they attacked.[204] It is unclear whether Dicaearchus himself placed the advent of war in the pastoral or agricultural *bios*; given Porphyry's ultimate goal in the *On Abstinence*, to promote vegetarianism, the emphasis on strife in the *nomadikos bios* may be his rather than Dicaearchus's,[205] but the agricultural *bios* is at the

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[203] Cf. Plato *Rep*. 373d-e.

[204] ὕστερον ὁ νομαδικὸς εἰσῆλθεν βίος, καθ' ὃν περιττοτέραν ἤδη κτῆσιν προσεισῆλθεν βίος, καθ' ὃν περιττοτέραν ἤδη κτῆσιν προσπεριεβάλοντο καὶ ζῴων ἥψαντο, κατανοήσαντες ὅτι τὰ μὲν ἀσινῆ ἐτύγχανεν ὄντα, τὰ δὲ κακοῦργα καὶ χαλεπά· καὶ οὕτω δὴ τὰ μὲν ἐτιθάσευσαν, τοῖς δὲ ἐπέθεντο, καὶ ἅμα τῷ αὐτῷ βίῳ συνεισῆλθεν πόλεμος.

[205] Porphyry is not the only cover-text for the *Life of Greece*, but he and Varro are our primary transmitters. For Varro's version of Dicaearchus's ages, which follows the same schema but which he uses as more of a neutral background, see Ax 2001.

It is interesting to note the uses to which writers can put the idea of pastoralism as a transitional stage of human development. Just as Herodotus uses the nomadic Aithiopes and Scythians to imagine different versions of the past, as I argued in chapter 2, one (Aithiopian) closer to the golden age, and the other (Scythian) closer to a miserable primitivism, Dicaearchus's pastoralists can be allied either to the first and best *bios* of golden age abundance, before the fall into agriculture, or to the agricultural age itself, when the greed and luxuriousness

very least the culmination of degenerative forces that have led humans away from the simplicity and contentment of the *automatos bios*.

Herodotus on Happiness and Wealth

Herodotus focuses less on the dangers or rewards of agriculture *per se*,[206] than the conditions that produce or hinder human happiness in general. Nevertheless, the *Histories*' philosophy of happiness is grounded in the material realities of life. In order to explain the causes of the Greco-Persian conflict and human fortunes generally, Herodotus explores the relationship between abundantly-producing lands, individual ambition, and imperialism.[207]

One of the most interesting features of Herodotus's writing is his inquiry into the full scale of human experience, from that of the individual to that of the state, *ethnos*, and land. These different scales of inquiry constitute different discourses, but not entirely separable ones; what Herodotus or his characters say about the smaller units of human experience interacts with what they say about the larger, and sometimes levels intersect directly. In Solon and Croesus's debate about happiness, which opens and grounds this topic as a major thread in the *Histories* (1.30-32),[208] Solon relates the fortunes of individuals to those of lands. Just as no land is self-

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allowed by pastoralism reached fruition. The *automatos bios* and *geōrgikos bios* are relatively stable and defined in both progressivist and pessimistic philosophies; the *nomadikos bios* is more malleable.

[206] The Aithiopian-Persian exchange in book 3 is a notable exception. See chapter 3.

[207] For a similar reading of the *Oresteia*, see Bakola 2013.

My reading parallels Flory 1987, 81-118, who argues for the *Histories* as a series of conflicts between "noble savages" and "prosperous agressors." I focus on the ecological aspects of these conflicts and see them as contributing to the idea of the noble savage rather than drawing upon it.

[208] As Pelling 2006, 143 says: "These remarks certainly do not represent Herodotus' last words on human experience, but they are prominent among his first, and provide the benchmark against which we measure much of the subsequent narrative."

sufficient (*chōrē oudemia katarkeei*, 1.32.8), he says, neither is any one person. What then determines the happiness of lands and individuals in the *Histories*?[209]

In his debate with Solon, Croesus's definition of *olbos,* "happiness," or "prosperousness,"[210] weights material wealth very heavily; if he is the wealthiest man in the world, then he is also the *olbiotatos*. Solon argues that wealth is necessary to happiness but not sufficient for establishing it; one must also be lucky in life and to the end of one's life. Both Tellus, the *olbiotatos* in Solon's estimation, and Cleobis and Biton, the runners up, are financially secure and lucky in their deaths. If Croesus, as the wealthiest man in the world, were also to end his life well, Solon would amend his judgement in Croesus's favor. But, as Solon goes on to say, this is unlikely because human life is changeable and the gods' jealousy makes it more changeable still (1.32.1-4). Each person's life spans enough time for disaster to strike multiple times. There are many ways to be wealthy but also unhappy.

Solon's comparison of lands and individuals is curious. A land's self-sufficiency, its *autarkeia*, is most easily conceptualized in terms of its variety and abundance of products, its material wealth. When Solon says that neither lands nor individuals are self-sufficient (1.32.8), he appears, like Croesus, to assert the importance of material wealth to the exclusion of other factors. Taking Solon's comparison of lands and individuals as a cue to read for the environment, one infers that it is possible to be a wealthy land, or state, or *ethnos*, but not a happy one, and that lands that are particularly wealthy are at greater risk for error, just as wealthy individuals are. Tilman Krischer, careful not to equate wealth and ill fortune, nevertheless neatly sums up one of

[209] This passage, one of the most famous in the *Histories*, has generated an enormous scholarly response. I have been particularly informed by Krischer 1964, Flory 1978, Shapiro 1994 and 1996, Dewald 1997, and Pelling 2006.
[210] For the semantic range of *olbos* and related words for happiness, see Heer 1969, and 71-72 for this passage in particular.

the main questions the Solon-Croesus debate leaves readers to ponder. If wealth attracts divine jealousy, how much wealth can a person risk having?[211] Though his emphasis is on individuals rather than larger groups, Solon's comparison of humans to lands allows readers to ask a similar question about *chōrai*. This is a reasonable way to interpret the passage given that the relative *olbos* of lands is one of the themes the ethnographies of the *Histories* explore. This theme becomes explicit especially in the concluding episode of the text, when Cyrus warns against the dangers of "soft lands," but is also reflected in Herodotus's catalogue of other lands' products and observation that the edges of the earth contain *ta kallista,* "the best things." (3.106, and cf. 3.116). Herodotus is interested in the relative *olbos* of lands and individuals.

Solon's arguments about the risks of wealth are born out in the stories that follow. Wealth distracts and deceives (1.22, 1.207-11[212]), attracts the notice of capricious gods or rulers (3.40, 7.38-29, 7.190), and never really compensates for personal loss (9.93-94). When it comes to lands and states, readers of the *Histories* learn that it is the desire for more and especially for the resources of another land that induces people to go to war (7.5), but that the acquisition of these resources renders them unfit to defend their newly-acquired wealth. Again and again, poverty is associated with military skill, and wealth, especially an abundance of natural resources, with military weakness (1.65-66, 1.71, 1.155, 5.49, 5.97, 7.102, 8.26, 9.82, 9.122). It is impossible, as Cyrus says in the famous ending episode of the *Histories*, for "the same land to produce both exceptional produce and good fighting men" (9.122),[213] because a variety and abundance of crops, whether home-grown or acquired by force, leads to sloth and luxury, both physical and

[211] Krischer 1964, 177: "[W]ieviel Reichtum und Wohlergehen (Glück) kann ich mir leisten, ohne den Neid der Götter (das Unglück) auf mich zu ziehen?"
[212] For more banquets of doom, see 2.100, 2.107, 2.121d, 6.78. Lloyd 1975, Introduction, 107 notes that this is a folk motif.
[213] οὐ γάρ τι τῆς αὐτῆς γῆς εἶναι καρπόν τε θωμαστὸν φύειν καὶ ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς τὰ πολέμια.

moral weakness.

The *Histories* also associate abundance with slavery. It is the desire for pleasure and the avoidance of work that leads rulers to invade other countries, and the subjects of an imperialistic ruler to allow themselves to become enslaved to him (1.26). Leisure weakens an individual or country's fighting ability, as does the slavery that imperialists demand of their subjects. Though the memory of slavery (5.109), or the fear of the master (8.86), can produce a degree of bravery, it is the rare person in the *Histories* whose military success completely overwhelms his enslavement to luxury (7.153). We learn that slaves fight less well than free men (5.78, 5.91),[214] and that freedom is often bought with poverty, or at least the sacrifice of further enrichment (8.143-144). Three dialogues make explicit this trade-off between poverty and freedom: Dionysius's exhortation to the Ionians to take up hard work and freedom instead of capitulating to the Persian king's softness and slavery (6.11), Demaratus's explanation to Xerxes that the Greeks' poverty has protected them from despotism (7.102), and the Spartans' chastisement of Hydarnes, who, they claim, traded his freedom for the comforts of Persian slavery (7.135).

Greek leaders who exhort their fellows to resist enslavement have their own reasons for associating Persian luxury with slavishness, but this rhetoric does not stand outside the logic that runs through the *Histories*; it is effective in part because it harmonizes so well with its context. In the world of the *Histories*, slavery is associated with wealth because both entail dependence, being "mastered" by outside forces that can lead a person, or a country, astray. Freedom, on the other hand, is associated with self-sufficiency because Greek writers define true self-sufficiency as a freedom from the desire for more. When it comes to statecraft, these forces leave rulers and their people in a tricky position. As Carolyn Dewald has said, "rulers of empire must refuse to

[214] For a similar relationship between slavery and military skill, especially in "soft" lands, see *Airs, Waters, Places* 16.

enjoy the fruits of their labors, in order to survive as rulers."[215]

On the surface, the *Histories* seem to advocate for self-sufficiency and against wealth and imperialism, as if these were ways of life that individuals and countries could freely choose. Choice is certainly an important element in peoples' fates, but so is chance, and the way that time works against people at every scale of organization. Both Solon's comments at the beginning of the narrative (1.30-32) and Cyrus's at the end (9.122) describe the conditions that produce *autarkeia* or its absence. They also assert the likelihood of change in the lives of individuals and countries, and are thus deeply pessimistic about the ability of human beings to live happy lives. Solon calculates the number of days in which things can go wrong for a human life (1.32); how much more can go wrong in the far longer life of a country? The concluding episode of the *Histories* reflects the same view of human fortune. Although the Persians take Cyrus's advice in the short term (9.122), we know that they do not keep to it, and this is because over time things change, usually for the worse. Human life, Xerxes realizes, is generally a misery (7.46), exceptions like Tellus, Cleobis, and Biton notwithstanding. Even if states are able to guard themselves against the dangers of wealth, time and chance will undermine them.

This is as true for people within Greece as without. Polycrates' wealth and success earn him a terrible death, one he tries to avoid by wisely subverting his own fortune, at the advice of Amasis (3.40), and which Herodotus says he in no way deserved (3.125). And yet Polycrates' tragic fate results from his habitus of wealth and success and how it affects his dealings with other people. Herodotus offers two reasons for Polycrates' death: that his easy capture of Samos incited the jealousy of Oroetes (3.120), or that by facing away from Oroetes' messenger (whether intentionally or not) he gave Oroetes offense (3.121). In both cases, it is Polycrates' wealth and

[215] Dewald 1997, 72.

good fortune that create the conditions for Oroetes' jealous revenge.

In the events leading up to his demise, Polycrates takes a more active role in his own doom. His plan to rule the sea – the first human, Herodotus says, to have conceived such a plan – and the money he needs to put this plan into action (3.123) drive him into Oroetes' trap. He is so consumed with his desire for greater power and wealth that he disregards oracles, dreams, and his family's pleading (3.124). Though Herodotus says that Polycrates' fate is undeserved, his ambition has made him vulnerable to the envy of others and his own self-deception.

Herodotus connects Polycrates' thalassocratic goals and tragic fate, but emphasizes his overall fortune more than particular desire for others' territory. The story of Sparta and the Arcadians demonstrates how wealth actually produces war. After Lycurgus establishes the Spartan constitution, things go well in Sparta:

> Since they had a good land and a not insignificant number of men, they soon thrived and prospered. But it was not enough for them to live in peace, and thinking that they were better than the Arcadians they consulted the oracle in Delphi about the whole of Arcadia (1.66).[216]

The oracle responds that the acorn-eating Arcadians will not give way to them, but that the Spartans might *diametrēsasthai* "measure out" the land of Tegea instead; this encourages the Spartans to attack Tegea, but instead of measuring out Tegea as its new possessors they do so roped together as laborers. In this story, it is the good fortune of the Spartans that ruins their contentment with peace and leads them into war, destruction, and enslavement. The fact that the Aracadians are tough acorn-eaters underlines the dangers of even the moderate degree of comfort Sparta enjoys.

The Aithiopes and others who dwell at the edges of space and time in the *Histories* offer

[216] Οἷα δὲ ἔν τε χώρῃ ἀγαθῇ καὶ πλήθεϊ οὐκ ὀλίγῳ ἀνδρῶν, ἀνά τε ἔδραμον αὐτίκα καὶ εὐθενήθησαν. Καὶ δή σφι οὐκέτι ἀπέχρα ἡσυχίην ἄγειν, ἀλλὰ καταφρονήσαντες Ἀρκάδων κρέσσονες εἶναι ἐχρηστηριάζοντο ἐν Δελφοῖσι ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ Ἀρκάδων χώρῃ.

a counter-example to these general truths, but not very much hope for the fate of peoples over time. The Aithiopes' golden-ish *bios*, as I explored in the last chapter, is not entirely what it appears, and their remoteness and the environmental specifics that sustain them are not available to anyone else, even if readers conclude that the Aithiopian *bios* is what they want. The *olbos* of most lands, as of most individuals, is elusive, if not illusory.[217]

In the long course of time, the *Histories* argue that peoples and lands, as well as states and individuals, will tend toward diminishment and degeneration.[218] Herodotus states this principle explicitly at the beginning of the *Histories*, when he says that "human happiness does not remain long in the same place," (1.5) and demonstrates it through characters like Croesus (1.86) and Polycrates (3.125), the wise pronouncements of Solon (1.32), Amasis (3.40), and Xerxes (7.46), as well as the stories of Sparta after Lycurgus (1.66), and the soft-living, despotic Persia of the main narrative that stands in contrast to the earlier, tougher Persia of Cyrus's time (9.122). Whether a land is naturally abundant or not, its inhabitants will inevitably want more and go to war to obtain it. If they are "soft" already, their military prowess will not last, and if they become "soft" through imperialism their downfall is just as inescapable.

Though Herodotus offers a comprehensive and thoroughly pessimistic theory of wealth, resource acquisition, and war, the Hellenistic authors who inherit his ethnographic tradition

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[217] Flory 1987, 113 argues that the Scythian-Amazon arrangement (4.111) constitutes another example of optimism, similarly remote and unavailable to Greeks.

The time-scales involved in assessing the *olbos* of lands further frustrate the identification of a truly happy land. As Dewald 1997, 81 says of the conclusion of the text, "the *Histories* is silent [about the virtue of the Athenian empire] not because Herodotus thought there was no answer, or because he didn't want to offend someone, or because the answer didn't matter, but because at the time of his writing this part of the pattern had not yet emerged." It may be possible to assess the "end" of a state, but lands and peoples usually endure past the point of historical chronology and thus have no natural "end" from which their *olbos* can be determined.

[218] As has been long-recognized in the scholarship. See Redfield 1985; Welser 2009; Fornara 1971, 78; and Romm 1998, 59-76. Romm 1998, 66 makes a wonderful argument about the consistency of this pessimism even in Herodotus's descriptions of plants and animals.

continue to explore the possibility for human happiness on a large scale. Both Megasthenes, through his treatment of the seemingly "soft" India, and Agatharchides, in his description of the relatively impoverished peoples who inhabit the Red Sea region, offer counterexamples to the decline narrative of the *Histories*.

The Mechanics of Megasthenes' Ideal State

Like the Persia imagined by the concluding episode of the *Histories*, Megasthenes' India produces many fine fruits.[219] India abounds in mountains, rivers, flora, fauna, cities, and people, and the earth itself is characterized by *eudaimonia*, "prosperity," yielding a double harvest and continual produce throughout the year:

> The earth, bearing all kinds of crops, also has many underground veins of all different kinds of metals … In addition to the fruit of Demeter, much millet grows throughout India, irrigated by a profusion of running streams, and there is a large quantity of legumes, and also rice and what is called "bosporos."[220] In addition, there are many other plants useful to nourishment, the majority native (F4 = DS 2.36.2-5).[221]

There is a double-inundation that results in two harvests per year (F4 = DS 2.36.4), and "sweet" wild foods that "offer an abundance for people" in addition to what can be cultivated. "As a result, they say that India has never been oppressed by hunger, or, in general, a scarcity of daily staples" (F4 = DS 2.36.4).[222] India also contains a multitude of kinds of plants and animals:

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[219] Parker 2008, 44: "Perhaps the most striking feature of Megasthenes' India is its abundance."
[220] "*Bosporos* … some kind of cereal, is a unique word, probably the same as the *bosmoron* of Strabo 15.1.13, 18 (Onesikritos, *FBNJ* 134 F 15)" (Roller 2011, comm. to F 4).
[221] ἡ δὲ γῆ πάμφορος οὖσα τοῖς ἡμέροις καρποῖς ἔχει καὶ φλέβας καταγείους πολλῶν καὶ παντοδαπῶν μετάλλων … χωρὶς δὲ τῶν δημητριακῶν καρπῶν φύεται κατὰ τὴν Ἰνδικὴν πολλὴ μὲν κέγχρος, ἀρδευομένη τῆι τῶν ποταμίων ναμάτων δαψιλείαι, πολὺ δ' ὄσπριον καὶ διάφορον, ἔτι δ' ὄρυζα καὶ ὁ προσαγορευόμενος βόσπορος, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτ' ἄλλα πολλὰ τῶν πρὸς διατροφὴν χρησίμων· καὶ τούτων τὰ πολλὰ ὑπάρχει αὐτοφυῆ.
Cf. F8 = Strabo 15.1.20.
[222] διὸ καί φασι μηδέποτε τὴν Ἰνδικὴν ἐπισχεῖν λιμὸν ἢ καθόλου σπάνιν τῶν πρὸς τροφὴν

> Indeed, India has many large mountains full of fruit-bearing trees of every kind, and many plains, large and fruitful, exceptional in their beauty, with a multitude of rivers flowing through them … It produces animals of all kinds exceptional in their size and strength, both land animals and birds (F4 = DS 2.35.3).[223]

India, luxuriously verdant and full of a variety of products, is just the sort of "soft land" we would expect to produce "soft people." Yet this is not the case. Megasthenes' India is prosperous in a way that neither exposes the Indoi to external threat nor causes their degeneration. This is no mere environmental accident, the *Indika* makes clear, but rather the result of a conscious partnership between the Indoi and their surroundings.

Land Management and the Protection of Farmers

At the most basic level, human beings in India reflect and reproduce attributes of the Indian land. Megasthenes repeatedly stresses the strength of the Indoi and their plenty, and relates this vitality both directly and indirectly to India itself. Like other species in India, the Indoi are many, strong, and various:

> There are innumerable peoples and cities, if anyone should wish to count them all … Also reported [is] the strength of these peoples (T8 = Pliny 6.58).[224]

> It is said that the whole of India is exceedingly large and that many people of all kinds live there (F4 = DS 2.38.1).[225]

In addition to these indirect correlations between India and its human inhabitants, Megasthenes

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ἥμερον ἀνηκόντων·

[223] ἡ δ' οὖν Ἰνδικὴ πολλὰ μὲν ὄρη καὶ μεγάλα ἔχει δένδρεσι παντοδαποῖς καρπίμοις πλήθοντα, πολλὰ δὲ πεδία καὶ μεγάλα καρποφόρα, τῶι μὲν κάλλει διάφορα, ποταμῶν δὲ πλήθεσι διαρρεόμενα … ζώιων τε παντοδαπῶν γέμει διαφόρων τοῖς μεγέθεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀλκαῖς, τῶν μὲν χερσαίων τῶν δὲ καὶ πτηνῶν. See F13b for the numerous towns, soldiers, and elephants of the Pandai, an Indian tribe. See F21a-23b for descriptions of specific giant species: tigers, monkeys, dogs, snakes, and, of course, gold-digging ants. For natural history as a feature of Greek and Roman writing about India, see Kartunnen 1997, 95-252.

[224] Gentes ei urbesque innumerae, si quis omnes persequi velit … Vires quoque gentium prodidere. Cf. F17 = Arrian 12.7.1.

[225] τὴν δ' ὅλην Ἰνδικὴν οὖσαν ὑπερμεγέθη λέγεται κατοικεῖν ἔθνη πολλὰ καὶ παντοδαπά. On the boundlessness of India, see Romm 1992, 83.

also explicitly relates the strength of the Indoi to their natural surroundings. Not only are they autochthonous (F4 = DS 2.38.1), and experience a swift cycle of bodily maturation and decay in keeping with India's recurrent harvests (F13d = Pliny 7.29), but Megasthenes comments that:

> Likewise, abundant fruitfulness also nourishes the people, providing for their surpassing height and bulk. And it happens that they are also skilled in crafts, because they breathe pure air and drink the most refined water (F4 = DS 2.36.1).[226]

Though the *Indika* takes time elsewhere to describe the Indoi in their purely human capacity, as distinct from the rest of nature, Megasthenes' appreciation for their size and strength is integrated into his description of the strength of the Indian land in general. From this perspective, the Indoi are just one more vigorous Indian species. Yet though India and the Indoi are naturally blessed, Megasthenes also highlights the role the Indoi themselves play in supporting and safeguarding this automatic abundance.

As described in chapter 2, Megasthenes describes Indian society as divided into a series of seven classes, called either *genē* or *merē*: wise men, farmers, herders, soldiers, craftsmen and merchants, overseers, and advisors to the king.[227] Except for the soldiers and overseers, every other class has a role in land-management. The philosophers "provide a great service to the Indian public" by predicting the weather. This allows king and commoners alike to prepare for all exigencies,[228] and shows that both ruler and people are seriously engaged in tending India's abundance. The farmers and herdsmen farm the land and tend its livestock, but farmers are also exempt from warfare and other liturgies in order to focus exclusively on their work (F4 = DS

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[226] ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἡ πολυκαρπία τρέφουσα τοῖς τε ἀναστήμασι τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τοῖς ὄγκοις ὑπερφέροντας κατασκευάζει· εἶναι δ᾽ αὐτοὺς συμβαίνει καὶ πρὸς τὰς τέχνας ἐπιστήμονας, ὡς ἂν ἀέρα μὲν ἕλκοντας καθαρόν, ὕδωρ δὲ λεπτομερέστατον πίνοντας. See Roller 2011, comm. to F4 for the connection between natural fertility and human stength in other authors.

[227] τὸ τῶν φιλοσόφων, γεωργῶν, βουκόλων καὶ ποιμένων, τεχνιτῶν, στρατιωτῶν, ἐφόρων, and τὸ βουλεῦον μὲν καὶ συνεδρεῦον τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν βουλευομένοις

[228] πολλοὶ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶι δὲ κοινῶι τῶν ᾽Ινδῶν μεγάλας παρέχονται χρείας (F4 = DS 40.2).

2.40.5, F19a = Arrian 11.9, F19b = Strabo 15.1.40), while the herdsmen have the additional task of making the land "pure," *kathara*, by keeping India's prolific fauna within manageable bounds (F4 = DS 2.40.6, F19b = Strabo 15.1.41). The craftsmen forge weapons, but also support the farmers by making tools specifically for them (F4 = DS 2.42.1). Even the magistrates, who are a part of the seventh class, dedicate time to land measurement and irrigation (F31 = Strabo 15.1.50).

Most *merē* of Indian society are engaged in land management, enhancing India's natural abundance by their application of labor, *technē*, and care. The Indoi also take special measures to safeguard land and farmers from the threat of war. In addition to their exemption from other work, the farmers are sacrosanct:

> What is customary among the Indoi also contributes to an absence of undernourishment among them. For although it is the case among some people that an enemy, laying waste to the land, renders the land uncultivatable, among them farmers are allowed to be sacred and are left alone (F4 = DS 2.36.6).[229]

> No enemy coming upon a farmer on the land would do him injury, but considering him a common benefactor would hold off from any harm. For this reason the land remains uncorrupted and, laden with crops, brings advantages to fruition for people (F4 = DS 2.40.4).[230]

These passages demonstrate both the importance of Indian *nomoi* in protecting farmers and their crops, and the investment of the entire Indian people in this attitude. India is naturally abundant and fruitful, but not autonomously so. Just as the Indoi derive strength from the strength of the land, so the land remains fruitful because the Indoi safeguard that fruitfulness. Megasthenes' India abounds in vigorous and various flora and fauna, rivers and metals, and yet this

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[229] συμβάλλονται δὲ παρὰ τοῖς Ἰνδοῖς καὶ τὰ νόμιμα πρὸς τὸ μηδέποτε ἔνδειαν τροφῆς παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς εἶναι, παρὰ μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις οἱ πολέμιοι καταφθείροντες τὴν χώραν ἀγεώργητον κατασκευάζουσι, παρὰ δὲ τούτοις τῶν γεωργῶν ἱερῶν καὶ ἀσύλων ἐωμένων. And F19 = Arrian 10 for another parallel.

[230] οὐδεὶς ἂν πολέμιος περιτυχὼν γεωργῶι κατὰ τὴν χώραν ἀδικήσειεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς κοινοὺς εὐεργέτας ἡγούμενοι πάσης ἀδικίας ἀπέχονται. διόπερ ἀδιάφθορος ἡ χώρα διαμένουσα καὶ καρποῖς βρίθουσα πολλὴν ἀπόλαυσιν παρέχεται τῶν ἐπιτηδείων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

hypertrophe is not self-sustaining; human beings have the power to manage its abundance and it is a central feature of Indian society – and the success of India's abundance – that they do. As Megasthenes says, "What is customary among the Indoi also contributes to an absence of undernourishment among them."

Both Plato's *Republic* and, especially, Aristotle's *Politics*, argue that labor should be divided among different classes of people, and to this Megasthenes agrees. His India includes seven classes clearly indebted to those imagined by Aristotle: farmers, craftsmen, the military, the rich, priests, and judges (*Pol.* 1328b19-20, cf. Plato *Rep.* 2.369d-371b and *Tim.* 24A) and which, like his, do not allow for class mobility. Megasthenes says that farmers are not allowed to become soldiers and vice versa (F4 = DS 2.41.5), an echo of Aristotle's insistence that farmers and soldiers be kept separate (*Pol.* 1329b1) and Plato's argument for specialized professions (2.370c).[231] But both the investment of Indian society in land management and the explicit protection of farmers put Megasthenes' India at odds with the ideal state imagined by Plato and Aristotle. In Megasthenes' India, an elite warrior class does not rule over an enslaved producer class, as in Aristotle's *Politics*,[232] nor is the task of land-management confined to farmers, as in Plato. Rather, farmers, soldiers, and other classes characterized by their profession are equally subordinated to a *basileus*, and almost every *meros* has a responsibility for keeping the land safe and productive. Whereas Aristotle privileges war over agriculture by elevating the status of

[231] The fact that Megasthenes separates farming and fighting can be taken in several ways: as evidence for the increasing separation of these activities in the Hellenistic period, as evidence of Megasthenes' interaction with Greek political philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, who advocated for this division, and as either reflective of Seleucid practice or as advocating for this to be Seleucid practice. It is generally assumed that Seleucid rulers, like Alexander, relied on a more or less professional army, but our evidence is scanty. See Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 53-59; Bar-Kochva 1976 and 1988.

[232] ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τοὺς γεωργοὺς δούλους ἢ βαρβάρους περιοίκους, *Pol.* 1329a 25; repeated at 1330a 25.

soldiers over farmers, and Plato makes land-management the purview of farmers alone, Megasthenes does not. In his ideal India, agricultural labor and laborers are as valued as war and warriors, land-management is the responsibility of everyone, and everyone is politically equal and subordinated to the king. Slavery is forbidden in India (F4 = DS 2.39.5, F16 = Arrian 18.1-2, F32 = Strabo 15.1.54) and farmers are sacrosanct.

In addition to commenting on the ideal allocation of martial and agricultural labor, the *Indika* also strongly criticizes a persistent feature of Greek warfare, the ravaging of enemy crops. Though the means and purpose of ravaging changed over time, the practice itself endured.[233] The way the *Indika* enters this debate, however, has as much to do with ecology as with ethics, or rather, as much with ecological ethics as with a certain ethics of warfare, for the *Indika* ties the protection of farmers and farmland to the ongoing health and vitality of India's ecology. It is wrong to kill farmers and to ravage the land, the *Indika* says, because of the consequences to the prosperity of all India.

Home-grown Weapons and Natural Foes

Indian wars do not reach outside India and other conflicts do not penetrate (F11a = Strabo 15.1.6-7, F11b = Arrian 5.4-5). Although Megasthenes gives the Indoi credit for not waging wars beyond their borders, "for the sake of justice," (*dia dikaiotēta*, F14 = Arrian 9.12), how do the Indoi protect themselves from outside attack? And how do they stay fit in their land of plenty? Elephants are the key to deflecting these dangers of natural abundance. As weapons, Indian elephants protect the Indoi from outside attack, and as natural foes they prevent the Indian military from becoming soft and lazy.

[233] Hanson 1998, 11. See Chaniotis 2005, 121-129 for the continuation of ravaging in the Hellenistic period, and periodic legislative efforts to restrict it.

In addition to marveling at the rest of India's flora and fauna, Megasthenes describes the superiority of India's elephants, which are "the largest" of all and "far surpass Libyan elephants in strength" (F4 = DS 2.35.4).[234] The Indian state trains and maintains the elephants (F4 = DS 2.41.2), and it is their deployment that frightens off all potential attackers, "since everyone fears the number and strength of the animals" (F4 = DS 2.37.3).[235] As a result of the fertility of the land and the protection of the elephants, the Indoi live easy and pleasant lives. But the ferocity that qualifies the elephants for war also makes them difficult to hunt, capture, and domesticate (F20a = Arrian 13-14). While the Indoi use their store of tamed elephants to manipulate the newly captured but still-wild animals, the drivers themselves must be quick and disciplined enough to "slip secretly under the belly of their mounts and tie together the feet" of those that are still wild (F20b = Strabo 15.1.42).[236] Like the twice-yearly harvests of India, the elephants are a miraculous crop. As important as their availability, however, is the fact that the Indoi organize their society to make the most of what the elephants can do. It is the Indoi's engagement and cooperation with their environment that allows the elephants to work to their advantage. If the Indoi did not personally hunt elephants and the Indian state did not prioritize the elephants' training and upkeep, the mere presence of elephants in India would neither protect the Indoi from attack nor prevent them from degenerating.

Hellenistic readers of Megasthenes familiar with Herodotus would have expected India, an abundantly providing country, to pose problems for its human inhabitants. Megasthenes solves

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[234] καὶ πλείστους δὲ καὶ μεγίστους ἐλέφαντας ἐκτρέφει, χορηγοῦσα τὰς τροφὰς ἀφθόνους, δι᾽ ἃς ταῖς ῥώμαις τὰ θηρία ταῦτα πολὺ προέχει τῶν κατὰ τὴν Λιβύην γεννωμένων.

See Trautmann 2009, ch. 11 ("Elephants and Mauryas") for a modern historical account of elephants in India's history. For elephants in antiquity at large, see Scullard 1974.

[235] διὸ καὶ τῆς χώρας ταύτης οὐδεὶς πώποτε βασιλεὺς ἔπηλυς ἐκράτησε, πάντων τῶν ἀλλοεθνῶν φοβουμένων τό τε πλῆθος καὶ τὴν ἀλκὴν τῶν θηρίων.

[236] οἱ εὐθαρσέστατοι τῶν ἡνιόχων λάθρα καταβαίνοντες ὑποδύνουσιν ἕκαστος τῇι γαστρὶ τοῦ οἰκείου ὀχήματος, ὁρμώμενος δ᾽ ἐνθένδε ὑποδύνει τῶι ἀγρίωι, καὶ σύμποδοδεσμεῖ.

these problems by involving the Indoi in land-management and the protection of crops and farmers, so that they have to work in order to maintain India's prosperity, abolishing slavery, so that "softness" cannot lead to enslavement, and having the Indoi train elephants both to protect themselves from greedy invaders and keep their army tough in the absence of human foes. Through his description of India, Megasthenes argues that a soft land can produce men good for war and a fertile country safe from invasion, as long as people structure society to capitalize on the potential already present in the natural world to optimize human well-being.

Agatharchides' Impassive Fisheaters

Unlike Megasthenes' India, Agatharchides' Red Sea Region is hardly attractive. Although influenced by Dicaearchus's series of *bioi*,[237] Agatharchides does not generally idealize peoples whose lives reflect the impoverishment of the age of oak. At the same time, it would be a mistake to think that Agatharchides denigrates these ethnic Others or that their way of life cannot criticize Greek norms. As I argued in chapter 3, the Fisheater diet questions Greek agriculturalism as a path to health. The most remote of Agatharchides' Fisheaters, the *Apatheis Icthyophagoi*, or "Impassive Fisheaters," offer a more comprehensive critique of the agriculturalism that leads to greed and war.

Apatheia and (Non)human Society

After describing the Fisheaters I discussed in chapter 3, Agatharchides moves on to the *Apatheis Icthyophagoi*, whom he also calls the *Apatheis Aithiopes* (F41b = DS 3.18.4). The majority of the Fisheaters live along the west coast of the Red Sea, but the Impassive Fisheaters are "beyond the

[237] Burstein 1989, 27; Ameling 2008; see also chapter 2, above.

straits" (F40b = DS 3.18.1), an area that corresponds roughly to modern Djibouti, just south of Eritrea in the horn of Africa. Like the other Icthyophagoi Agatharchides describes, the Impassive Fisheaters subsist entirely on fish. But because they eat fish that are raw and still juicy, these Fisheaters do not require water. Their lack of thirst leads Agatharchides to conclude that they are *apatheis*, "unsuffering," or "impassive," since they do not suffer thirst as other humans do. Of their way of life, he says that "they are content with the diet that has been allotted to them by fortune from the very beginning, considering "happiness" [*eudaimonia*] the banishment of the pain that comes from want" (F40b = DS 3.18.2).[238] Their freedom from thirst is, however, only the most superficial aspect of these Fisheaters' *apatheia*. They do not emote at all, even when they are beaten or when their wives and children are slaughtered in front of their eyes (F41b = DS 3.18.5-6).

Apatheia is, of course, a philosophically loaded term. Some Platonists, Sceptics, and Stoics advocated for it, or for the replacement of *pathē* with their virtuous counterparts, *eupatheiai*, while Aristotle and the Peripatetics, with whom Agatharchides is usually associated, preferred *metriopatheia*, the moderation rather than obliteration of the passions.[239] It is unclear where Agatharchides fell in this debate and how or whether to read the Impassive Fisheaters as significant to that debate. They certainly look like extreme examples of Stoic virtue in their acceptance of whatever *tuchē* has allotted them. Moreover, the existence of the Impassive Fisheaters contradicts critics of *apatheia*, like Crantor, the Old Academic, who argued that perfect *apatheia* would be impossible to achieve.[240] Setting aside Agatharchides' interaction with

[238] στέργουσι δὲ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς δίαιταν ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης αὐτοῖς προσκληρωθεῖσαν, εὐδαιμονίαν ἡγούμενοι τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἐνδείας αὐτοῦ τοῦ λυποῦντος ὑπεξαίρεσιν.
[239] Sorabji 2000, 181-210.
[240] Graver 2001, 187-194. Crantor's fragments are collected by Mette 1984. For Agatharchides' philosophical ecelecticism, see Longo 1987, 16-17.

Hellenistic philosophy, what is important for present purposes is how the Fisheaters' *apatheia* distances them from other humans and frustrates the building of human society. As Agatharchides says:

> On the whole … they do not enter into conversation with other peoples, nor does the foreign appearance of those who approach their lands disturb them, but looking at them steadfastly they remain dispassionate and keep their composure, as if no one were there (F41b = DS 3.18.5).[241]

Apatheia leads to lack of interest in human conversation, and this lack of interest means that the Impassive Fisheaters do not communicate or associate with other humans. They have not even developed a spoken language, but communicate with one another by manual gestures instead (F41b = DS 3.18.6).[242]

Yet the Impassive Fisheaters do make social bonds with nonhuman members of their environment:

> And what is most marvelous of all, seals live with them and catch fish for themselves alongside the human beings.[243] Likewise, when it comes to their beds and the safety of their children they have the greatest confidence in one another, for the society between species is perpetuated without injustice and with peace and all due respect (F42b = DS 3.18.7).[244]

What to make of this human-nonhuman sociality? Some have argued that the Fisheaters as a whole are more animal than human,[245] and it is true that Agatharchides compares other Fisheater

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[241] καθόλου δ' ἀποφαίνεται μήτ' εἰς σύλλογον ἔρχεσθαι πρὸς τοὺς ἀλλοεθνεῖς, μήτε τὸ ξένον τῆς ὄψεως τῶν προσπλεόντων κινεῖν τοὺς ἐγχωρίους, ἀλλ' ἐμβλέποντας ἀτενῶς ἀπαθεῖς ἔχειν καὶ ἀκινήτους τὰς αἰσθήσεις, ὡς [ἂν] μηδενὸς παρόντος (F41b = DS 3.18.5).

[242] As Ameling 2008, 39 notes, this is a further sign that they occupy a temporally earlier *bios*.

[243] The meaning of παραπλησίως here is difficult to determine. Jeremy McInerney suggested to me that it means seals and humans cannot distinguish whose fish belong to whom, or whose children belong to whom.

[244] καὶ τὸ πάντων θαυμασιώτατον, φῶκαι τοῖς γένεσι τούτοις συνδιατρίβουσαι θήραν ποιοῦνται τῶν ἰχθύων καθ' αὑτὰς παραπλησίως ἀνθρώποις. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ περὶ τὰς κοίτας καὶ τὴν τῶν γεννηθέντων ἀσφάλειαν μεγίστῃ πίστει τὰ γένη χρῆσθαι ταῦτα πρὸς ἄλληλα· χωρὶς γὰρ ἀδικήματος ἀλλοφύλοις ζῴοις ἡ συναναστροφὴ γίνεται μετ' εἰρήνης καὶ πάσης εὐλαβείας

[245] Ameling 2008, 38: "The life of the fish-eaters differed not much from the life of animals[.]"

communities to animals. Those that live within the straits, north of the Impassive ones, "live entirely naked and have wives and children in common, in the same manner as herds of animals" (F31b = DS 3.15.2),[246] and in general, Agatharchides says, "they have a way of life similar to that of animals who live in dens" (F35b = DS 3.16.7).[247] Yet though the Impassive Fisheaters in particular have lost interest in human interaction, Agatharchides does not portray them as animals. While the Fisheaters north of the straits kill and eat seals as just another *ichthys* (F33b = DS 3.15.6), the Impassive Fisheaters, by contrast, socialize with the creatures who would otherwise become their prey. The Impassive Fisheaters' *apatheia* and lack of human community does not leave them without companions or society. The seals have replaced humans in the Impassive Fisheaters' value system, and the society they form with the Impassive Fisheaters acts as an alternate social and ecological arrangement. Though the Impassive Fisheaters eschew individual bonds and have no interest in outsiders, they are able to form society as a group, with and in response to the seals who are their neighbors.

Building and Burial

In the absence of *pathē* and the interest in other humans that *pathē* generate, the Impassive Fisheaters socialize with nonhumans. Their adaptability is also demonstrated through their method of house-building. Agatharchides divides different kinds of Icthyophagoi by where in the Red Sea Region they live and subdivides the Impassive Fisheaters based on their type of dwelling: "These peoples do not employ the same dwellings, but live in those that differ

[246] τούτων δὲ τῶν βαρβάρων τινὲς μὲν γυμνοὶ τὸ παράπαν βιοῦντες κοινὰς ἔχουσι τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ τὰ τέκνα παραπλησίως ταῖς τῶν θρεμμάτων ἀγέλαις
[247] παραπλησίαν διάθεσιν ἔχοντες τοῖς φωλεύουσι τῶν θηρίων

depending on their particular surroundings [*peristasis*]" (F43b = DS 3.19.1).[248] Some Impassive Fisheaters live in ready-made caves, others weave huts out of found whale ribs or wild olive trees, and still others burrow into mountain-like mounds of seaweed (F43b-46b = DS 3.19-20). In each case, the Impassive Fisheaters make their material surroundings as pleasant for themselves as they can, and with great success. Those who weave olive tree branches are a good example:

> Olive trees grow about these lands in great abundance. Their roots are washed by the sea, but they have thick foliage and their fruit is like the chestnut. Weaving these trees together they make a continuous shade and live in tents of this peculiar kind. For they lead pleasant lives by passing their time on land and in the sea simultaneously, since they escape the sun by means of the shade of the branches, and counterbalance the natural heat of the place by the waves which continually lap against them, and their bodies enjoy the blowing of gentle breezes (F43b = DS 3.19.3-4).[249]

The way that the Impassive Fisheaters *diorthousthai*, "set right for themselves," or "counterbalance" the heat of their country, is key to their happiness and representative of their building philosophy at large. Their environment is very hot, so they use trees to shade their bodies and take advantage of the trees' amphibiousness to become amphibious themselves. They do not harvest the trees, but weave them where they stand, so that trees and people cohabit in much the same way that people and seals do. The Impassive Fisheaters' burial practice exemplifies this integration with their environment:

> They bury their dead by leaving them out at low tide, and when the tide comes in they cast the bodies into the sea. And because they make their peculiar form of burial into food for the fish, they follow a way of life that cycles in this unique fashion from age to

[248] οἰκήσεσι δὲ τὰ ἔθνη οὐχ ὁμοίαις χρῆται, πρὸς δὲ τὰς τῆς περιστάσεως ἰδιότητας διηλλαγμέναις ἐμβιοῦσι

[249] ἐλαῖαι φύονται πάνυ πολλαὶ περὶ τοὺς τόπους τούτους, τὰ μὲν περὶ τὴν ῥίζαν ἔχουσαι προσκλυζόμενα τῇ θαλάττῃ, πυκναὶ δὲ τοῖς φυλλώμασι, τὸν δὲ καρπὸν ὅμοιον ἔχουσαι τῷ κασταναϊκῷ καρύῳ. ταύτας ἀλλήλαις συμπλέκοντες καὶ συνεχῆ σκιὰν ποιοῦντες ἰδιαζούσαις σκηναῖς ἐμβιοῦσιν· ἅμα γὰρ ἐν γῇ καὶ θαλάττῃ διατρίβοντες ἐπιτερπῶς διεξάγουσι, τὸν μὲν ἥλιον φεύγοντες τῇ διὰ τῶν ἀκρεμόνων σκιᾷ, τὸ δὲ φυσικὸν περὶ τοὺς τόπους καῦμα τῇ συνεχεῖ τοῦ κύματος προσκλύσει διορθούμενοι, ταῖς δὲ περιπνοαῖς τῶν εὐκαίρων ἀνέμων εἰς ῥᾳστώνην ἄγοντες τὰ σώματα

age (F45b = DS 3.19.6).[250]

The unusual burial rites of other peoples are a trope of ethnography; it is, after all, the practice of certain Indoi to eat their dead that causes Herodotus to declare that *nomos*, custom, is king (3.38). Here, however, the *idiotēs*, "peculiarity" of the Impassive Fisheaters' burial practice serves an ecological function: their bodies become the fish that they eat. The Impassive Fisheaters' adaptive building method and unusually peaceful cohabitation with seals culminates in this fusion of their bodies with the fish on which they depend. Just as they insert their bodies into the caves, whale bones, olive branches, and seaweed that make up the body of the shore, and just as their peace treaty with the seals has knit them into a cooperative community, so too do they exchange their material with the fish who have eaten them in an endless cycle.

The Impassive Fisheaters' relationship with their environment and its nonhuman inhabitants stands in contrast to their disinterest in typical human relationships; there is an economy between sensitivity to humans and nonhumans in this text. The Impassive Fisheaters' *apatheia*, their lack of human emotion and interest in human society, frees them to engage with the nonhuman members of their *peristasis* to an unusual degree. Their *apatheia* also encourages them to accept their environment for what it is. They modify the landscape only inasmuch as is necessary for their basic needs, and consider *eudaimonia* what Agatharchides' readers would call base subsistence.[251]

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[250] τοὺς δὲ τελευτήσαντας θάπτουσι κατὰ μὲν τὸν τῆς ἀμπώτεως καιρὸν ἐῶντες ἐρριμμένους, ὅταν δ' ἡ πλημυρὶς ἐπέλθῃ, ῥίπτουσιν εἰς τὴν θάλατταν τὰ σώματα. διὸ καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν ταφὴν τροφὴν τῶν ἰχθύων ποιούμενοι κυκλούμενον ἰδιοτρόπως τὸν βίον ἔχουσι παρ' ὅλον τὸν αἰῶνα
Cf. F39b = DS 3.17.5: "Their way of life follows a cycle of this sort throughout the whole period of their life."

[251] For a modern parallel, see Marshall Sahlins' famous 1972 argument that hunter-gatherers enjoyed "The Original Affluent Society" because of, in part, their "Zen" approach to material desires. And see Bird-David et al. 1992 for a reassesment of Sahlins' theory.

Cooperation and Companion Species

As with Megasthenes' Indoi and the peoples discussed in chapter 3, the Impassive Fisheaters' way of life is to some degree determined by the chance conditions of their environment. Of their building technique Agatharchides says that "the necessity imposed by nature leads them in a skill that they taught themselves" (F45b = DS 3.19.2),[252] and proposes both habit and need as possible causes of their association with seals:

> This form of life [i.e. living with seals], although incredible, has been preserved by these people from long ago, whether it was fashioned as a result of habit over time or imposed by the pressing necessity of circumstances (F42b = DS 3.18.7).[253]

Nevertheless, though Agatharchides gives due weight to *physis* and the constraints of the Impassive Fisheaters' harsh environment, he wants readers to understand that they decide to respond to those constraints in certain ways. He does not say whether the Impassive Fisheaters are *apatheis* by nature or by habit; I would guess he assumes they are this way by nature. But given their apathetic base, he attributes a great deal of agency to them as they work with their environment to make things as pleasant for themselves as they can.

Likewise, Megasthenes' Indoi are to a large degree a product of their environment. India is hyperabundant by nature, just as the Indoi are naturally many, various, and strong. Nevertheless, both Megasthenes and Agatharchides stress human agency and communal choice in the response to preset conditions. The Impassive Fisheaters live a difficult and in many ways unenviable way of life, but through them Agatharchides shows that a good, if not ideal, life can be achieved through *apatheia* and responsiveness to one's environment. Readers of

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[252] τῆς κατὰ φύσιν χρείας αὐτοδίδακτον τέχνην ὑφηγουμένης

[253] Οὗτος μὲν οὖν ὁ βίος, καίπερ ὢν παράδοξος, ἐκ παλαιῶν χρόνων τετήρηται τοῖς γένεσι τούτοις, εἴτε ἐθισμῷ διὰ τὸν χρόνον εἴτε ἀναγκαίᾳ χρείᾳ διὰ τὸ κατεπεῖγον ἡρμοσμένος. This equivocation is an example of the "multiple explanations" characteristic of ethnography and discussed in the previous chapter.

Agatharchides familiar with Herodotus would expect the Impassive Fisheaters to be miserable and perhaps susceptible to greed and aggression. Agatharchides demonstrates through the Impassive Fisheaters that contentment is possible even in harsh conditions, as long as humans cooperate with the nonhuman members of their environment and cultivate detachment from material prosperity. Megasthenes addresses the other extreme of human existence to argue that a soft land can produce good fighting men if people take measures to protect themselves from enervation. Both Megasthenes and Agatharchides, like Herodotus, take seriously the effect of environment on human life. Unlike Herodotus, they have more hope that human beings can work with their environment to make it livable, and even agreeable, in the long-term.

Nonhuman animals[254] play an important and surprising role in both the *Indika* and *On the Red Sea*. The Indoi are successful inhabitants of a "soft" land in part because they resist invasion and yet remain in good fighting shape. Elephants act as both their protectors, or weapons, and foes with whom to practice their military skill. The Impassive Fisheaters are also isolated from foreign humanity, but they build community with seals instead.

These seals deserve special comment. Vernant and Detienne rightly connect the seals' society with their amphibiousness.[255] They also relate Agatharchides' seals to later accounts of seals that fall in love with humans, but these are very different phenomena. Ancient writers considered relationships of erotic love and friendship between individual animals and humans unusual but not unheard of.[256] Contractual relationships between humans and animals, rather than affective ones, were a different story; in general, ancient writers considered nonhuman

[254] Though seemingly redundant, this term is used to remind readers that humans are also animals.
[255] Detienne and Vernant 1974, 247-48.
[256] See Williams 2013, Smith 2013 for recent discussions of this literature.

animals incapable of giving or receiving justice.[257] Oliver Hellmann has investigated rare moments of social cooperation between humans and animals in Greek and Roman prose literature. He found that these relationships were either unstable or contingent on animals' subordination to human culture.[258] They are also generally the achievement of individual animals, rather than communities acting in concert. Agatharchides' description of seal and human society is, to my knowledge, unique in depicting a stable and peaceful arrangement between a community of humans and nonhuman animals. Readers do not know whether the seals have taken on aspects of human culture, in as much as the Impassive Fisheaters possess recognizably human culture, but the seals have not been domesticated to human use. In Hellmann's words, humans and seals have achieved a true symbiosis.

This symbiosis extends to another animal species in the Impassive Fisheaters' environment. Because of their burial practice, the fish on which the Impassive Fisheaters depend also eat them and "follow a way of life that cycles in this unique fashion from age to age" (F45b = DS 3.19.6). The endless cycle of corpse eating is notable in two respects: it is mutually beneficial and involves the exchange of human and fishy material; human bodies become fish bodies and vice versa. Agatharchides presents the humans, seals, and fish beyond the straits of

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[257] Sorabji 1993, esp. 107-169.

[258] Hellmann 2008, 199: "Bei aller Differenz verbindet ein signifikanter Anthropozentrismus die vorgebrachten Argumentationen in verschiedenster Hinsicht. Es sind humane Denk- und Verhaltensweisen, die den Tieren unterstellt werden, es sind humane Tugenden, die die Tiere mit ihrem Verhalten verkörpern, es sind humane Fähigkeiten, die sie sich zu Nutze machen. Entsprechend verwundert es nicht, daß in allen behandelten Beispielen eine dauerhafte Symbiose zwischen Mensch und Wildtier nur im Bereich der menschlichen Kultur möglich ist. Eine Integration des Menschen in die Lebenswelt des Wildtiers, wie sie im modernen Bericht zu Beginn des Beitrags geschildert wurde, wird nicht angestrebt." See Hellmann 2008, 194-195 for domestication in particular.

To Hellmann's collection of unstable human-animal arrangements can be added Dio Cassius 39.38.2-4, in which elephants make an agreement with the people importing them and are betrayed.

the Red Sea as, in Donna Haraway's words, "companion species." Haraway originally developed this term to describe the coevolutionary relationship between dogs and humans, which has significantly shaped both species. "There cannot be just one companion species," she says, "there have to be at least two to make one."[259] Like Haraway, Agatharchides deconstructs the nature/culture binary and the narratives that separate human and nonhuman society and corporeality. In Agatharchides' text, humans are always already formed by and forming nonhuman nature. This doesn't mean that the fish would die without the humans (though the reverse is probably true, or perhaps these Fisheaters, like others Agatharchides describes, would resort to a substitute, like mussels), but that both humans and fish enact a cycle that is mutually beneficial, and that causes these species to constitute one another.

The cooperation between humans and nonhuman animals in the straits beyond the Red Sea does not preclude war, but the fact that the Impassive Fisheaters do not wage war is significant. Through the Impassive Fisheaters, Agatharchides has imagined a human community whose material impoverishment encourages them to behave very differently than people living under similar constraints in Hesiod, Dicaearchus, and Herodotus. By virtue of their *apatheia*, the Impassive Fisheaters have escaped not only greed and strife within their community, but also a collective desire for more, and the imperialism that this desire often produces. They do not conquer other humans, but instead build relationships of peace and mutual help even with nonhumans.

The Impassive Fisheaters' material contentment and freedom from ambition comes at a great cost to what Greek readers' would have considered their humanity. Their perfect *apatheia* has undermined their affective bonds with one another, and thus their development of spoken

[259] Haraway 2008, 11-12.

language and other forms of culture. Their closeness with the nonhuman species in their environment, especially their practice of burying at sea to continue "the endless cycle" of mutual nourishment, contravenes deeply-held Greek values of the treatment of the dead. Agatharchides, like many ethnographers, does not adjudicate between Impassive Fisheater and typical Greek values, though his admiration of their contentment allows readers to interpret the Impassive Fisheaters in a positive light. Readers' appreciation for the Impassive Fisheaters, and the critique of Greek attachment to material pleasures that their way of life constitute, do not, however, mean that Greek readers would have considered Impassive Fisheater life superior to their own. The fact that the Fisheaters achieve contentment in such a radically un-Greek way might well have provoked disgust in Agatharchides' readers and a rejection of Impassive Fisheater *bios*. Rather than exhorting readers to cultivate the Fisheaters' perfect *apatheia*, Agatharchides' text allows them to imagine what perfect *apatheia* would look like, and to make their own choices in response.

Empire and Resource Acquisition

The reader's application of Agatharchides' ethnography to their individual lives is open. But the Impassive Fisheaters and other peoples of *On the Red Sea* offer a more thoroughgoing critique of the Ptolemaic regime within which Agatharchides wrote. Megasthenes' text can also be interpreted as critical of the Seleucids who were his patrons. Both Megasthenes and Agatharchides elevate peoples who confine their military and economic activities to the borders of their own region, rather than engaging in long-distant trade and conquest to acquire the resources of others.

Megasthenes' India is generally recognized as idealized, or at least worth emulating, but

the ideal space of the *Indika* is not generic[260] nor characteristically Indian in the way of his predecessors.[261] Andrea Zambrini, the best-known scholar of Megasthenes, has argued that Megasthenes wrote primarily for the Seleucids he served, advising them how to organize their new state. Mussino argues that Megasthenes emphasized the military skill of the Indoi in order to discourage Hellenistic rulers from invading India, a point Kosmin has elaborated into an innovative and comprehensive new theory of the *Indika* as an apology for Seleucid failure to conquer India.[262] But if, as Kosmin argues, India's unconquerability excuses the Seleucids from failing to conquer them, the Indoi's approach to military expeditions and resource use also critiques the Seleucids' desire to acquire India in the first place, and to import elephants and other goods from India. The Indoi are idealized not only because they have rarely been conquered, but because they themselves do not conquer (F14 = Arrian 9.12). They use the elephants their land produces to defend themselves from outsiders (F4 = DS 2.37.3), not to expand their borders. The Indoi's material abundance has not softened them, nor has it made them ambitious for additional varieties of resource. Instead, Megasthenes says, they are notable for their *euteleia*, "thrift," and *haplotēs*, "simplicity" (F32 = Strabo 15.1.53). The Seleucids, on the other hand, pursued wars of conquest and trade deals to acquire the resources of others, elephants included.[263] If the Seleucids are meant to emulate the Indoi, they should radically

[260] Mussino 2000, 116: "Siamo tuttavia di fronte a una profonda innovazione da parte del nostro autore: lungi dal creare una geografia fantastica quale quella del "paese di cuccagna" o ancora quella dell'Atlantide del Timeo platonico, egli descrive luoghi, popolazioni e usi con precisione, ma non tralascia di dare loro un'aura di eccezionalità o indicazioni che ne descrivono le peculiarità e i caratteri talora straordinari."
[261] Zambrini 1983, 1112-1113.
[262] Zambrini 1983; Mussino 2000, 114; Kosmin 2014, 50-53. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 97 also anticipate this argument.
[263] For the importance of the elephant in Seleucid campaigns and propaganda, see Scullard 1974, 64-76, Alonso Troncoso 2013, Kosmin 2013, 2-3. For the Seleucid military in general, see Bar-Kochva 1976 and 1989. For Seleucid economics, see Aphergis 2004; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt

revise their foreign policy and drastically curtail their consumption of exotic products.

One episode in particular critiques Seleucid imperialism, the story of Mandanis.[264] Megasthenes tells us that when Alexander arrived in Taxila, one of the westernmost cities of India, he saw the naked Indian sages and asked to take one with him. Mandanis, the oldest of the sages, refused to go with Alexander or to allow any other sage to accompany him:

> It is said that he retorted that he was just as much a son of Zeus as Alexander, and that he did not need anything from Alexander, because what he had was enough. He could see that those with Alexander were wandering over all the earth and sea for no good reason, and that their wanderings had no limit. He had no desire for anything in Alexander's power to give, and, moreover, did not fear being deprived of anything Alexander might control. For while he was alive the land of India, bearing fruit at the proper seasons, sufficed, and when he died he would be delivered from the annoying accretion of his body (F34b = Arrian 7.2.2-4).[265]

Mandanis here is more a spokesman for his *meros* of Indoi than the Indoi at large, but what he says stands in opposition Alexander's conquests, and thus also to the Seleucids' legacy. Although India is an easy place to live, it is ironically Alexander whose limitless "wanderings" threaten the sages' equanimity and moderation.

Agatharchides makes it even easier for readers to criticize the Ptolemies. The Ptolemies' interest in the Red Sea was primarily economic, and focused especially on the hunting of African elephants.[266] This interest generated the first-hand material with which Agatharchides worked to

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1993, 40-71; Austin 1986.

[264] For the tradition of Alexander's encounter with Mandanis and other gymnosophists, see Brown 1960, van Thiel 1972, Stoneman 1994. For the later tradition of Indian gymnosophists, see Parker 2008, 272-78.

[265] ἀλλὰ ὑποκρίνασθαι γὰρ λέγεται, ὡς Διὸς υἱὸς καὶ αὐτὸς εἴη, εἴπερ οὖν καὶ ᾽Αλέξανδρος, καὶ ὅτι οὐτε δέοιτό τουτῶν παρ᾽ ᾽Αλεξάνδρου· ἔχειν γάρ οἱ εὖ τὰ παρόντα, καὶ ἅμα ὁρᾶν τοὺς ξὺν αὐτῶι πλανωμένους τοσαύτην γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῶι οὐδενί, μηδὲ πέρας τι αὐτοῖς γινόμενον τῶν πολλῶν πλανῶν. οὐτ᾽ οὖν ποθεῖν τι αὐτός, ὅτου κύριος ἦν ᾽Αλέξανδρος δοῦναι, οὐτε αὖ δεδιέναι, ὅτου κρατοίη ἐκεῖνος, ἔστιν οὗ εἴργεσθαι· ζῶντι μὲν γάρ οἱ τὴν ᾽Ινδῶν γῆν ἐξαρκεῖν, φέρουσαν τὰ ὡραῖα, ἀποθανόντα δὲ ἀπαλλαγήσεσθαι οὐκ ἐπιεικοῦς ξυνοίκου τοῦ σώματος.

[266] For Ptolemaic elephant hunting in the Red Sea region and dependence on Arabia for spices and perfumes, see Sidebotham 2008; Casson 1993; Burstein 1989, 1-12; Tarn 1929; Desanges

write his *On the Red Sea*; as Diodorus tells us, Ptolemy III sent one Simmias to the Red Sea region to capture elephants, or plan for their capture (F41b = DS 3.18-3-4; cf. F80b = DS 3.36, F85b = DS 3.40, Appendix F2.2 = Strabo 16.4.5). Agatharchides says that a similar expedition, undertaken by Ptolemy II, contravenes the natural order: "Creatures separated by *physis* [Ptolemy II] intentionally brought together to live in one place" (F1 = Phot. Cod. 250.1, 441b).[267] Agatharchides again steps in to critique the Ptolemies' gold mining in his description of the Nubian mines. The mines are populated by criminals, but also those who have been accused unjustly, and the miners endure such agony that they prefer death to life (F24b = DS 3.13). Agatharchides explains that gold is so difficult to mine because nature has decreed it to be so (F29b = DS 3.14). *Physis* itself stands against these imperial projects.

The non-Greek peoples Agatharchides describes are free from these desires. He says of the Fisheaters who live above the straits: "Their nature, being unperverted, considers the satisfaction of necessity the greatest good and longs nothing for imported pleasures" (F38b = DS 3.17).[268] This is merely one instance of a repeated refrain throughout *On the Red Sea* that asserts nature's capacity to satisfy.[269] The Impassive Fisheaters are extreme in their detachment from material pleasures, but their self-sufficiency is clearly something Agatharchides admires, and which stands in stark contrast to the Ptolemies' ambition. Agatharchides also brings his resource-hungry ruler and self-sufficient Others into direct dialogue. In a stock "rejection of gifts" scene, a Ptolemy tries to convince the Hunting Aithiopes to capture elephants alive for his use. "Although

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1978; Scullard 1974, 120-145.

[267] καὶ τὰ τῇ φύσει κεχωρισμένα τῇ προνοίᾳ συναγαγεῖν ὑπὸ μίαν οἴκησιν.

[268] ἡ γὰρ φύσις αὐτῶν ἀδιάστροφος οὖσα τὴν ἀναπλήρωσιν τῆς ἐνδείας ἡγεῖται μέγιστον ἀγαθόν, οὐδὲν τῶν ἐπεισάκτων ἡδέων ἐπιζητοῦσα.

[269] F33b = DS 3.15, F40b = DS 3.18, F42b = 3.14, F43b = DS 3.19, F47b = DS 3.21, F51b = DS 3.23, F61b = DS 3.31, F91b = DS 3.43, F97b, = DS 3.45, F100-101b = DS 3.47, F103b = Strabo 16.4.19.

he promised them many wondrous things, he heard that they not only refused, but said that they would not exchange his entire kingdom for their own way of life (F57 = Phot. Cod. 250.56, 453a).[270]

Conclusion

In the Greek imagination, material prosperity is often associated with the advent of agriculture and the beginning of war. Herodotus's *Histories* traces the fortunes of both individuals and states, and argues that material comforts leave people open to outside attack and internal degeneration. Megasthenes and Agatharchides use ethnic Others to imagine alternatives to this Herodotean pessimism. Although Megasthenes' India is a "soft" land, the Indoi's elephant husbandry and wider involvement in land-management prevent them from becoming a "soft" people. Agatharchides' Impassive Fisheaters, although impoverished, do not desire the resources of other places. Instead, they cultivate contentment through *apatheia* and nonhuman community. Both Megasthenes' and Agatharchides' texts criticize Seleucid and Ptolemaic resource acquisition, and their ethnographies serve as alternative ecologies for Greek readers to consider.

[270] καὶ πολλὰ καὶ θαυμαστὰ αὐτοῖς ὑπισχνούμενος, οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἔπεισεν, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἂν τὴν ὅλην ἀλλάξασθαι βασιλείαν πρὸς τὸν ἐνεστῶτα βίον εἰπόντων ἀπόκρισιν ἤκουσεν.

Chapter 5: History and the Other

In the first two chapters I argued that Greek writers use ethnic Others to imagine past times and alternative ecologies, and in the middle two considered how the ecologies of ethnic Others depended on and also informed Greek cultural history. In this chapter I will draw out the implications of representing ethnic Others as occupying past times and, in the final chapter, the potential of ancient ethnographies to critique Greek ecological ethics.

Colonialism and Arrest

When ethnographers describe those distant in space as practicing a temporally distant way of life, space and time converge. Peoples who do not practice agriculture, like the pastoralist Aithiopes of Herodotus or Agatharchides' Fisheaters, or those who enjoy golden-age abundance, such as the Indoi of Megasthenes, preserve at the edges of the earth what Greeks imagine to have been their own past stages of life. The convergence of space and time that results from this focus on the developmentally earlier *bios* of Others, a focus I will call "*bios* characterization," occurs in later anthropology as well. As the sociologist Ernest Gellner observes, "systematic study of "primitive" tribes began first in the hope of utilizing them as a kind of time-machine, as a peep into our own historic past, as providing closer evidence about the early links in the great Series."[271] This use of Others has been largely rejected by anthropology and related disciplines,

[271] Gellner 1964, 18-19. I am not the first to make this connection between ancient and modern anthropology; cf. Feeney 2007, 110.

and anthropology in particular has addressed the instrumentalizing of Others in its comprehensive self-critique.[272]

In this debate, Johannes Fabian has been the most influential.[273] In *Time and the Other*, Fabian argued that representing other peoples as occupying earlier phases of one's own development is inherently oppressive. When anthropologists make living peoples into symbols of their own culture's past, Fabian says, they deny them "coevalness" with themselves.[274] Placing Others in a "primitive" past, he claims:

> "Contributed above all to the intellectual justification of the colonial enterprise … It promoted a scheme in terms of which not only past cultures, but all living societies were irrevocably placed on a temporal slope, a stream of Time – some upstream, others downstream."[275]

Scholars have demonstrated that modern anthropology was implicated in colonial projects, and that the characterization of Others as "primitive" fueled colonialism. What about ancient ethnography? Is the characterization of Others as practicing past *bioi* inherently oppressive? How is it related to ancient colonialism?

In the first place, there are problems with applying a colonial framework to Classical ethnography. As Ian Moyer has argued, there is little evidence to suggest that ancient imperialists, unlike their modern counterparts, used ethnographies as handbooks for conquest.[276] Nevertheless, there is a strong relationship between ethnographic writing and imperialist

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[272] See Hoebel, Currier, and Kaiser 1982 for an early survey of concerns, and Stocking 1982 for a critical history of anthropology. Yoffee 2005 critiques the evolutionary model of states and Davis 2008 the periodization of history by stages.
[273] Even in Classics. See Vasunia 2001, 113 ff for an application of Fabian to book 2 of the *Histories*. Cobet also notes that Herodotus's Others belong to a different notion of time, fuzzy and relative rather than related to specific dates, and that, "if *ethnē* have a history of their own at all, it is stories about beginnings" Cobet 2002, 404.
[274] Fabian 1983, 31.
[275] Fabian 1983, 17.
[276] See chapter 2.

projects. In as much as ethnographic writing results from on the ground encounters between different peoples, conquest—like trade—causes contact and encourages the exchange of information; conquerors in particular need to gather information about the people they wish to rule.[277] Imperialism is also a powerful force behind ethnographic writing as a mode that operates independently of direct contact between peoples, as can be seen especially in the two Hellenistic authors of this study. Megasthenes, whether as a deputy of the Seleucids or a companion of Alexander, wrote his *Indika* self-consciously in response to Alexander's eastern conquests. Alexander's arrival is a major event in Megasthenes' account of Indian, and Alexander's failures there reinforce India's resistance to all previous conquerors, at least human ones.[278] Furthermore, as I noted in the previous chapter, Paul Kosmin has argued persuasively that the *Indika* was written for Seleucid rulers grappling with their own failure to control India; other scholars of Megasthenes, especially Zambrini, see the *Indika* as an exhortation to the Seleucids about how to organize their new state. In all plausible scholarly theories, then, Megasthenes appears to have written to and for a central power with imperial ambitions. Like Megasthenes, Agatharchides wrote at a royal court, the court of Ptolemy VI, and his main source of information was a man named Simmias, sent to the Red Sea Region by Ptolemy III to find and export war elephants (F41b = DS 3.18-3-4). Though Ptolemy was not engaged in a war of conquest to procure elephants, the resource-oriented nature of the expedition and the potential to exploit the peoples

[277] Woolf 2011, 8-31. Later on in classical antiquity, writers like Alexander Polyhistor, Juba of Mauretania, Caesar, Tacitus, and Pliny the Elder wrote ethnographies more explicitly in aid of empire. The difficult to date *Periplus of Hanno*, which purports to be a transcription of an inscription that Hanno, the king of the Carthaginians, dedicated to commemorate his colonization voyage along the west coast of Africa, is explictly colonial and depicts graphic violence against colonized subjects. See Müller 1855 for the standard text, Diller 1952 for genre, and Oikonomides 1977 for commentary and the mss. facimile.

[278] F11b = Arrian 5.4-5. Cf. F4 = DS 2.37.3 and 2.39.4, F12 = Arrian 7.8-9, F14 = Arrian 9.9-12, F34a = Strabo 15.1.68, and F34b = Arrian 7.2.2-4.

encountered in the course of it shaped the material Agatharchides drew upon.

Though he did not write at a royal court, imperialism plays a prominent role in Herodotus's *Histories* as well. Herodotus describes other peoples in the order of their conquest by the Persians and in the context of his account of Persian expansion, so that Persian imperialism gives rise to and structures the ethnographies of the *Histories*.[279] Given the wealth of Persian sources Herodotus mentions or visibly uses, it is reasonable to expect that the contact with other peoples the Persians experienced in the course of their expansion provided the Persian court, and subsequently Herodotus, with some of the ethnographic information Herodotus reports.[280] The Persian conquests that preceded the Greco-Persian wars "opened" the world for Greek scholars as much as for Persian kings.[281]

All three authors of this study thus either benefited from imperialist projects or wrote at courts hungry for the lands and resources of their ethnographic subjects. Yet all three also critique the empires that furnished them with their ethnographic material. In the last chapter, I discussed both Megasthenes' and Agatharchides' criticisms of imperial resource acquisition, as contrasted with the self-sufficiency of their ethnographic subjects. Herodotus too is often read as talking back to Athenian empire.[282] None of these authors can be absolved from instrumentalizing Others to further their critiques, but neither are they working simplistically on behalf of imperial patrons.

While Fabian is particularly interested in the effect of arresting Others at a previous time, ethnography also generally arrests by describing the customs of its subjects as timeless and

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[279] Harrison 2002, 555.
[280] Flower 2006 collects bibliography on individual Persian sources to correlate against the *Histories*. See also Lewis 1997 and Murray 2001a&b.
[281] And of course the kings of the *Histories* are themselves often scholars. See Branscombe 2013 and Christ 1994.
[282] Raaflaub 1987, Moles 2002.

unchanging. This way of writing about ethnic Others is often referred to as the "(timeless) ethnographic present."[283] The ethnographic present is common in ancient ethnography, including in Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides. All three writers describe the customs of their ethnographic subjects, including other Greeks, in the present tense, as if they had always been and always would be as they were when the ethnographer (or his informant) observed them. For example, Herodotus says that the Babylonians "bury their dead in honey, and mourn like those in Egypt" (1.198).[284] There are exceptions to this use of the present tense, but it is the default mode.

The present tense is an obvious feature of most description, especially natural historical description. Peoples, like plants and animals, "are" when writers describe them. This does not necessarily mean that the described subject has always been or will always be as they are at the moment of description. But ethnographers, like other ancient natural historians, allow the present tense of description to stand for all time. Ethnographers do not make sure to explain that the described subject was as described only at the moment of observation, and this is because it is not to their advantage to do so; an ethnography will seem and be more authoritative the more stable and enduring it seems, and thus the less it can be questioned.

The ethnographic present constructs a moment of direct contact between ethnographer and ethnographic subject and places the reader there; this allows the reader the pleasurable illusion of travel and increases the credibility of the ethnographer, who appears to have observed the Other directly and whose account, because timeless, never loses its authority. The ethnographic present also constructs the Other as Other by allowing them to stand stably in contrast to the Greek reader's Greekness. An Other whose customs and behaviors are

[283] See Burton 1988 for the history of the ethnographic present, both as a period of time and a mode of ethnographic description. Cf. Stocking 1987 and Trautmann 1992. Wolf 1982 and Birth 2008 discuss theories of and challenges to transcending this method of modern anthropology.
[284] Ταφαὶ δέ σφι ἐν μέλιτι, θρῆνοι δὲ παραπλήσιοι τοῖσι ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ.

unchanging can be easily compared to Greeks or other Others. Because Babylonian funeral customs are described in the present, Herodotus's readers can definitively infer that in this respect Babylonians are different from Greeks, but similar to Egyptians (who are also different from Greeks).

Describing Others as arrested at a particular *bios* is a subspecies of the general tendency of ancient ethnography to arrest Others and describe them once and for all. But *bios* characterization has further effects. When ancient writers characterize ethnic Others as practicing a developmentally earlier *bios*, Others can be valued in two possible ways: if the developmentally earlier *bios* of the Other is considered better than the developmentally later *bios* of the ethnographer, the Other is elevated above the ethnographer; if it is considered worse, or not as good, the Other is not as valued. The most obvious way in which *bios* characterization oppresses the ethnographic subject is by placing them not only in an earlier *bios*, but one valued less than that of the developmentally later *bios* of the ethnographer. But the idealization of Others' ecologies is just as problematic, since it instrumentalizes Others without acknowledging the variability, change, and contingency of their way of life. The idealization of Others has a long history, but recent criticism of the practice has focused on current idealizing representations of Others. As Donald Lopez has argued of Western representations of Tibetan Buddhism, idealizing Others strips them of agency just as much as denigrating representations do, and in fact idealizing representations often operate simultaneously with those that denigrate.[285]

These criticisms of modern anthropology are relevant to our understanding of ancient ethnography. When ancient ethnographers focus on the *bios* of Others, Others become static and changeless symbols of the past, incapable of shaping their own representation or acting contrary

[285] Lopez 1998.

to the desires of the one representing them. In particular, as I argue in the next section, Herodotus's attention to the *bios* of Others comes at the expense of an attention to their histories. When Others symbolize a past *bios*, they stop acting in history or having a history of their own.

Historicized Center and Timeless Edges in Herodotus

At the beginning of the *Histories*, Herodotus promises that he will cover both "small towns" and "great cities," and discuss the vicissitudes of human fortune (1.3-4). *Astea anthrōpōn* on the one hand and *anthrōpeiē eudaimoniē* on the other bracket the full range of Herodotus's inquiries, asserting his interest in collectives and individuals and foreshadowing his attention to *ethnos* as a particular kind of collective. The *Histories*' attention to a variety of perspectives is embodied in this opening passage, as is Herodotus's promise to document change over time. Yet *ethnē* in the *Histories* are not always represented as having the history that individuals and states enjoy. Herodotus describes the political history of peoples who are nearer to him in both spatial distance and temporal development, while placing more distant peoples in a static present characterized primarily by their mode of subsistence.

James Romm has argued that Herodotus' world is primarily divided into two regions, the *oikoumenē* and the *eschatai.*[286] The *oikoumenē*, "our world," or "the inhabited world" is composed of Greece and the lands that surround it. As Romm says, these lands are defined not only by their proximity to Greece but by their intercommunication. Herodotus's inquiry is limited by the bounds of human interaction, and thus by the bounds of the *oikoumenē*. The *eschatai* lie beyond these bounds, but they are not *eremoi*, "wastes," in which no one lives and nothing can be known; they are, rather, liminal spaces of partial communication.

[286] Romm 1992, 32-41. See also Kaerst 1903 and Gisinger 1937.

Romm's observation about the *oikoumenē* and *eschatai* of the *Histories* contextualizes the production of the *Histories.* The difference between Herodotus's characterization of *oikoumenē* and *eschatai* peoples is the result partly of his variable access to different parts of the world and sources that describe them. Although Herodotus was influenced by earlier accounts of the places he describes and drew on his own inferences and suppositions, he was also dedicated to both autopsy, direct observation, and *akoē*, the reports of others, including the Others who feature in his ethnographic descriptions. *Oikoumenē* peoples were more available to his own autopsy and to the observations of his informants. Geographically marginal peoples, on the other hand, would have been harder to observe directly or to study by gathering information from informants; Herodotus is skeptical that the Arimaspoi really inhabit the edges of northern Europe because of how little he can discover about them (3.116). Coming into direct contact with Others also allowed Herodotus to examine or have translated for him their records of the past, giving him both the material for sketching the history of an *ethnos* and a reason to do so. Herodotus uses the Egyptians' exhibition of their king lists to introduce those kings into his narrative, but this narrative device probably mimics the conditions under which he heard or heard of the ruler-lists he goes on to relate. As Ian Moyer has demonstrated, these Egyptian king-lists represent native agency in co-constructing Herodotus's portrait of the Egyptians.[287] The fact that Herodotus did not travel to India and talk directly to Indoi about their history influenced his representation of the Indoi as pastless.

And yet the fact that Herodotus describe the Indoi and other *eschatai* peoples at all should not be taken for granted. Although some or all of these peoples may have been described before him, his decision to transmit information about them in the absence of direct observation

[287] Moyer 2011, 42-83.

or more recent reports is interesting. Even more interesting is the fact that he is willing to theorize a people's customs and *bios*, but not their histories. History, it seems, is particular in a way that customs and *bios* are not. When Herodotus says that because there are Hyperboreans, there must also be Hypernotians (4.36), he is engaging in creative logical extrapolation, the filling in of the world based on what he knows or thinks he knows already. *Bios* is likewise something he thinks he can infer, because *bios* is correlated with time and time with space. As I argued in chapter 2, Herodotus maps progressively earlier *bioi* onto progressively more distant places, and subdivides peoples in the same way. This allows him to theorize the *bios* of a people based on where they are in the world and their proximity to peoples who practice other *bioi*.

There is nothing wrong with this method *per se*, but it affects the reader and the reader's perception of Others independent of Herodotus's intentions or the context in which he produced his *Histories*. In what follows, I consider the representation of Others and the meanings readers can make of them, to (paraphrasing Vasunia) "reflect upon the effects of Herodotus' narrative and see what sort of [world] his text produces."[288]

Oikoumenē

Herodotus describes peoples of the *oikoumenē*, including those who inhabit Lydia (1.94), Persia (1.130-140), Caria (1.171), Caunia (1.172), Babylonia (1.194-199), and Egypt (2.4, 2.35-50, 2.82) in terms of their *nomoi* as well as their history. Others of the *oikoumenē* differ from Greeks in the ways they interpret what it means to be civilized, but they are not represented as being developmentally different from Greeks or arrested at a single point on the developmental continuum. It is taken for granted that *oikoumenē* peoples practice agriculture as Greeks do, but

[288] Vasunia 2001, 112.

this aspect of their lives is not dwelt upon as a defining or arresting feature. Even when Herodotus describes Babylonian irrigation (1.193), he is interested in it as a technology rather than a way of characterizing the Babylonians. Although agriculture is a prerequisite for the refinements of *oikoumenē* peoples, Herodotus does not characterize them as agricultural, and so does not emphasize their place in a temporal series.

More importantly, Herodotus describes the histories of *oikoumenē* peoples: their interaction with Greeks and one another, and their change over time. In his description of Babylonia, for example, Herodotus chronicles the achievements of past Babylonian rulers (1.184-185) and describes both enduring customs and those that have been abandoned (1.196). Chronicling the history of Babylonia integrates the Babylonians into Greek history and combats the arrest produced by the ethnographic present in which Herodotus generally writes about their customs. Complete alterity requires the Other to stay still. Giving Babylonians a past disrupts their alterity in two ways, by relating them to Greek chronology and by making them less easy to compare to defining Greek characteristics. Babylonia is of course very different from Greece, and Herodotus emphasizes this difference. But the Babylonians are not stuck in a completely static relationship to Greece. Herodotus does not always dwell at length on the peoples of the *oikoumenē*; the Carians and Caunians, for example, are described only briefly (1.171-2). But Herodotus does not tell us about their *bios* – the assumption is that they are agriculturalists – and instead relates their language, history of religion, and contributions to Greek warfare.

One of Herodotus's favorite methods for chronicling the histories of *oikoumenē* peoples is to list their rulers. These ruler-lists or "king-lists," as they are usually called, both relate the history of other places to that of Greece, and expand Greek chronology.[289] Others who have been

[289] Moyer 2011, 42-83. For king-lists in general, see also 107-8 and 125-7.

folded into Greek history (and vice versa) by virtue of these ruler-lists are in time with Greece. They have a present and a past, just as Greece has, and will undergo further change in the future. While a list of rulers effects coevalness by integrating *oikoumenē* peoples into Greek history as a temporal succession of events, Herodotus's extended characterization of Other rulers as individuals integrates the *ethnē* of the *oikoumenē* into Greek history as a succession of notable people. Croesus (1.6-94), for example, is not only a historical figure who places the Lydians in time, he is a fully-developed character who disrupts the alterity of an otherwise homogeneous *ethnos*. Croesus's fall from fortune and subsequent role as Cyrus's wise advisor makes him as much a person as any Greek and a model of wisdom and humility for Greek readers. His characterization draws Greeks and Lydians together into a relationship that preserves the differences between them without asserting the static Otherness of Lydians or an exclusive Greek claim to complex personality.

Ambivalent characterizations of individual Others also disrupt the alterity produced by the ethnographic present. Herodotus describes the Egyptian queen Nitocris briefly but evocatively in the second book of the *Histories.* As the Egyptian priests are reading a list of their 330 monarchs, they pause to relate a story about Nitocris in which she deceives and kills her brother's murderers by drowning them in an underground chamber specially built for this purpose (2.100). The story does not elevate Nitocris as an *exemplum* to be followed or avoided, but she still emerges as a real and complex individual. The fact that she is selected out of a much longer list of unnamed rulers, and that, as Herodotus tells us in what follows, she is one of only two Egyptian rulers about whom the Egyptians have anything particular to relate, makes her story stand out even more. A long, even comprehensive, king list can and does place the Egyptians in time and implies their change over time, but it is the details of Nitocris' betrayal,

construction project, and revenge, and other stories like hers, that nuance Herodotus's portrait of the Egyptian *ethnos.* Even when *oikoumenē* individuals behave very badly, Herodotus's attention to them as individuals is separated from his characterization of the *ethnos* to which they belong. When Xerxes abuses Leonidas' corpse, Herodotus says this is unusual for the Persians (7.239), separating Xerxes from the Persian people and excusing them from his bad behavior.

Eschatai

Though he generally describes the customs of *oikoumenē* peoples as timeless and unchanging, Herodotus deploys a number of strategies to historicize his immediate neighbors. This is not true of *ethnē* who inhabit the edges of the world. Herodotus characterizes the *ethnē* of the *eschatai* almost exclusively in terms of their *bios*, a *bios* that places them firmly on the less-developed slope of evolutionary time and outside the events of history.

There are two kinds of *ethnē* in the *Histories* who are marginal and marginalized in this way. The first are those that Herodotus places at the literal edges of the earth: to the east, Indoi (3.106), and the tribes bordering the Massagetae (1.202-203); to the south, Arabians (3.107-13); to the south-west, Aithiopes (3.114); to the north, probably Arimaspoi (3.115-116),[290] and to the west, Celts (4.49).[291] The second are *ethnē* who are marginal to an *oikoumenē* people, such as the fish-eating Babylonians (1.200) and the marsh-dwelling and fish-eating Egyptians (2.9),[292] who circumscribe individual regions of the *oikoumenē* with an internal margin. Herodotus does not

[290] The information, Herodotus says, is not secure.
[291] Contrast with Megara, the western limit of Persian incursion (9.14). Persian conquest drives many of the ethnographies and limits Herodotus's information but does not define the geography of his world.
[292] These peoples are described in less detail and often subsidiary to some "main" group (a writing strategy we see deployed throughout the ethnographic tradition, e.g. in Tacitus' Germania).

locate these internal *eschatai* precisely, but his narrative always places them after the description of the majority, agriculturalist group. As I argued in chapter 2, when an *ethnos* is divided up into different subgroups, these subgroups are often assigned *bioi* in reverse-developmental order. The least developed subgroups form the internal *eschatai* of Herodotus's world.

Not all *eschatai* peoples are characterized by *bios.* The "small men" of Libya, for example, are described only in terms of their short stature and black skin (2.32; cf. 4.43). Nevertheless, peoples at the geographical margins of the *oikoumenē* or a particular region of the *oikoumenē* are predominantly characterized by their *bios* and often subdivided on the basis of *bios* alone. After describing the customs and history of the majority of the Babylonians, for example, this is the whole of Herodotus's report about the fisheating Babylonians:

> There are three clans of Babylonians that eat nothing but fish. After catching them, they dry them in the sun, and do the following: they put the fish in a mortar, pound it with pestles, and sift it through a fine-meshed cloth. And according to their individual wishes, they either knead the meal into a cake and eat it, or else bake it into bread (1.200).[293]

This description attends to the *bios* of the fisheating Babylonians to the exclusion of all other traits. In the case of these internal *eschatai* peoples, it is possible for readers to understand the fisheating Babylonians as otherwise identical to the majority of the Babylonians, and as having a share of their history. But when an *ethnos* is characterized only by *bios*, *bios* is all that readers can know about them and it is only by *bios* that readers can envision them. For example, the unnamed people who inhabit the islands of the Araxes river are described thus:

> In [the Araxes] are said to be many islands as big as Lesbos, on which live people who in the summer eat all kinds of roots they have dug up, and in winter the fruits they have gathered from the trees and stored for food … This is said to be their way of life (1.202).[294]

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[293] Εἰσὶ δὲ αὐτῶν πατριαὶ τρεῖς αἳ οὐδὲν ἄλλο σιτέονται εἰ μὴ ἰχθῦς μοῦνον, τοὺς ἐπείτε ἂν θηρεύσαντες αὐήνωσι πρὸς ἥλιον, ποιεῦσι τάδε· ἐσβάλλουσι ἐς ὅλμον καὶ λεήναντες ὑπέροισι σῶσι διὰ σινδόνος· καὶ ὃς μὲν ἂν βούληται αὐτῶν ἄτε μᾶζαν μαξάμενος ἔδει, ὁ δὲ ἄρτου τρόπον ὀπτήσας.

[294] Omitted is a description of their drug use, which affects them "like wine."

Unlike in his description of *oikoumenē* peoples, Herodotus does not chronicle the rulers of these Araxes island-dwellers, describe their notable individuals, or indicate that any of their customs have changed over time. They are a static and undifferentiated mass.

The Aithiopes, who inhabit the southernmost edge of the world, are represented similarly. A few Aithiopes become Egyptian kings, but their exploits are credited to the Egyptians (2.100, 2.137-39). Long-lived Aithiopian kingship is described at 3.20, but Herodotus does not chronicle Aithiopian kings in Aithiopia.[295] As rich as is the interaction between the Aithiopian king and Cambyses' delegation in book 3, the king himself is not named or characterized as anything other than a spokesman for his *ethnos.* The Aithiopes enter the story of the Persian wars only to satirize the diet and consumerism of the *oikoumenē* and to provide an occasion for Cambyses to further demonstrate his foolishness. Like the Araxes-island dwellers, Herodotus's Aithiopes are symbols of the past and foils for the real agents of history.

Other peoples, not of the *oikoumenē* but still involved in the politics of the Persian Wars, are characterized as timeless even when their histories are theoretically accessible. The Scythians, for example, are introduced through Darius's expedition against them, and Herodotus recaps Scythian dominance of Media (4.1; 6.40) but does not chronicle their past, except briefly (4.5-7), and this "history" such as it is, is undercut by the alternative origin stories that Herodotus advances in place of what the Scythians say about themselves (4.8-12). The Scythians are developed as individuals only through Anacharsis and Scyles (4.76-80), who forsake being

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Νήσους δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ Λέσβῳ μεγάθεα παραπλησίας συχνάς φασι εἶναι, ἐν δὲ αὐτῇσι ἀνθρώπους οἳ σιτέονται μὲν ῥίζας τὸ θέρος ὀρύσσοντες παντοίας, καρποὺς δὲ ἀπὸ δενδρέων ἐξευρημένους σφι ἐς φορβὴν κατατίθεσθαι ὡραίους καὶ τούτους σιτέεσθαι τὴν χειμερινήν … Τούτων μὲν αὕτη λέγεται δίαιτα εἶναι.

[295] See Török 2014, 52 and 56 for a consideration of Herodotus's Aithiopian sources.

Scythian and thus do not disrupt the alterity of a homogeneous Scythian *ethnos*.[296] Herodotus's real interest is Scythian nomadism as the absence of agriculturalism, which makes them invincible (4.46), as they say themselves (4.127), and fuels his narrative of their dramatic conflict with Darius. We do not know what material Herodotus had to draw on in crafting his Scythian *logos*, but his attention to *bios* demonstrates his persistent interest in nonagricultural ways of life and the way that a nonagricultural *bios* can account for the entire fate of a people.

The tension between *bios* characterization and participation in history is strikingly demonstrated in book 4. After describing the *bios* and customs of Libyan tribes, Herodotus comments that "most of them have neither now nor ever taken notice of the Persian king" (4.197), further opposing nonagricultural *bios* and participation in history.[297] What is significant is not so much that some peoples are excluded from the events of the Greco-Persian wars, but the fact they are described by *bios* alone. *Oikoumenē* peoples are more accessible to Herodotus's inquiries into their past and current role in Persian expansion, while *eschatai* peoples are less so, but Herodotus also uses *bios* characterization to fill in a lack of knowledge about *eschatai* peoples, and assumes that people who are marginal, either to the *oikoumenē* as a whole or to different regions within the *oikoumenē*, are uninterested in Persian expansion and uninvolved in history in general. In other words, if an *ethnos* is geographically distant from Greece or practices a developmentally earlier *bios*, their histories and the nuances of their cultures are both less likely to be known and more likely to remain unknown. Their unknowability becomes a sign of their uninvolvement and an excuse to represent them as symbols of the past, rather than agents in their own right or members of "our world."

It is most likely that Herodotus characterizes *eschatai* peoples by *bios* because this is all

[296] Cf. the Tracian Salmoxis (4.95-96).
[297] καὶ τούτων οἱ πολλοὶ βασιλέος τοῦ Μήδων οὔτε τι νῦν οὔτε τότε ἐφρόντιζον οὐδέν.

the information he could gather about them, or because he thinks of *bios* as something he can extrapolate from geography. Herodotus does not, I think, set out to marginalize *eschatai* peoples by refusing to report their histories. But even as an accident, the *bios* characterization of *eschatai* peoples is itself significant for how readers will envision the edges of their world. The *Histories* is not only a history of the events of the Greco-Persian wars, it is a comprehensive and authoritative description of the world, and the way peoples are represented in the *Histories* is how they will be perceived by readers. *Eschatai* peoples in the *Histories* are static, pastless, uninvolved in the events of history, undifferentiated by notable individuals, and characterized by *bios* alone. They are instruments for thinking through the Greek past and alternatives to current Greek ecologies, not dynamic communities of real people who have collaborated in their representation.

Arrest in Megasthenes and Agatharchides

The textual arguments in the last section depend on having a complete work through which to discuss authorial selection and emphasis, and so I cannot offer the same sort of reading of Megasthenes and Agatharchides; we do not know how their extant fragments were originally situated. Nevertheless, I offer a few comments about arrest and *bios* characterization in these authors.

Agatharchides' *On the Erythraean Sea* resembles Herodotus's ethnographies of the *eschatai* in focusing on *bios*. I think it is less likely that Agatharchides provided the same depth of history for the peoples of the Red Sea elsewhere in the work because his characterization of them seems so indebted to Herodotus already, and would, I expect, have conformed to the conventions for describing the *eschatai* laid out in the *Histories*. Megasthenes, on the other hand,

gives a more complete ethnography of India and describes the history of the Indoi as well as their customs, enfolding them more or less into the *oikoumenē.* Does Megasthenes' attention to things other than *bios* subvert or prevent ecological self-critique? I do not think so. My argument in this chapter has been that arrest furthers ecological inquiry and makes it easier to use Others as ecological models, not that it is impossible to use them this way when they are described more richly.

What Arrest Can Do

I have emphasized the negative consequences of arrest before investigating the constructive possibilities that arise when Greek ethnographers describe the ecologies of Others. These possibilities will be the subject of my next and final chapter; here, I want to consider how arrest enables ecological reflection.

When I was a little girl, my parents took me to the California Academy of Sciences, where I saw a series of elaborate ethnographic dioramas. These dioramas featured life-size models of human Others engaged in their characteristic modes of subsistence. One in particular fascinated me: an African woman crouched partly nude in an empty landscape, holding a grub to her open mouth. I was horrified at the thought of eating insects and disgusted by the image in front of me. The woman's exposed body and the barrenness of her surroundings heightened my sense of the difference between us. On the heels of my horror followed an intense period of reflection on my own diet and use of natural resources. I imagined eating grubs myself, I imagined living very differently, and I was troubled.

This moment was certainly not the only conversion experience in my development as an environmentalist, but it was an important one, and it was effective precisely because I

encountered an Other whose alterity was emphasized, whose past and future had been effaced, and whose way of life was reduced to *bios*. This image affected me so deeply not in spite of its offensiveness, but because of the very ways in which it did offend. *Bios* characterization in ancient texts offers the same paradox. *Bios* tends to take the place of other kinds of characterization, those that would more richly and authentically represent Others. But *bios* characterization also allows for an encounter between reader and Other that can prompt genuine self-critique. Arrest, in these moments, works both ways. The arrest of the Other allows the reader to see herself as static, to see her way of life at a moment in time and evaluate it against the *bios* of the Other.

Conclusion

For ethnic Others at the edges of the earth to serve as stable symbols of early Greek history, they must stay still. Herodotus arrests Others by focusing on their *bios* as a static and timeless condition and by ignoring their histories and changes over time. Herodotus does not explicitly denigrate Others who practice earlier *bioi*, but he does instrumentalize them. As 20th and 21st century Native American critiques of natural history museums have shown, the depiction of Native Americans as people "out of time" is harmful even when their timelessness is celebrated.[298] Given the ambivalence with which Greeks thought about the succession of developmental stages, it is possible for readers of ethnography to read temporally distanced Others in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, arresting Others is inherently oppressive because it paralyzes them in time and subordinates them to the cultural and ecological reflection of the ethnographer.

[298] Lonetree 2012.

An easy fix would seem to be to enfold Others into Greek chronology and identify both with a shared universal history. In her discussion of Posidonius's description of Celts, for example, Anne Sauer concludes that the characterization of Celts as Homeric heroes "considerably diminishes the distance between Celts and Greeks. The Celts are not representatives of absolute Otherness, since some of their customs have been revealed to be identical with those of early Greeks."[299] It is true that describing Others with one's own attributes diminishes their "absolute Otherness," but it does not flatten power relations or ensure that Others have cocreated their representation. As Berber Bevernage said in his response to Fabian's *Time and the Other*, "while you seem to read coevalness as signifying equal power relations and respectful interaction, I read it as a display of power and believe it cannot come into existence without a certain degree of dominance."[300] Allowing Others space in one's own history still subordinates them to that history.

Arrest is not a self-consciously imperialist method in Herodotus, but rather an effect of the ethnographic mode. *Bios* characterization represents an interest in marginal others as alternatives to think with rather than as persons with a history who participate in the shared events of the *oikoumenē*. To the degree that Herodotus inquires into the relationship between humans and the rest of nature, he treats Others as specimens and describes them at a moment in time that is taken to be characteristic of their behavior across time. The "arrest" Others experience in both ancient and modern ethnography is thus an inescapable effect of the ethnographic method. Anthropologists can be held responsible for the oppressiveness of arrest, but it is written into their discipline and operates independently of their intentions.

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[299] Sauer 1992, 117: "…il diminue considérablement la distance que l'on avait cru percevoir entre les Celtes et les Grecs. Ces derniers ne sont plus les représentants d'une altérité absolue, puisque certaines de leurs coutumes se révèlent être identiques à celles des Grecs des origines."
[300] Bevernage 2014, 4.

Chapter 6: Ecological Others and the Limits of Self-critique

In the previous chapter I argued that ancient ethnographers' focus on the *bios* of Others is inherently problematic. Edward Said asks, "can one divide human reality, as indeed human reality seems to be genuinely divided, into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanly?"[301] The answer appears to be no.

And yet, as I said at the close of the last chapter, the Other who is arrested at an earlier stage of development can profoundly affect the reader of ethnography and unsettle her closely held ecological assumptions. This is not to suggest, as Pierre Amrouche once said that, "one has the right to look at objects as one wishes."[302] But the way ancient Greek writers looked at ethnic Others is worth considering separately from the problems with looking at Others *per se*, the problems with conducting ethnography explored in the last chapter. In this final chapter, I consider the ecological questions and provocations embedded in Greek ethnography, by revisiting some of the passages discussed over the course of this study and bringing them into dialogue with James Cameron's 2009 film, *Avatar*, as a final case-study and application of the interpretive framework I have developed.

Ethnography as Alternate Reality

Although inaccuracies in ancient ethnographies have rendered them of little interest to those

[301] Said 1979, 45.
[302] Quoted in Steinglass 2002, 106.

trying to reconstruct the past of the peoples described,[303] they have come to be appreciated for precisely these "defects," in particular the tendency of ethnographers to describe the unknown Other in the known terms of the Self. The filtering of the Other through the writer's own cultural codes was most famously described by François Hartog in his reading of Herodotus's Scythian *logos*. In *Le Miroir d'Hérodote*, Hartog analyzes Herodotus's translations of Scythian *nomoi*, including a description of Scythian sacrifice that presents Scythian ritual as the opposite or inverse of Greek sacrificial ritual. "Serving as an 'absent model,'" Hartog says, "Greek sacrifice provides at the same time a way to apprehend … Scythian practice and to understand its otherness."[304] When an ethnographer filters the practices of Others through his own cultural expectations, or uses the home-culture as an "absent model," the Other is subordinated to the culture of the writer. Yet in many ways, this filtering seems almost inevitable. As Hartog says:

> A narrator belonging to group *a* will tell *a* about the people of *b*; there is the world in which one describes and the world that is described. How can the described world be persuasively incorporated into the world where it is described? That is the problem the narrator must confront, the problem of *translation*.[305]

As much as a writer might wish to neutrally or objectively describe another people, then – and this is not necessarily the desire or intent of ancient ethnographers, it should be noted – the ethnographic genre itself works against unfiltered observation; ethnography, in order to be intelligible, must explain the unknown in terms of the known.

After Hartog, ancient ethnography came to be valued for what it could reflect about

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[303] Despite the attempts of those working in other fields, especially Indologists regarding Megasthenes' *Indika*. See for example, Thapar 2000, 488-512, and Karttunen 1997, 73-76 for a discussion of this phenomenon.

[304] Hartog 1980, 64: "Jouant comme "modèle absent," le sacrificie grec offre à la fois la possibilité d'appréhender cette pratique scythe et d'en traduire l'altérité."

[305] Hartog 1980, 331-32: "Un narrateur, appartenant au groupe *a,* va raconter *b* aux gens de *a*; il y a le monde où l'on raconte et le monde que l'on raconte; comment, de manière persuasive, inscrire le monde que l'on raconte dans le monde où l'on raconte: tel est le problème du narrateur. Il est confronté à un problème de *traduction*."

Greek culture and Greek mentalities, although Hartog did not mean that the Self is necessarily the focus of the ethnographer's interest; rather, as Pelling has argued, "Self and Other form an indissoluble unity."[306] Nevertheless, one of the effects of ethnography is to set up a comparison, whether explicit or not, between the Self and the Other. The Self may not be the focus of ethnography, but ethnography causes the reader to reflect on her own culture in the light of another. As I discussed in chapter 2, exemplarity, i.e. the question of whether and how Greeks and Romans elevated Others to critique their sense of Self, is one prominent theme in recent work in Classical ethnography. Though ethnographic texts reinforce and consolidate the power and normativity of the Self's culture, ethnographies that praise the Other have the potential to critique the Self.

While Eric Adler has recently revived the idea of barbarians as vehicles for Roman self-criticism, his work, concentrated as it is on the speeches of Rome's enemies, treats only explicit complaints about Rome as a military and governing power.[307] Yet as James Romm suggests, idealized others can also pose implicit criticisms of Greek and Roman society; the ways in which barbarians are praised and valued reveal ethnographers' dissatisfaction with their own culture. The sub-genre of idealizing or utopian ethnographies is well known from both Hellenistic and modern literature: Iambulus and Euhemerus, Montesquieu and More all furnish examples.[308] As Romm has observed, however, the idea of an ideal Other antedates the philosophical utopian travel narratives that became popular in and following the fourth century. Greeks and Romans, he argues, have two opposing approaches to other peoples: ethnocentrism, which "sees the center of the world as the best or more advanced location" (where the center is either Greece or Rome,

[306] Pelling 1997, 53.
[307] Adler 2011.
[308] For the "noble savage" trope especially in Greco-Roman literature, see Lovejoy and Boas 1965, 287-367.

respectively) and ethnocentrism's inverse, which "privileges the edges of the earth over the center" and offers the people at the edges as *paradeigmata* in a style Romm calls "ethnological satire."[309] As an example of ethnological satire in earlier centuries, Romm discusses Herodotus's Aithiopian *logos*: a highly positive portrait of the Aithiopians which emerges in the course of Herodotus's narrative of Cambyses' conquests in book three.

Romm's "ethnologic satire" is a marked way for the Other to criticize the Self, but ethnography is also inherently critical. The comparison of the Other to the Self invites readers to judge themselves in the light of the Other, and vice versa. Sometimes the ethnographer will guide the reader towards a valuation or devaluation of an Other's *nomoi* or *bios*, as, for example, when Megasthenes uses the absence of slavery in India to criticize Greek *euētheia*, "silliness" in failing to apply laws of equality to both slave and free (F4 = DS 2.39.5, F16 = Arrian 18.1-2, F32 = Strabo 15.1.54). But these moments of explicit judgement are rare. Instead, Greek ethnography usually traffics in ambivalence: by omitting explicit valuations and, as explored in chapters 2 and 3, multiplying explanations and placing pessimistic and progressivist pasts side by side.

My own analysis of the Aithiopian *logos*, in chapter 3, is more ambivalent than Romm's, and I argued that though idealized in some senses, the Aithiopes are compromised as a paradigm in several ways. If Adler focused on the way the Other explicitly criticizes the Self and Romm argued for the implicit arguments that idealized Other make to the readers of ethnography, my work here has been to demonstrate the variable readings of Others and their ecologies. Building on Carolyn Dewald and Christopher Pelling's observations about the changing roles of Self and Other in Herodotus,[310] I have described ethnographies as alternate realities for readers to explore and evaluate for themselves. Instead of positing a monolithic Greek Self opposed to a non-Greek

[309] Romm 1992, 46.
[310] Dewald 1990, Pelling 1997.

Other, I have investigated the reader as Self and the way the described Other criticizes and provokes her to ecological reflection.

The Ancient Ecological Other

The Ecological Other, known especially from Roy Ellen's seminal 1986 article on the Green Primitive and Shepard Krech's 1999 book *The Ecological Indian*, can be considered a subspecies of the Noble Savage:[311] an ethnic Other who is idealized because of their environmental behaviors and whose way of life critiques the ecology of the ethnographer. This trope takes on different forms in different ages; Jared Diamond's 2012 work of popular anthropology, *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn From Traditional Societies?* describes "traditional," pre-state societies to both access an older *bios* and critique state societies like Diamond's own, especially their diet, patterns of warfare, and social norms. In addition to using Ecological Others to critique the Self, Diamond also reinscribes the myth of the "primitive" as a remnant of one's own past – traditional people inhabit the "yesterday" of the book's title.

Although the Ecological Other is usually seen as a myth created by environmentalists or at least post-industrial people as a way of coming to terms with their extensive environmental footprint,[312] and while it should not be forgotten that the myth of the Ecological Other operates in specific ways in the post-industrial age, the persistent interest of ancient ethnographers in Others' ecologies means that it is also appropriate to discuss Ecological Others in antiquity and to investigate their critique of ancient ecologies.

[311] See Ellingson 2001 for a new history of this trope.
[312] Milton 1996, 106 ff.

Ecological Values of Others in Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides

Greek ethnography is interested in the *bios*, "way of life," of Others and conceptualizes *bios* in the language of "cultural history," what scholars call Greek writing about the deep past. When it comes to Herodotus, we can say that his ethnography contributed to the development of cultural histories like Dicaearchus's *Life of Greece* and Aristotle's economic thought in the *Politics*, just as these texts influenced later Hellenistic ethnographies including Megasthenes' *Indika* and Agatharchides' *On the Red Sea.* The *bioi* in both ethnographies and cultural histories vary from author to author but fall roughly into three categories: gathering, pastoralism, and agriculturalism. The change from one of these stages to the others in cultural history is presented either pessimistically or progressively, but individual ethnographers vacillate between casting the developmentally earlier *bioi* of living peoples as blessedly golden-age or brutally primitive. This exploration of different kinds of pasts makes ethnographies rich places for ecological reflection, but rarely do the ethnographers studied here adjudicate between ecologies or advocate for certain ecological practices.

There are a few exceptions to this general tendency, and they cluster around social rather than individual practices, and in the Hellenistic authors discussed rather than Herodotus. As I argued in chapter 4, both Megasthenes and Agatharchides criticize the long-distance importation of exotic resources, and praise instead peoples who cultivate self-sufficiency of both mind and body. Megasthenes and Agatharchides' texts also value Others for engaging directly in land-management and with the nonhuman species in their environment. Both authors present Ecological Others as embedded in their environments and in some sense accountable to other species, even if these texts are also unabashedly anthropocentric. In this way they reflect the environmental values and conceptions of nature discussed in chapter 1. When hunting, gathering,

and pastoralism are idealized in Greek ethnography, it is not because of concern with industrial damage,[313] but because agriculturalism is seen as the source of ecological, social, and political costs.

Satire, Counter-satire, and Meta-satire in the Rejection of Gifts Scene

A particularly potent scene for provoking ecological reflection occurs in all three texts studied here. The "rejections of gifts" scene puts *bioi* directly in conversation with one another, as a Greek or other representative of a later, agricultural *bios* tries and fails to convince a developmentally earlier Other of the benefits of their way of life. I will reprise these episodes before considering their significance.

In book 3 of the *Histories,* Cambyses sends a delegation of Icthyophagoi to spy on the Aithiopes. They come bearing gifts of purple-dyed cloth, golden jewelry, perfume, and palm-wine, all of which, except for the wine, the Aithiopian king rejects, and interprets as both emblematic of the inferiority of Persian culture and Cambyses' particular degeneracy:

> The king of the Persians has not sent you with gifts because he values my friendship so highly, nor do you speak the truth (for you have been sent to spy on my kingdom), nor is he a just man. For if he were just, he would not desire the land of another, nor would he lead people into slavery who have never wronged him (Hdt. *Hist.* 3.21).[314]

As discussed in chapter 3, the Aithiopian king goes on to denigrate the Persian diet of agriculturally-produced bread, which he says stunts their life-span, and to assert the superiority of Aithiopian pastoralism.

Another scene of this sort appears in the *Indika*. After Alexander arrived in Taxila, one of

[313] Milton 1996, 109.

[314] Οὔτε ὁ Περσέων βασιλεὺς δῶρα ὑμέας ἔπεμψε φέροντας προτιμῶν πολλοῦ ἐμοὶ ξεῖνος γενέσθαι, οὔτε ὑμεῖς λέγετε ἀληθέα (ἥκετε γὰρ κατόπται τῆς ἐμῆς ἀρχῆς) οὔτε ἐκεῖνος ἀνήρ ἐστι δίκαιος. Εἰ γὰρ ἦν δίκαιος, οὔτ' ἂν ἐπεθύμησε χώρης ἄλλης ἢ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ, οὔτ' ἂν ἐς δουλοσύνην ἀνθρώπους ἦγε ὑπ' ὧν μηδὲν ἠδίκηται.

the westernmost cities of India, he tried to take one of the naked sages of the city with him. Mandanis, the oldest of the sages, refused to go with Alexander or to allow any other sage to accompany him:

> It is said that he retorted that he was just as much a son of Zeus as Alexander, and that he did not need anything from Alexander, because what he had was enough. He could see that those with Alexander were wandering over all the earth and sea for no good reason, and that their wanderings had no limit. He had no desire for anything in Alexander's power to give, and, moreover, did not fear being deprived of anything Alexander might control. For while he was alive, the land of India, bearing fruit at the proper seasons, sufficed, and when he died he would be delivered from the annoying accretion of his body (F34b = Arrian 7.2.2-4).[315]

And again in *On the Red Sea*, people at the edges of the earth prefer their own *bios* to more refined alternatives. Agatharchides says that a Ptolemy tried to convince the Hunting Aithiopes to capture elephants alive for his use:

> Although he promised them many wondrous things, he heard that they not only refused, but said that they would not exchange his entire kingdom for their own way of life [*bios*] (F57 = Phot. Cod. 250.56, 453a).[316]

In all of these scenes, a denizen of the *oikoumenē*, the known world with Greece at its center, presents someone at the edges of the earth, the *eschatai*, with the fruits of *oikoumenē* civilization and tries to persuade them to accept the gifts in exchange for their own resources. In rejecting these gifts, the representative of the *eschatai* people calls into question the benefits of *oikoumenē* way of life and the assumed superiority of *bios* that prompted the *oikoumenē* representative to approach them. Although all three scenes draw attention to the imperialism that has motivated

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[315] ἀλλὰ ὑποκρίνασθαι γὰρ λέγεται, ὡς Διὸς υἱὸς καὶ αὐτὸς εἴη, εἴπερ οὖν καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, καὶ ὅτι οὐτε δέοιτό τουτῶν παρ' Ἀλεξάνδρου· ἔχειν γάρ οἱ εὖ τὰ παρόντα, καὶ ἅμα ὁρᾶν τοὺς ξὺν αὐτῶι πλανωμένους τοσαύτην γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ἐπ' ἀγαθῶι οὐδενί, μηδὲ πέρας τι αὐτοῖς γινόμενον τῶν πολλῶν πλανῶν. οὐτ' οὖν ποθεῖν τι αὐτός, ὅτου κύριος ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος δοῦναι, οὐτε αὖ δεδιέναι, ὅτου κρατοίη ἐκεῖνος, ἔστιν οὗ εἴργεσθαι· ζῶντι μὲν γάρ οἱ τὴν Ἰνδῶν γῆν ἐξαρκεῖν, φέρουσαν τὰ ὡραῖα, ἀποθανόντα δὲ ἀπαλλαγήσεσθαι οὐκ ἐπιεικοῦς ξυνοίκου τοῦ σώματος.

[316] καὶ πολλὰ καὶ θαυμαστὰ αὐτοῖς ὑπισχνούμενος, οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἔπεισεν, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἂν τὴν ὅλην ἀλλάξασθαι βασιλείαν πρὸς τὸν ἐνεστῶτα βίον εἰπόντων ἀπόκρισιν ἤκουσεν.

these encounters, imperialism is not the only aspect of *oikoumenē* life under attack. The gifts are rejected for their own sake, and the *bios* of the *eschatai* is likewise celebrated for itself. These scenes bring *bioi* not only into dialogue, but put them in direct competition, and validate the preference of *eschatai* peoples for their own *bios*.

The Aithiopian *logos* is, as James Romm has said, satirical, as are other scenes of this type, but not uniformly so. Whereas Megasthenes consistently idealizes the Indoi and presents India as the best of all possible worlds, Herodotus and Agatharchides are ambivalent about the *bios* of the *eschatai*. Herodotus's Aithiopes are not as honest as the Aithiopian king implies, and there are environmental specifics that frustrate the transferability of the Aithiopian *bios* to the *oikoumenē*. Agatharchides' *ethnē* are satisfied with their way of life, but Agatharchides presents them as impoverished and, in the case of the Impassive Fisheaters, socially disabled. Some of them have superior health, but others seem to suffer as a result of their limited resources. All of these facts undermine the authority of the developmentally earlier peoples described in Herodotus and Agatharchides to criticize people of the *oikoumenē*.

Even more troubling is the greater literary context of the *Histories* and the way that readers of Megasthenes and Agatharchides would have interpreted Hellenistic ethnographies in the light of Herodotus. The Aithiopian *logos* is followed shortly by Herodotus's famous statement that all peoples prefer their own *nomoi* (3.38). This allows readers to reinterpret the Aithiopian *logos* not as a criticism of Persian *bios* but as an example of everyone's preference for what they know, and to conclude that the Aithiopes' preference is appropriate only for them. When contextualized this way, Herodotus's ethnologic satire seems to contain within it a counter-satire of the Aithiopes themselves. This counter-satire is available to readers of Megasthenes and Agatharchides as well, since, as I discussed in chapter 2, both authors bear the

signs of having read Herodotus and can themselves be interpreted as responding to the *Histories*. Herodotus's text might even be considered meta-satire, a text that "go[es] *beyond* [satiric] strategies by additionally confronting the human need to constantly construct … systems of meaning."[317] Book 3 dramatizes not only the Aithiopes' criticism of the Persians, and simultaneously undercuts the Aithiopes as having to authority to level this criticism, but uses Herodotus's reflection on *nomos* as king to investigate the entire enterprise of ethnological comparison.[318]

Although not generically comic, these scenes employ humor in creating their satires and counter-satires. Mark Mash, in his dissertation on humor in the *Histories*, has argued convincingly that Herodotus uses humor for didactic purposes, especially to raise questions about ethnologic differences, and notes in particular that Herodotus uses humor to ask open questions rather than offer "rigid answers."[319] While Mash sees the humor of ethnographic encounters as producing polyphony, I would add that humor also severely restricts the criticism these scenes have to offer. The extreme devotion of Others to their ways of life create a space of paradox[320] that simultaneously prepares for radical critique and allows readers to disregard that critique.

The role of gesture and performance in these scenes reinforces both their humor and intractability. Flory has documented the importance of gesture in scenes of ethnologic

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[317] Kronenberg 2009, 15. Kronenberg applies the idea of metaparody (Morson 1989) to articulate "metasatire" in Greek and Roman texts on farming. Although Gruen 2010 does not use the term, he reads Tacitus's *Germania* as a metasatire.
[318] For the serious, didactic capacity of ancient satire, see Kronenber 2009, 11, and for satire as inquiry, Griffin 1994, 39-52. Although satire and counter-satire produce polyphony, Griffin 1994, 65 argues that irony is inherently unstable and "tends toward an infinite regress" (69).
[319] Mash 2010, 125-6.
[320] Griffin 1994, 53.

confrontation,[321] and this dovetails with the speechlessness or incomprehensibility (to Greeks) of many *barbaroi*.[322] The rejection of gifts is accompanied by a speech, but it is powerful because of the rejection, which can be accomplished without speech and can be understood regardless of mutual linguistic intelligibility. At the same time, these performances are also so extreme as to be easily dismissed. When Pausanias prepares two feasts to demonstrate the poverty of the Spartan diet, he does so *epi gelōti*, "as a joke" (9.82). The presentation and rejection of imperial gifts is a serious matter with serious consequences, but as a scene of this kind it is funny and therefore dismissible.

Avatar: The Future of the Ecological Other

In the last chapter, I suggested that it is Others' arrest at an earlier stage of development that throws the reader's ecological behaviors into relief and thus creates the conditions for self-critique, and in the previous section that humor likewise undermines itself in provoking readers to self-interrogation. To further explore how the representation of Ecological Others both creates the conditions for self-critique and simultaneously subverts them, I consider James Cameron's 2009 epic film, *Avatar*. *Avatar* meditates extensively on the encounter between Self and ecological Other, the practice of ethnography, and the problems of translating alternate ecologies.

Synopsis (Spoiler Alert)

Avatar takes place in a near-future in which humans have achieved sophisticated, long-distance space travel. Our protagonist, Jake Sully, is a paraplegic ex-marine and self-identified Jarhead,

[321] Flory 1987, 105.
[322] Recent considerations of foreign language in Greek texts include Munson 2005 and Gera 2003.

who in the wake of his injury and the sudden death of his identical twin brother, a research scientist, has taken his brother's place on a ship bound for the planet Pandora. The ship is staffed by scientists interested in the flora and fauna of Pandora but funded and controlled by the RDA, the Resources Development Administration, who want to mine "unobtanium," a rich source of energy unique to the planet. In addition to boasting a variety of animal and plant life, Pandora is also inhabited by humanoids who call themselves the Na'vi, or The People. When the film opens, the Na'vi have resisted the RDA's overtures to buy or trade for Pandora's unobtanium.

Pandora does not have an atmosphere that will support human life, but the scientists on the mission have devised a way to grow "avatars," "remotely controlled bodies … grown from human DNA mixed with the DNA of the natives," (00:8:28) with which the humans can psychically "link." Although vastly uneducated compared to his brother, Jake is able to link with the avatar created for his brother and thus take his brother's place on the mission. In exchange for keeping Colonel Quaritch, the security head of the RDA, informed about the Na'vi, Jake is promised a new set of legs when he returns to Earth. Although initially happy with this arrangement and indifferent to Pandora, Jake falls in love with Neytiri, the daughter of the political leader of the Omaticaya, the clan of Na'vi he encounters, and with the Na'vi way of life. He is eventually initiated into the Omaticaya clan and opposes the actions of the RDA. By the time Jake fully acculturates, however, the RDA has learned enough from him to effectively attack the Na'vi. At first rejected by the Na'vi as a traitor, Jake eventually wins their trust, becomes their leader, defeats the RDA, and, in the final scene of the film, fuses with his Na'vi avatar and abandons his human body forever.

Racism and Postcolonialism

As was immediately noted by scholars and popular critics, *Avatar* recapitulates a familiar story, the white man's conversion to the cause of an Other people.[323] But unlike previous instantiations of this trope, like *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), or *The Last Samurai* (2003), *Avatar* does not draw directly on human history. The Na'vi are a constructed people, an alien race, and cannot be perfectly mapped onto any one human ethnicity. Their skin is blue and their features vary; the actors playing the principal Na'vi characters range from the Afro-Cuban Laz Alonso (Tsu'tey) and the self-identified black Zoe Saldana (Neytiri), whose parents are Dominican, to the Guyanese-born CCH Pounder (Moat) and Cherokee Wes Studi (Eytukan). The language of the Na'vi, although based on an initial "Polynesian-flavor[ed]" set of vocabulary, was constructed by a linguist to avoid too many features of any one human language.[324] Pandora as we see it is more or less tropical, but Sam Worthington (Jake Sully)'s Australian accent conjures the outback of Australia's aborigines, and several features of the film – the school the RDA establishes on Pandora, the RDA's "shock and awe strategy," (2:07:04) and Jake's war wounds, especially in light of the film's release date (2009) – evoke the Iraq war. The Na'vi's war paint, use of feathers for adornment, bow and arrow technology, and nature spirituality may have reminded American audiences of Native American Indians in particular.

The fictionality of the Na'vi and their eclectic characteristics did not protect the film from criticisms of racism or appropriation by environmentalists,[325] nor, more interestingly, prevented indigenous peoples from identifying with the Na'vi in their ongoing struggles against outside

[323] Grabiner 2012, 101-106, Fritz 2012, Heaven 2009.
[324] Milani 2009.
[325] Taylor 2013.

forces.[326] Although *Avatar* essentializes, romanticizes, and arrests the Na'vi at a "primitive" stage of development, and subordinates them to Jake as their "white savior," the film also demonizes Pandora's human invaders and explicitly criticizes their militarism and greed. This coexistence of racist and postcolonial effects is not a coincidence. Arresting the Na'vi and placing them at an earlier stage of development creates a stronger contrast between them and the over-technologized, power- and resource-hungry humans. The film draws on stereotypes about indigenous peoples, but its human characters are also stereotypes: Parker Selfridge, the bigoted RDA executive who casts slurs at the Na'vi and plays golf on the deck of his ship; Colonel Quaritch, with his exaggerated southern accent, fondness for military clichés, and unquenchable blood-lust; and Grace Augustine, the chain-smoking, no-nonsense head scientist. By focalizing the story through Jake and constructing him as the hero of the story, the film makes it easy for white American audiences to identify with his conversion experience, and thus with the Na'vi. It is the racist elements of the film that also critique white, western power in the world outside the film and validate indigenous and colonized peoples' decision, when they do, to fight back. It is the stereotyping on both sides that allows viewers to compare the humans and Na'vi and be persuaded by the film's arguments about the superiority of the Na'vi way of life.

Racism and Environmentalism

Avatar's environmentalist themes are conveyed through the Na'vi's nature spirituality.[327] The Na'vi worship Eywa, originally presented as merely a deity; over the course of the film, the scientists discover that she is Pandora, that Pandora/Eywa is sentient and that the Na'vi can communicate with her directly. Eywa "protects … the balance of life" (2:08:30), and in the final

[326] Adamson 2012.
[327] For the many facets of which, see Taylor (ed.) 2013.

battle of the film attacks the RDA by sending the planet's animals against them.

The way different characters in the film (mis)understand Eywa determines their attitude toward the planet's resources and which side – RDA or Na'vi – they ultimately take. The RDA scoff at the notion that Pandora is sentient and that the trees which are the foci of Na'vi religion and take their nourishment from the "unobtanium" the RDA so desires, are sacred, whereas the Na'vi cannot fathom the idea of uprooting these trees and jeopardizing their access to Eywa. Jake's formal initiation into the Omaticaya and his inner conversion to Na'vi life is figured in several ways: his increasing facility with the Na'vi language, his gradual adoption of Na'vi dress and adornment, his growing attraction for Neytiri, and especially through his awareness of and belief in Eywa. Neytiri, the daughter of the Omaticaya's spiritual leader and heir to her position, is instrumental in educating Jake in the formal tenets of her religion, the most important of which are a belief in the interconnection of all life on Pandora, and certain practices, like the ritual thanksgiving for the death of animals, which express this belief. At first, Jake has no use for the religious-environmental aspect of his training. "I really hope this tree-hugger crap isn't on the final," (1:01:45) he says. As the film proceeds, however, Jake experiences first hand "sahelu," "the bond" between Pandora's lifeforms: first with the ikran, a kind of dragon Na'vi hunters ride (58:50:00), and then with Neytiri. As he tells Neytiri:

> Look, at first, it was just orders. And then everything changed, ok, I fell in love. ::laughs:: I fell in love. I fell in love with the, with the forest, and with the, with the Omaticaya people, and with you, with you, with you." (1:36:56)

Just as the scientists become convinced of Eywa's reality because of their testing of the interconnections between plants on the planet's surface, so too Jake is ultimately converted not by theory but by direct experiences of this interconnection. The film's environmental message is thus "proved" to the audience through Eywa's reality and Jake's relationship with her, which he

ascends to after climbing a ladder of love of sorts: first the forest, then the Omaticaya people, then Neytiri, and finally Eywa herself, whom he begs for help after the RDA attack (2:08:00) and in whose presence he and Neytiri seal their life-bond (1:24:00). Just as Diotima urges Socrates to pursue the good through a series of intermediate steps (Pl. *Sym.* 210a-212a) – first by loving a beautiful body, and then many, and so on – so Jake describes his process of conversion as mediated through particular affective relationships: first he falls in love with the forest, then with the Omaticaya people, and finally with Neytiri. But this particular love, which Diotima places at the beginning of the process of philosophy, is both the *telos* of Jake's experience and the fuel for all his other commitments. Jake makes Neytiri the culmination of his erotic education, but we have seen his attraction to her from the beginning, and how she had inspires in him a love for her *ethnos* and planet.

Some of *Avatar*'s strongest critics were those who saw the Na'vi's religion as a caricature of Native American religion, and it is potentially offensive that the Na'vi's beliefs are not respected *per se* but only because they have been proved "real" and confirmed for audiences through an appealing love story. Yet it is the simplicity of the religion and its dogma of an interconnected, sentient planet whose members all respect one another, the conflation of religion with the romance between the film's protagonists, and, especially the overwhelming "reality" of this religion, that made the environmentalism of the film so clear and, within the world of the film, irrefutable. In *Avatar*, racism is mobilized to articulate radical postcolonial and environmentalist ends.

Seeing the Other

Avatar also explores and critiques anthropological inquiry. When he arrives on Pandora, Jake is

told to keep videologs of his experiences with the Na'vi, because "good science is good observation" (00:10:05). These logs become both the vehicle for the voiceover narration viewers hear and the means by which the RDA gathers the information it uses to attack the Na'vi. The fact that Jake's videologs have multiple uses affirms the essential ambiguity of ethnography: The RDA see the videologs and respond violently while the scientists respond by converting to the Na'vi's cause, but viewers of the film are left to make their own decisions. The fact that the RDA funds the scientists' anthropological work in order to get information they can use against the Na'vi is ironically mirrored by the Na'vi themselves, who allow Jake to learn about them because they want to study him (00:46:40).[328]

The ambivalence of anthropological work and knowledge exchange is reflected also in the movement of the plot: what Jake learns from the Na'vi is used against them, but he brings his human military experience, and knowledge about the RDA's armory, to their defense. The film also questions human science in general. Jake is belittled by the scientists for being an uneducated marine, but this lack of book-learning also equips him to be re-educated by the Na'vi. He assures Moat, concerned that his "cup is already full," that "my cup is empty, trust me" (00:46:15), while Neytiri is convinced that he knows nothing (of value), at all: "You have a strong heart, no fear. But stupid! Ignorant, like a child." (0:39:21) Although the scientists in the film as individuals all end up on the side of the Na'vi, anthropology as a discipline and western modes of knowledge production in general are inextricably entwined with militarism, imperialism, and betrayal.

The film's mistrust of certain disciplines of human knowledge is part of a larger theme, the difference between seeing, seeming, and being. Jake's avatar allows him to experience

[328] An example of the "observer observed," Christ 1994, 181.

Pandora physically, but he must undergo an inner transformation, and a transformation of habits and behaviors, to become one of them. Similarly, though he looks like his brother, the scientists do not treat him as his brother's intellectual equal; he is both like and unlike his twin. Jake's experience in the avatar and with the Na'vi is metaphorically described as the difference between dreaming and reality, another version of the seeming/being dichotomy explored in the film. The film begins with Jake relating a dream of flying. "Sooner or later, though," he says, "you always have to wake up" (00:00:58). While Jake is training with the Na'vi in his avatar body, his human body sleeps, and vice versa, so that his time in the avatar seems like a dream. But as Jake's allegiance changes, so too does his perception of reality. "Everything is backwards now," he says, "like out there is the true world, and in here is the dream" (1:17:42). The Na'vi themselves pun on this when they comment that Jake is the first warrior "dreamwalker" they have met (0:46:40). But there is a deeper level to this name as well; the Na'vi see Jake as living in a dream, as sleepwalking through life. Jake's transformation over the course of the film is an "awakening" fully realized only in the final shot of the film, when Jake opens the Na'vi eyes that have finally become his own.

Seeing and being seen also hold an important place in Na'vi society. Jake is warned not to look into the eyes of another hunter's ikran, though he is not told why (00:58:23), and later, when Grace Augustine is brought to the Na'vi for healing, Moat says that Grace must "pass through the eye of Eywa." (1:59:42) The Na'vi's standard greeting, *Oel ngati kame/ie,* "I see you," means "I see into you, I understand you" (1:00:52). After the RDA attack, Jake says that he "was in the place the eye does not see," (1:54:11) to describe his social death. When Neytiri forgives him and rehabilitates him socially, they exchange the "I see you" greeting, and Jake is seen again, he is accepted (1:5718). Who the Na'vi "really" are as a goal of scientific inquiry is

dramatized through Jake's process of discovering who he "really" is and what his society means to him.

The concern of the characters with falseness and fidelity, with seeming versus being, and with dreams and reality, is realized largely through Jake's conversion to the Na'vi way of life and the way this is reflected on his body. The fact that his human body is paralyzed is not insignificant here. Jake longs to take his brother's place on the mission at least in part to escape his paralysis; he experiences his body as false and his avatar body as true. When Tsu'tey accuses Jake of being "a demon in a false body" (1:30:45), he is speaking the inverse of Jake's experience. And yet the film does not present Jake's human, disabled body as entirely bad or even bad in itself. When Colonel Quaritch turns against Jake, he orders one of his men to "wheel this meat out of here" (1:31:10). Though Jake also experiences his human body as mere "meat," we are supposed to disagree with Colonel Quaritch as the film's primary villain. When Neytiri first sees Jake in his human body, she says "I see you" (2:32:16). Though Jake ultimately forsakes his human body, it is truly his, truly him, paralysis and all, and it is important to his relationship with Neytiri that she understand and see into this part of him. Thus, the film valorizes Jake's choice to become Na'vi without demonizing humans *qua* humans. Differences between cultures are affirmed, while transcendence of these differences is celebrated.

Translating *Avatar* to Earth

The film's intense exploration of seeing, seeming, and being, and narrative focus on the transformation of a human into an Other raises interesting questions about how viewers are expected to translate the messages of the film back to Earth. In the world of the film, Earth is in explicit peril. Speaking to Eywa, Jake says: "See the world we come from. There's no green

there. They *killed* their mother," (2:08:47) and after he and the Na'vi expel the RDA from Pandora, he comments that "the aliens went back to their dying world" (2:32:37). The near-future of the film, and therefore the "death" of Earth, are placed before viewers as a real and likely possibility, but not an inevitable one. How then does the film suggest humans outside the film might save "their mother"?

The most obvious path is to emulate Jake and reject consumerist, high technology culture in favor of a Na'vi-style way of life. When Jake is explaining the Na'vi's rejection of the RDA's proposals, he says "They're not going to give up their home. They're not going to make a deal. For...for a light beer? And blue jeans? There's nothing that we have that they want" (1:33:23). Being like the Na'vi means not wanting these things either. But Jake's transformation is also extraordinary, and, in the world of the film, unique. Jake not only embraces Na'vi culture, he abandons his own body for his avatar. This is presented as not only the consequence of his love relationship with Neytiri and conversion to the Na'vi religion and way of life, but also as the culmination of innate tendencies. Jake is a rebel throughout the film, constantly disobeying the scientists' orders and ultimately betraying his military duty. His body is nonconforming as well: his disability sets him apart from the other humans on the mission, as do his tattoos. Most tellingly, perhaps, are his first words in the film: "When I was lying there in the VA hospital, with a big hole blown through the middle of my life, I started having these dreams of flying. I was free" (00:52). This dream is a metaphor for his despair and disgust with his body, but also a foreshadowing of the freedom he will discover in his avatar body and flying on the back of his ikran. External signs also foreshadow Jake's transformation. When Neytiri first meets Jake, he is being attacked by animals on Pandora. She saves him, reluctantly, because of a sign from Eywa, which she takes to mean that he is there for some greater purpose.

All of these features of Jake's representation combine to overdetermine his acculturation to Na'vi life and the abandonment of his human body. The other human who seems predisposed for this complete transformation, Grace Augustine, the lead scientist on the mission, dies while trying to permanently transfer her mind into her avatar body. Jake may be the only human capable of completely becoming the ecologically superior Other. This creates a paradox for viewers who want to take the environmental message of the film to heart. Jake's rejection of human ways of relating to the natural world is what makes the strongest argument for such a rejection, but the film also implies that Jake may be unique in becoming Na'vi.

On the other hand, the film also presents a variety of human allies to the Na'vi cause who do not completely transform, or even experience Na'vi life through an avatar. These allies include one of the RDA's pilots, Trudy Chacon, who abandons the RDA and is later shown wearing Na'vi war paint and feathers in her hair (2:17), and the scientist Max Patel, who works against the RDA from the inside. In the last scenes of the film, these human allies are shown standing alongside the Na'vi, and we are told that some of them have chosen to stay on Pandora to start a new culture. The degree to which these humans will change their way of life (rather than merely their fashion) to conform to Na'vi life is left unspecified, but there are indications that some sort of human-Na'vi hybridity is in the making.

The film also draws a strong contrast between kinds of collaboration. While the Na'vi experience sahelu with the ikran and other animal species, the humans have similar relationships with machines, their avatars and the robotic armor they wear like a second skin (00:22:10). Human-machine and Na'vi-animal symbiosis are contrasted explicitly at several points. Just as the Na'vi fly the dragon-like ikran, the RDA's "dragon gunship" leads their fleet. In the final battle of the film, the Na'vi's animals and the humans' machines come into direct conflict

(2:15:00). This culminates in the fight between Neytiri on the back of a panther-like thanator and Colonel Quaritch in robot armor (2:26:00). In *Avatar*, humanoids become like those they bond with, or collaborate with. The Na'vi, who bond with animals, are allied in some sense to the good of the animals, while the humans, because they rely on machines, think like machines and cut themselves off from other forms of life. Machine technology is not presented in the film as bad *per se* but dangerous in the way it allows humans to separate from their immediate environment and forget that their fate is bound up with a greater living system. Jake's first act of opposition to the RDA is to throw stones at the cameras of an oncoming bulldozer. The driver of the bulldozer says that he has been made "blind" by this (1:27:15), demonstrating both the vulnerability of machine technology and the identification humans feel with their machines.

Avatar draws its power from the fact that it presents an environmentally specific fantasy of ideal, human-planet relations. Pandora is not Earth, all life on Earth is not connected the way that life is connected on Pandora, but the film encourages humans in the present day to treat their planet as if it were sentient, and to make decisions about other species as if they too could experience sahelu, "the bond." Humans are also encouraged to leave natural resources to those who natively control them. Resources like "unobtanium" have good and bad uses, and indigenous peoples are inclined towards the former.

Translating the Ecological Other

Although *Avatar* has a more overtly environmentalist message than the ethnographies of Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides, several themes and strategies are common to them all. First, like *Avatar*, Greek ethnographies use Others to reflect on ecology and to provoke a comparison between the ecological behaviors of Self and Other. Arresting Others at a certain –

and earlier – stage of development allows readers to see their own practices and interrogate them. But the differences between cultures that fuel the ethnographic project also frustrate the applicability of the Other's *bios* to the world of the Self. In describing the Other as ecologically Other, the Other's environment is constructed as incommensurate with the environment of the Self. Both *Avatar* and the Greek ethnographies discussed use dramatic encounters between Self and ecological Other to prompt self-critique. These embodied exempla – from Jake Sully in *Avatar* to the Aithiopian king in Herodotus, Mandanis in Megasthenes, and the unnamed Indoi who reject Ptolemy's gifts in Agatharchides – will inspire diverse and inconsistent emulation. They offer a displaced position from which to reflect on one's way of life, not a blueprint for living.

These confrontations also comment on the practice of ethnological inquiry itself, since they rely, as Stewart Flory says of peoples in Herodotus, on "their ignorance of one another."[329] The difference between ways of life is performed by the incomprehension of two peoples faced with one another, as when the Aithiopian king derides Persian *bios*, Mandanis and the Indoi in Agatharchides reject imperial gifts, and the Na'vi reject the RDA's "blue jeans and light beer." At the same time, these encounters often occur in the course of anthropological inquiry. Cambyses' ignorance of the Aithiopes prompts him to send the envoy that occasions the Aithiopian king's speech, and the RDA's mission is inextricably bound up with the scientists'. It is not just that imperial resource acquisition and anthropology are materially interdependent, but that narratives of one are often narratives of the other, and the greed and ignorance that impel an expedition often become the occasion for an exchange of ethnological information and the self-interrogation prompted by exchange.

[329] Flory 1987, 102.

Inasmuch as the ecological self-critique that arises from ethnography can be translated into direct action, both *Avatar* and the Greek authors studied here focus on affect and the relationship between beings, and state-wide responses to natural resources. Individuals should engage in and become satisfied with their immediate environments, and states should rely on what they already possess instead of pursuing the resources of others.

When, in the wake of the film, *Avatar* fans committed to taking action in their personal lives, they turned to personal practices like meditation, limited political actions like the circulation of petitions, or socially-approved sacrifices like vegetarianism.[330] Porphyry's translation of Dicaearchus and ethnic exempla into a vegetarianism his readers could easily adopt is relevant here as well. Ironically, it is the elite's access to Ecological Others and ecological critique that subverts their application of that critique. Fans of *Avatar* who have been affected by the message of the film have also been seduced by the rich visual spectacle that conveyed the film's message, and are therefore deeply implicated in the systems that brought such a resource-intensive blockbuster to their attention. Greek readers of the ancient texts I have discussed are in a similar position, uniquely able both to access ethnologic information and, precisely because of this access, likely to dismiss criticisms of the systems that have made ethnological information available to them.

Conclusion without Closure

As Jonas Grethlein has recently argued,[331] historiography is torn between two opposing desires: the desire to make meaning of the events of the past by taking a teleological perspective, and the desire to experience the contingency of events as they are lived in real time. Ethnography,

[330] Istoft 2013, 69-74.
[331] Grethlein 2013.

including Greek ethnography, is torn between similarly incompatible tendencies: to relate the Self to the Other, or to see the Other's behaviors as contingent on environmental specifics that are either unknowable or untransferable. The vividness of ethnographic description both creates the conditions for ecological reflection and compromises attempts to translate those reflections into action.

Ethnography is a mode of prose description, not a visual image, but it works on readers in much the same way as Lutz and Collins have argued is the case for ethnographic photographs:

> "[F]or diverse viewers, the images of a starving African family may implicate American overconsumption, greedy multinational corporations, corrupt local governments, or the lack of industry of dark-skinned peoples ... [The photograph] cannot provide the social analysis that would allow its viewers to act on their unease. The most we can ask of an image is that it leave us with questions, with an aroused interest in the subject, a desire to know more fully the conditions surrounding the representation."[332]

And yet it is perhaps significant that Greek ethnography, as a written mode that often preserves its author's voice, does not provide more explicit "social analysis" of the ethnological "images" it transmits. Herodotus, Megasthenes, and Agatharchides show us that Greek ethnographers were invested in provoking ecological self-critique, but they are not sources for determining ancient ecological ideologies. Rather, their texts reveal many of the concepts that structured ecological reflection in antiquity. They teach us the terms of Greek ecological debate.

[332] Lutz and Collins 1993, 272.

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