

Over the past 40 years scholarship on Herodotus' Scythian *logos* (Book 4) has been dominated by the critical analyses of two eminent scholars; Detlev Fehling (1971; 1990) and François Hartog (1980;1988). Fehling inherited a tradition of empirical, nearly positivistic textual analysis, which was focused primarily on proving Herodotus right or wrong. Hartog's great work marked a movement away from this approach to a more sophisticated appreciation of the literary and artistic dimension of Herodotus, whose work was finally appreciated as literature, not just history. However, remarkably both critics agreed that Herodotus' account of the Scythians was largely, if not entirely, fictitious. This paper, by adopting a novel, comparative, interdisciplinary approach in analysing the Scythian excursus, shows through the examination of Central Asian steppe history and nomad customs (Grousset 1948, Basilov 1989, Sinor 1990, Torday 1997), that both approaches have notable limitations resulting largely from their mutual neglect of comparative and historical material.

The paper first addresses Fehling's assertion that Herodotus' version of Scythian putative origin (4.5-7) is not local in derivation, but is actually based on models found in Greek genealogical literature (Fehling 1990, 45). By utilizing information on actual steppe customs overlooked by Fehling, the paper identifies genuinely Scythian elements in the legends recorded by Herodotus. For instance, the paper describes the steppe custom of the youngest child inheriting the bulk of the family inheritance while the rest of the possessions are divided among other sons who are then sent away from the family encampment (Grousset 1948, 319; Onon 1990). All of these features are present in Herodotus' account of Scythian origins.

The second part of the paper addresses Hartog's argument that most of the Scythian customs and practices mentioned by Herodotus are merely inversions of Greek or Egyptian *nomoi* (Hartog 1989, 215). Through comparisons with the astonishingly elaborate state structure and military organisation of the Xiongnu Empire (Grousset 1948, 54; Torday 1997, 88), the contemporary, eastern counterpart of the Scythians, the paper shows that the account of Scythian social organisation and administrative practices, regarded as inventions by Hartog, is likely to be true. Scythian battle tactics, dismissed as mere inversions and allusions to Athenian strategy during the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, are re-examined and compared to the steppe warfare of other nomadic confederations such as the Xiongnu, Huns and Mongols (Yü 1990, 124; Sinor 1990, 13). The comparative angle from Central Asia reveals an astonishing resemblance between the nomadic tribes that casts doubt on the exclusively literary and theoretical interpretations offered by the two great critics.

In short the paper argues that a more comprehensive and comparative approach to the Scythian *logos* and to the *Histories* as whole is needed in future Herodotean scholarship. The historical and literary dimensions of the *Histories* both deserve appreciation and cannot be divorced from each other. Neither can a strictly text based analysis provide the comprehensive scope that is required to appreciate the full breadth of Herodotean inquiry.