

The Religious Aspects of War in the Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome

Edited by

Krzysztof Ulanowski



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Contents

List of Abbreviations XIII

List and Affiliations of Contributors XIX

Introduction 1

PART 1

The Ancient Near East

War in Mesopotamian Culture 5

Pietro Mander

Some Remarks Concerning the Development of the Theology of War
in Ancient Mesopotamia 23

Vladimir Sazonov

Battle-Descriptions in Mesopotamian Sources I: Presargonic and
Sargonic Period 51

Sebastian Fink

A Comparison of the Role of Bārû and Mantis in Ancient Warfare 65

Krzysztof Ulanowski

Eclipses and the Precipitation of Conflict: Deciphering the Signal
to Attack 99

Micah Ross

PART 2

Greece

War and Religion in Ancient Greece 123

Robert Parker

The Terrified Face of Alcyoneus: The Religious Character of Greek Warfare,
or What about the Vanquished? 133

Bogdan Burliga

- The Burning of Greek Temples by the Persians and Greek War-Propaganda** 166
Eduard Rung
- Weather, Luck and the Divine in Thucydides** 180
Rachel Bruzzone
- Xenophon's Piety within the Hipparchikos** 194
Simone Agrimonti
- The Mounted Torch-Race at the Athenian Bendideia** 206
Nicholas Sekunda
- Like Gods among Men. The Use of Religion and Mythical Issues during Alexander's Campaign** 235
Borja Antela-Bernárdez
- Defence and Offence in the Egyptian Royal Titles of Alexander the Great** 256
Ivan Ladynin
- Egyptian Warriors: Machimoi, in Coroplastic Art—Selected Examples** 272
Sławomir Jędraszek
- PART 3**
- Rome**
- Clenar larans etnam svalce: Myth, Religion, and Warfare in Etruria*** 291
Joshua R. Hall
- The Ara Pacis Augustae and the Campus Martius: Peace and War, Antinomic or Complementary Realities in the Roman World** 303
Dan-Tudor Ionescu
- The Religious Legitimation of War in the Reign of Antoninus Pius** 358
André Heller

**Roman Soldiers in Official Cult Ceremonies: Performance, Participation
and Religious Experience 376**

Tomasz Dziurdzik

**Religious Aspects of the Bar Kokhba Revolt: The Founding of Aelia
Capitolina on the Ruins of Jerusalem 387**

Boaz Zissu and Hanan Eshel

Index of Authors 407

The Burning of Greek Temples by the Persians and Greek War-Propaganda*

Eduard Rung

In 330 BC the soldiers of Alexander the Great, inspired by Thais of Athens, burned down the splendid palaces in Persepolis.¹ This outrageous action was reported by Diodorus Siculus, Arrian, Plutarch and some other authors.² Arrian (*An.* 3.18.12) supposes that the burning of Persepolis' palaces formed part of the implementation of Alexander's *panhellenic* program in the war against the Persians:

He burnt down the Persian palace, though Parmenio advised him to preserve it, for many reasons, and especially because it was not well to destroy what was now his own property, and because the men of Asia would not by this course of action be induced to come over to him, thinking that he himself had decided not to retain the rule of Asia, but only to conquer it and depart. But Alexander said that he wished to take vengeance on the Persians, in retaliation for their deeds in the invasion of Greece, when they razed Athens to the ground and burnt down the temples. He also desired to punish the Persians for all the other injuries they had done the Greeks (translated by E.J. Chinnock).

Diodorus (17.72.2–3) and Plutarch (Alex. 38.1–7) stress the role of Thais of Athens in the burning of Persepolis. Diodorus (17.72.2–3) reports:

* I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Dorothy Thompson (Girton College, Cambridge, UK) for polishing my English in this article.

1 On the burning of Persepolis by Alexander, see especially: J.M. Balcer, "Alexander's Burning of Persepolis," *Iran* 13 (1978) 119–33; E.F. Bloedow, "Alexander the Great 'Under Fire' at Persepolis," *Klio* 79 (1997) 341–53; G. Morrison, "Alexander, Combat Psychology, and Persepolis," *Antichthon* 35 (2001) 30–44.

2 Also in Curtius (5. 6. 19–20), Strabo (15. 3. 6) and Athenaeus (13. 576 d–e). Arrian and the vulgate sources disagree as to the role of the courtesan Thais. A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) 331 reports that the vulgate version and the deliberate firing are generally understood as depending on motives other than revenge: (i) as a demonstration to the people of Asia that the Persian Empire had perished; (ii) a reaffirmation to the Greek world that Alexander was still aware of the problem of his homeland; (iii) an attempt to destroy the morale of the Persians by burning the symbol of their empire.

Thaïs said that for Alexander it would be the finest of all his feats in Asia if he joined them in a triumphal procession, set fire to the palaces, and permitted women's hands in a minute to extinguish the famed accomplishments of the Persians. This was said to men who were still young and giddy with wine, and so, as would be expected, someone shouted out to form the comus and to light torches, and urged all to take vengeance for the destruction of the Greek temples (translated by C.H. Oldfather).

Thus, as one can conclude from Diodorus' account, someone in the Macedonian forces, at this particular juncture, proclaimed the slogan of revenge and this stimulated the crowd of soldiers to set fire to Persepolis' palaces. Diodorus (17.72.6) further explicitly states that "it was most remarkable that the impious act of Xerxes, king of the Persians, against the acropolis of Athens should have been repaid in kind after many years by one woman, a citizen of the land which had suffered it". Plutarch, however, reports this story somewhat differently (*Alex.* 38.17). He emphasizes that the said Thaïs was responsible for the idea of revenge against the Persians: "it would be a still greater pleasure to go in revel rout and set fire to the house of the Xerxes who burned Athens" (*Plut. Alex.* 38.4). Plutarch goes on to report that the soldiers who had set fire to the palaces of Persepolis indeed believed that this act of revenge would mean the end of the campaign in Asia and their return home: "For they hoped that the burning and destruction of the palace was the act of one who had fixed his thoughts on home, and did not intend to dwell among Barbarians" (38.7). Despite the different versions of the event, there is a consensus in the sources that the background for Alexander's burning of Persepolis was a Greek sense of the need for revenge going back to the period of the Persian wars.

In this chapter my aim is to consider the slogan of revenge against the Persians who had burned down the Greek shrines and, further, to take account of other aspects of this theme: (a) the Persian practice of burning Greek shrines in the period of the Persian wars; (b) the influence of Persian imperial policy in Greece on Greek consciousness and ideology, and (c) when it was that this Greek slogan for revenge actually effected policy, and the consequences of this development.

It is well known that the Persians had systematically burned Greek shrines since the time of the Ionian revolt down to Xerxes' invasion of Greece in 480 BC.³ Herodotus (5.102) explicitly states that the burning of the temple of

3 Cyrus the Great has been already responsible for the burning of Greek temples in Asia Minor, e.g. temple in Phocaea (Hdt. 1.144). R.J. van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and the Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations" in *Extraction & Control. Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (eds. M. Kozuh, W.F.M. Henkelman, C.E. Jones,

Cybele during the Ionian attack on Sardis in 498 BC was the main pretext for the subsequent burning of Greek temples by the Persians. Hornblower suggests that Herodotus is here adopting or reporting a Persian line of explanation, which presented the Ionian revolt as an act of Greek aggression, to which the Persians then replied in kind. As Hornblower notes, the 'orientalizing' theme of Persian temple-burning in 480 was important long after Herodotus' own time, as it was used as the pretext for Alexander the Great's invasion of Asia; Herodotus' earlier point about Sardis was naturally forgotten, or at any rate not followed up, in later accounts and later propaganda.⁴ Of course, one cannot be certain why the Persians actually did burn the Greek temples, given their usual religious tolerance towards foreign gods and cults.⁵ Some alternative views have been suggested for this Persian impiety in Greece. The most popular view is that the destruction of the temples by the Persians was due to the religious situation in Iran, as well as deriving from certain features of the Iranian religion of Zoroastrianism. I note here just a few of the most indicative scholarly views. Munn claims that the redistributive burning of Greek temples in the time of Xerxes resonates with the zealous temper expressed in the name of right religion by Xerxes in the Daiva inscription at Persepolis.⁶ George supposes that the Persian burning of some Greek shrines stood in contrast to

C. Woods, Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2014) 236 mentions this action of Cyrus along with others as an argument against scholarly opinion on Cyrus' religious tolerance. On the Persian practice of burning Greek shrines, see: P. Tozzi, "Per la storia della politica religiosa degli Achemenidi: Distruzioni persiane di templi greci agli inizi del V secolo," *RSI* 89 (1977) 18–32; G. Firpo, "Impero universale e politica religiosa. Ancora sulle distruzioni dei templi greci ad opera dei Persiani," *ASNP* ser. 3 16,2 (1986) 331–93. On the Persian attitude to Greek temples, see: P. Funke, "Die Perser und die griechischen Heiligtümer in der Perserkriegszeit" in *Herodot und die Epoche der Perserkriege. Realitäten und Fiktionen. Kolloquium zum 80. Geburtstag von Dietmar Kienast* (ed. B. Bleckmann, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2007) 21–34.

- 4 S. Hornblower (ed.), *Herodotus Histories Book V* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) 9.
- 5 This is the most traditional view, on which see, for example: A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948) 465; R.N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1963) 78, 82, 120; R. Ghirshman, *Iran: From the Earliest Times to the Islamic Conquest* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978) 133 T. Cuyler Young, Jr., "The Early History of the Medes and the Persians and the Achaemenid Empire to the Death of Cambyses," in *CAH²* 4 (1988) 42, 100, 102, III; M.A. Dandamaev, V.G. Lukonin, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 358. In criticism of this concept, see: van der Spek, *Cyrus . . .*, 233–6.
- 6 M. Munn, *The Mother of the Gods, Athens and Tyranny of Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) 227 n. 19.

the veneration of yet other Greek holy places and reflected the Persian practice of burning the abodes of enemy gods.⁷ Dandamaev and Lukonin suggest that by destroying the temples and removing the statues of their gods, Xerxes strove to deprive a hostile population of the help of their local gods.⁸ Kuhrt came to opposite conclusion: “the destruction of temples in Greece and perhaps Asia Minor does not fit with the statement that the king replaced the worship of *daivas* with the cult of Auramazda, while Xerxes’ sacrifices to Greek gods and use of local rituals and practices contradicts any such notion”.⁹ Some scholars assume that the Persian treatment of Greek shrines is comparable with similar sacrilegious actions in Egypt, Babylonia and other places where it is reported that the Persians also destroyed local temples.¹⁰

It is striking that four distinguished experts in the Achaemenid history (in ‘Herodotus and Babylon Reconsidered’), while considering the literary tradition of Xerxes’ destruction of the Babylonian temples, refer to similar practice in Greece: “It has recently become clear that Greek accusations made against Persians, of *hierosylia* and sacrilege have their *Sitz im Leben* in the Greek experience of temple destruction in the course of Xerxes’ Greek campaign. Yet it is clear that these destructions were part of the war strategy and not a religiously motivated act of vengeance by the Persians, as Herodotus and others have implied”.¹¹ The problem of Achaemenid religious policy is too complex

7 P. Georges, *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 56.

8 Dandamayev, Lukonin, *Culture . . .*, 360.

9 A. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (Oxford: Routledge 2007) 242.

10 For an evaluation of the Greek evidence for the Persian misdeeds and destruction of temples in Egypt and Babylon, see: I. Ladynin, “Adversary *Ḫšryš(3)*: His Name and Deeds According to the Satrap Stela,” *CdE* 87 (2005) 108–109; A. Kuhrt, S. Sherwin-White, “Xerxes’ Destruction of Babylonian Temples” in *Achaemenid History*. vol. II: *The Greek Sources* (Proceedings of the Groningen 1984 Achaemenid History Workshop) (eds. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1987) 69–78; W.F.M. Henkelman, A. Kuhrt, R. Rollinger, J. Wiesehöfer, “Herodotus and Babylon Reconsidered” in *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich—Herodotus and the Persian Empire. Akten des 3. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen”, Innsbruck, 24–28. November 2008* (eds. R. Rollinger, B. Truschneegg, R. Bichler, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011) 449–70. There is a tendency in the historiography to challenge the testimony of Classical authors on Xerxes’ ‘sacrilegious’ actions towards the native temples and cults in Egypt as well as in Babylonia.

11 Henkelman, Kuhrt, Rollinger, Wiesehöfer, *Herodotus . . .*, 458.

to be discussed here in detail¹²; however, it is still necessary to put forward some arguments in support of the idea that Persian ‘sacrilegious’ actions were not reflections of their more general religious policy, but rather were caused by the actual experience of military campaign in Greece.¹³ This view corresponds with the Greek explanation of the Persian burning of the temples since it focuses not on the religious enmity between the Greeks and Persians but instead stresses the idea of revenge, which, strictly speaking, was the chief factor in their relations leading to war. Besides, in almost all cases, which involved Greek temples and shrines, the Persians also burned other buildings inside the cities and annihilated local population.

The earliest written example of such an act against a Greek city was recorded by Ctesias (FGrHist. 688. F. 13.22). According to Ctesias, when Darius crossed the bridge over the Propontis he razed to the ground the homes and temples of the Chalcedonians (Χαλκηδονίων οικίας και ιερά ἐνέπρησεν), because they planned to set the bridge near them adrift and because they destroyed the altar which Darius had dedicated on his way through in the name of Zeus Diabaterios. Similar words are found in Herodotus’ accounts of the Persian destructions of Greek temples in 490 and 480/79 BC. Herodotus also records that the Persians set fire to the Ionian cities including their temples in 494 BC (6.32: τὰς πόλεις ἐνεπίμπρασαν αὐτοῖσι τοῖσι ἱεροῖσι). In the case of the Samians, neither their city nor temples were burned down in 494 BC (Hdt. 6.25: οὔτε ἡ πόλις οὔτε τὰ ἱερά ἐνεπρήσθη). In contrast, when in 490 BC the Persians were enslaving the Naxians they burned down both their temples and the city (Hdt. 6.96: οἱ δὲ Πέρσαι ἀνδραποδισάμενοι τοὺς κατέλαβον αὐτῶν, ἐνέπρησαν καὶ τὰ ἱερά καὶ τὴν πόλιν); similarly, in 480 BC the cities and temples of Phocis were set alight by Xerxes (Hdt. 8.33: καὶ ἐς τὰς πόλεις ἐνιέντες πῦρ καὶ ἐς τὰ ἱερά). Herodotus refers particularly to the burning of the cities of various Phocian ethnic communities—the Panopeans, Daulians and Lilaeens, but makes no mention of their temples being burnt (Hdt. 8.35: καὶ γὰρ τῶν Πανοπέων τὴν πόλιν ἐνέπρησαν καὶ Δαυλίων καὶ Λιλαϊέων). He similarly omits mention of tem-

12 See: A. Kuhrt, “The Problem of Achaemenid ‘Religious Policy’” in *Die Welt der Götterbilder* (eds. B. Groneberg, H. Spieckermann, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007) 117–42.

13 The case of Babylon shows a close parallel. There is a Greek tradition of a destruction of sanctuaries by Xerxes in Babylon (e.g. sanctuary of Bel) and Alexander’s intention to restore them (Arr. *An.* 3.16.4; 7.17.1; Strabo. 16.1.5). The possible Xerxes’ destruction of Babylonian temples was probably connected with a revolt mentioned by Ctesias (FGrHist. 688. F.13.25), and was therefore intended as a punishment for the rebellious country. There is no Greek or Egyptian direct evidence of a Persian destruction of local temples in Egypt, however, according to the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine, some Egyptian temples were destroyed by Cambyses (DMOA. XXII. B 19–20).

ples, when recording the burning of Thespieae and Plataea in Boeotia at the hands of the Persians (Hdt. 8.50: ἐμπρήσας Θεσπιέων τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν . . . καὶ τὴν Πλαταιέων ὡσαύτως). On his retreat from Athens, however, which had survived the destruction by Xerxes one year earlier, according to Herodotus (Hdt. 9.13), Mardonius burnt down the walls, houses and temples (ἐμπρήσας τε τὰς Ἀθίνας, καὶ εἴ κού τι ὀρθὸν ἦν τῶν τειχέων ἢ τῶν οἰκημάτων ἢ τῶν ἱρῶν, πάντα καταβαλὼν καὶ συγχώσας). What these accounts suggest is that the burning of temples was not an explicit policy on the part of the Persians during their campaigns against the Greeks.

Herodotus refers to acts of revenge on only a few occasions.¹⁴ A careful reading of his account of the burning of the temple of Cybele in Sardis by the Greeks (Hdt. 5.102) clearly shows that this temple was not set alight intentionally but was demolished as a result of the burning of the city (καὶ Σάρδιες μὲν ἐνεπρήσθησαν, ἐν δὲ αὐτῆσι καὶ ἱρὸν ἐπιχωρήσας θεοῦ Κυβέλης). And in recounting acts of Persian aggression Herodotus draws particular attention to the burning of Greek temples by the Persians as examples of retaliation: τὸ σκηπτόμενοι οἱ Πέρσαι ὕστερον ἀντενεπίπρασαν τὰ ἐν Ἑλλήσι ἱρά (Hdt. 5.102); τὰ ἱρά συλήσαντες ἐνέπρησαν, ἀποτινύμενοι τῶν ἐν Σάρδισι κατακαυθέντων ἱρῶν (on Eretria: Hdt. 6.101). There are, however, some additional examples of temple-burning in Herodotus which are not connected by him with any acts of revenge, but are plain accounts of setting fire to temples. One such example is the burning of the temple of Apollo in Abae (Hdt. 8.33); secondly, there was the Persian plan to burn down Delphi, which was never effected since, as Herodotus shows, the deity became involved (Hdt. 8.35–39). In both of these cases, the Persian actions were not directed immediately against the Greek gods or cults. It was simply the case, according to other Greek authors, that the Persians, considered sacrilegious by the Greeks, in the course of their invasion plundered Greek shrines; they also removed to Persia a variety of sacred objects, as they had already done from Egypt and Babylonia.¹⁵ Arrian (*An.* 3.16.7–8) reports on such booty, found by Alexander in Susa in 330 BC: “Many other things were

14 On the idea of revenge in Greek ideology and culture: H. Bellen, “Der Rachegedanke in der griechisch-persischen Auseinandersetzung,” *Chiron* 4 (1974) 43–67; H.-J. Gehrke, “Die Griechen und die Rache. Ein Versuch in historischer Psychologie,” *Saeculum* 38 (1987) 121–49.

15 On the removal to Persia of sacred objects from Egypt and Babylonia: Ladynin, “*Adversary Hšryš(3)* . . . , 110–11; Kuhrt, Sherwin-White, *Xerxes* . . . , 70–2 and Henkelman, Kuhrt, Rollinger, Wiesehöfer, *Herodotus* . . . , 453–8, an attempt to downplay Greek evidence for Xerxes’ destruction of the Babylonian temples and removal of the statue of Bel-Marduk (Hdt. 1.183).

also captured there, which Xerxes brought with him from Greece, especially the bronze statues of Harmodias and Aristogeiton. These Alexander sent back to the Athenians . . ." (πολλά δὲ καὶ ἄλλα κατελήφθη αὐτοῦ, ὅσα Ξέρξης ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄγων ἦλθε, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ Ἄρμοδίου καὶ Ἀριστογείτονος χαλκαὶ εἰκόνες. καὶ ταύτας Ἀθηναίοις ὀπίσω πέμπει Ἀλέξανδρος).¹⁶ Arrian provides further information when reporting the arrival of Greek embassies to Alexander in Babylon in 323 BC (*An.* 7. 19.2):

He also gave the ambassadors permission to take with them all the statues of men and images of gods and the other votive offerings which Xerxes had carried from Greece to Babylon, Pasargadae, Susa, or any other place in Asia (ὅσους δὲ ἀνδριάντας ἢ ὅσα ἀγάλματα ἢ εἰ δὴ τι ἄλλο ἀνάθημα ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος Ξέρξης ἀνεκόμισεν ἐς Βαβυλῶνα ἢ ἐς Πασαργάδας ἢ ἐς Σοῦσα ἢ ὅπη ἄλλη τῆς Ἀσίας). In this way it is said that the brazen statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, as well as the monument of the Oelcaean Artemis, were carried back to Athens (translated by E.J. Chinnock).

This account carries with it the implication that the removal of sacred and other objects from Greece to Persia in the course of Xerxes' invasion in 480 BC was devoid of any religious motivation. In addition, we should note that the Greek authors reporting the Persians' plundering of Greek temples in all cases employ the verb *συλάω*, 'pillage', 'plunder'. According to Herodotus, when the Persians captured Miletus in 494 BC they plundered the temple and oracle before they set them alight (Hdt. 6.19: ὁ νηὸς τε καὶ τὸ χρηστήριον, συληθέντα ἐνεπίμπρατο). And when they captured Eretria in 490 BC, they plundered and then burned the temple as well (Hdt. 6.101: τὰ ἱρὰ συλήσαντες ἐνέπρησαν). As for the temple of Apollo at Abae, the Persians also plundered this before they burnt it down (Hdt. 8.33: τὸ ἱρὸν συλήσαντες ἐνέπρησαν). Herodotus also lays stress on the Persians' intention to plunder Delphi and to deliver the treasures there to king Xerxes (8.35: ὅπως συλήσαντες τὸ ἱρὸν τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖσι βασιλεῖ Ξέρξη ἀποδέξαιεν τὰ χρήματα).

Scholars often make the point that in many cases the Persians in fact treated Greek gods in a not unfriendly manner; on occasion Persians even showed

16 According to Pausanias (1.8.5), the statues of Harmodias and Aristogeiton were returned to Athens only by Antiochus. Valerius Maximus (2.10. ext.1) ascribes this to Seleucus; Pliny the Elder (*NH* 34.70), to Alexander. Bosworth, *A Historical . . .*, 317 resolves this contradiction by suggesting that Alexander merely promised the return of the statue-group during his stay in Susa.

themselves anxious to respect Greek gods.¹⁷ There are numerous examples that could be adduced but we will mention only those that relate to the Persian wars. The Lindian chronicle twice mentions Persian offerings to Athena of Lindos, though it is probable that two reports relate to the same event—the attack on Rhodes by Persian forces in 490 BC. According to the first record, Artaphernes sent earrings, a dress, tiara, bracelets, knife and ornate clothing to the temple of Lindos (Lind. Chron. XXXII. 65–69). The second entry records that, after failing to capture Rhodes by siege, Datis removed his garment and sent this, together with his bracelets, tiara and dagger, and also his chariot, as an offering to the goddess (Lind. Chron. XLII. 35–38).¹⁸ The offering made by Datis during the expedition against Greece in 490 BC to the temple of Apollo on Delos was well known (Hdt. 6.97). Finally, Herodotus mentions a sacrifice which Xerxes, after taking Athens in the summer of 480 BC, ordered the Athenian exiles to make on the Acropolis (Hdt. 8.54).

In spite of the fact that Persian ‘sacrilegious’ actions in Greece were not caused by enmity towards Greek religion or Greek gods, the Greeks themselves considered these as impious and needing to be remembered and revenged. Herodotus reports that both the Greeks and the Persians were well aware of the significance of temple burning in Greek policy and propaganda, as becomes clear in several of his comments (Hdt. 8.109, 140, 143–144). Moreover, a number of Greek authors mention the Greek decision not to rebuild the temples destroyed by the Persians, so as to leave them as memorials for the next generations. Isocrates (4.156) claims a similar decision was first taken by the Ionians, but Diodorus Siculus (11.29.4) and Lycurgus (Leocr. 81) see this rather as a requirement of the so-called Plataean oath.¹⁹ There has been much debate about the authenticity of the Plataean oath,²⁰ but it is clear from other Greek sources that a decision on this subject was indeed taken by the Greeks during the Persian wars. This is reflected in the archaeological data and confirmed

17 P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander. A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002) 547–9; P. Georges, *Barbarian Asia . . .*, 57–8.

18 C. Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of Their Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

19 It must, however, be noted that there is no mention of this in the text of the oath preserved on the Acharnae stela: Tod II. 204 = GHI 88.

20 P. Siewert, *Der Eid von Plataiai* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1972); H. van Wees, “The Oath of the Sworn Bands: The Acharnae Stela, the Oath of Plataea and Archaic Spartan Warfare” in *Das frühe Sparta* (eds. A. Luther, M. Meier, L. Thommen, München: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006) 125–64; P. Krentz, “The Oath of Marathon, not Plataia?,” *Hesperia* 76 (2007) 731–42; recently: P. Cartledge, *After Thermopylae: The Oath of Plataea and the End of the Graeco-Persian Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

by Plutarch's reference (*Per.* 17) to Pericles' congress decree (itself also the subject of scholarly controversy²¹) and by the date when construction work was started on the Athenian Acropolis in the mid fifth century BC.²²

The origin, therefore, of the idea of taking revenge on the Persians for their burning of the Greek shrines, appears to be contemporary with the period of the Persian Wars. This is clear enough from Aeschylus, who in his 'Persians' (472 BC) explicitly expresses the idea. The context here is a description of the Persians' sacrilegious actions in Greece (ll. 809–812):

For in coming to the land of Hellas they did not shrink in reverence
from plundering the statues of the *theoi* or to burn their temples.
The altars and the shrines of the *daimones* are no more to be seen,
utterly overturned from their very foundations and scattered in
confusion.

(οἱ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη / ἡδούντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς·
βωμοὶ δ' αἰστοί, δαιμόνων θ' ἰδρύματα / πρὸρριζα φύρδην ἔξανέστραπται
βάθρων).

(translated by Niall McCloskey and John Porter)

The Persians, as the text continues, had already suffered for their sacrilegious actions in Greece in the outcome of the battle of Salamis; new sufferings will await them in the future in the battle of Plataea and even later (ll. 813–819):

As a result, having acted evilly, they suffer evils
as great or greater, while others are still to come, nor yet has
the foundation of their misfortunes been laid: it still must be
capped off
such is the great libation of the blood of those slaughtered that will be
poured
on the land of the Plataeans by the Doric spear.
The mounds of corpses will bear silent testimony
to the eyes of mortals even to the third generation,

21 See, for example: R. Seager, "The Congress Decree: Some Doubts and a Hypothesis," *Historia* 18 (1969) 129–31; G.L. Cawkwell, "The Peace between Athens and Persia," *Phoenix* 51 (1997) 126.

22 A.E. Raubitschek, "The Peace Policy of Pericles," *AJA* 70 (1966) 39; I.S. Mark, *The Sanctuary of Athena Nike in Athens: Architectural Stages and Chronology* (Princeton: Hesperia Supplement 26, 1993) 100–101.

warning that, being mortal, one must not have thoughts greater than one's station (translated by Niall McCloskey and John Porter).

Herodotus also writes of the necessity of taking revenge on the Persians in the context of Xerxes' peace proposals to the Athenians; he suggests that instead of making pacts, it is necessary for the Athenians to take revenge on the Persians (Hdt. 8.144: τοῖσι ἡμέας ἀναγκαίως ἔχει τιμωρέειν ἐς τὰ μέγιστα μάλλον ἢ περ ὁμολογέειν). There is no clear indication in the sources that the idea of taking revenge for the Persian practice of temple burning had any significance in the period from the Persian wars down to Philip of Macedon. It was nowhere explicit in the proclaimed goal of the Delian League (Thuc. 1.96 speaks of ἀμύνεσθαι ὧν ἔπαθον δηρῶντας τὴν βασιλέως χώρων,²³ but he does not specifically refer to the religious factor; so revenge is rather for the Persian devastation of Greece more generally).

In the Spartan-Persian war of 400–394 BC the slogan of 'Freedom of the Greeks of Asia Minor' was dominant.²⁴ And in Isocrates' orations (Panegyricus and Philip) revenge for Persian religious crimes in Greece was not put forward as one of the main arguments for launching a Greek expedition for the conquest of Asia.²⁵ The theme of revenge appears again in Diodorus (16.89.2) who attributes it to Philip of Macedon after the battle of Chaeronea:

23 On the meaning of Thucydides here, see: P.A. Brunt, "The Hellenic League Against Persia," *Historia* 2 (1953/4) 150; R. Sealey, "The Origins of the Delian League," in *Ancient Society and Institutions. Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th Birthday* (ed. E. Badian, Oxford: Blackwell, 1967) 238, 241; A.H. Jackson, "The Original Purpose of the Delian League," *Historia* 18 (1969) 12–6; H.R. Rawlings III, "Thucydides on the Purpose of the Delian League," *Phoenix* 31 (1977) 1–8; N.D. Robertson, "The True Nature of the 'Delian League' 478–461 BC I," *AJAH* 5 (1980 [1981]) 73–4.

24 See: R. Seager, C.J. Tuplin, "The Freedom of the Greeks of Asia: On the Origins of a Concept and the Creation of a Slogan," *JHS* 100 (1980) 144–6.

25 On the slogans of *panhellenism* in the fifth and fourth centuries BC: M.A. Flower, "From Simonides to Isocrates: The Fifth Century Origins of Fourth Century Panhellenism," *CLA* 19 (2000), 65–101. J. Seibert, "'Panhellenischer' Kreuzzug, Nationalkrieg, Racheefeldzug oder Eroberungskrieg?—Überlegungen zu den Ursachen des Krieges gegen Persien" in *Alexander der Grosse. Eine Welteroberung und ihr Hintergrund. Vorträge des Internationalen Bonner Alexanderkolloquium, 19.–21.12.1996* (ed. W. Will, Bonn: R. Habelt, 1998) 23, cites only two passages in Isocrates (Paneg. 185 and Philip. 125), and claims that in both the 'Rachemotiv' (concept of revenge) plays a subordinate role; in response to Seibert's argument, see: E.F. Bloedow, "Why did Philip and Alexander Launch a War against the Persian Empire," *AnCl* 72 (2003) 263–4.

He spread the word that he wanted to make war on the Persians on the Greeks' behalf and to punish them for the profanation of the temples, and this won for him the loyal support of the Greeks (translated by C.H. Oldfather).

It seems probable that, in the changed political conditions in Greece and for his own advantage, Philip revived the old Greek slogan of revenge against the Persians for their acts of temple-burning in Greece during the Persian wars. It is difficult to say if this slogan went down well among the Greeks at that time, but the continuation of the Athenians' cooperation with the Persians during Alexander's invasion of Asia shows that it was not a fruitful one. Alexander had inherited this slogan from his father, as shown by the events at Persepolis.²⁶

The conclusion must be that, while the burning of Greek shrines by the Persians was an expression of a religious aspect of war, it did not add up to war against either Greek religion or Greek gods, nor indeed did it represent any form of religious war. The Persian 'sacrilegious' actions were not reflections of their more general religious policy, but rather were caused by the actual experience of military campaign in Greece. The slogan of revenge against the Persians appeared originally as an expression of Greek war propaganda. Later, in the time of Philip and Alexander, it became a demonstration of Macedonian, anti-Persian propaganda that aimed, as Diodorus (16.89.2) rightly says, to win the loyal support of the Greeks.

Bibliography

- E. Badian (ed.), *Ancient Society and Institutions. Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th Birthday* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967).
- J.M. Balcer, "Alexander's Burning of Persepolis," *Iran* 13 (1978) 119–33.
- H. Bellen, "Der Rachedanke in der griechisch-persischen Auseinandersetzung," *Chiron* 4 (1974) 43–67.
- B. Bleckmann (ed.), *Herodot und die Epoche der Perserkriege. Realitäten und Fiktionen. Kolloquium zum 80. Geburtstag von Dietmar Kienast* (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2007).
- E.F. Bloedow, "Alexander the Great 'Under Fire' at Persepolis," *Klio* 79 (1997) 341–53.

26 On this slogan of revenge for Xerxes' burning of Greek temples in the policy and propaganda of Philip and Alexander: M.A. Flower, "Alexander the Great and Panhellenism" in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (eds. A.B. Bosworth, E. Baynham, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 101.

- , “Why did Philip and Alexander Launch a War against the Persian Empire,” *AnCl* 72 (2003) 261–74.
- A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).
- , E. Baynham (eds.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander. A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002).
- P.A. Brunt, “The Hellenic League Against Persia,” *Historia* 2 (1953/4) 135–63.
- P. Cartledge, *After Thermopylae: The Oath of Plataea and the End of the Graeco-Persian Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- G.L. Cawkwell, “The Peace between Athens and Persia,” *Phoenix* 51 (1997) 115–30.
- T. Cuyler Young, Jr., “The Early History of the Medes and the Persians and the Achaemenid Empire to the Death of Cambyses,” in *CAH*² 4 (1988) 1–52.
- M.A. Dandamaev, V.G. Lukonin, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- G. Firpo, “Impero universale e politica religiosa. Ancora sulle distruzioni dei templi greci ad opera dei Persiani,” *ASNP* ser. 3 16,2 (1986) 331–93.
- M.A. Flower, “Alexander the Great and Panhellenism” in Bosworth, Baynham (2000) 96–135.
- , “From Simonides to Isocrates: The Fifth Century Origins of Fourth Century Panhellenism,” *CLA* 19 (2000) 65–101.
- R.N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1963).
- P. Funke, “Die Perser und die griechischen Heiligtümer in der Perserkriegszeit” in Bleckmann (2007) 21–34.
- H.-J. Gehrke, “Die Griechen und die Rache. Ein Versuch in historischer Psychologie,” *Saeculum* 38 (1987) 121–49.
- P. Georges, *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).
- R. Ghirshman, *Iran: From the Earliest Times to the Islamic Conquest* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978).
- B. Groneberg, H. Spieckermann (eds.), *Die Welt der Götterbilder* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).
- W.F.M. Henkelman, A. Kuhrt, R. Rollinger, J. Wiesehöfer, “Herodotus and Babylon Reconsidered” in Rollinger, Truschneegg, Bichler (2011) 449–70.
- C. Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of Their Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- S. Hornblower (ed.), *Herodotus Histories Book V* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2013).
- A.H. Jackson, “The Original Purpose of the Delian League,” *Historia* 18 (1969) 12–6.

- M. Kozuh, W.F.M. Henkelman, C.E. Jones, C. Woods (eds.), *Extraction & Control. Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2014).
- P. Krentz, "The Oath of Marathon, not Plataia?," *Hesperia* 76 (2007) 731–42.
- A. Kuhrt, S. Sherwin-White, "Xerxes' Destruction of Babylonian Temples" in Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Kuhrt (1987) 69–78.
- , *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007).
- , "The Problem of Achaemenid 'Religious Policy'" in Groneberg and Spieckermann (2007) 117–42.
- I. Ladynin, "Adversary *Hšryš*(3): His Name and Deeds According to the Satrap Stela," *CdE* 87 (2005) 87–113.
- A. Luther, M. Meier, L. Thommen (eds.), *Das frühe Sparta* (München: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006).
- I.S. Mark, *The Sanctuary of Athena Nike in Athens: Architectural Stages and Chronology* (Princeton: Hesperia Supplement 26, 1993).
- G. Morrison, "Alexander, Combat Psychology, and Persepolis," *Antichthon* 35 (2001) 30–44.
- M. Munn, *The Mother of the Gods, Athens and Tyranny of Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
- A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).
- A.E. Raubitschek, "The Peace Policy of Pericles," *AJA* 70 (1966) 37–41.
- H.R. Rawlings III, "Thucydides on the Purpose of the Delian League," *Phoenix* 31 (1977) 1–8.
- N.D. Robertson, "The True Nature of the 'Delian League' 478–461 BC I," *AJAH* 5 (1980 [1981]) 64–96.
- R. Rollinger, B. Truschnegg, R. Bichler (eds.), *Herodot ind das Persische Weltreich—Herodotus and the Persian Empire. Akten des 3. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema "Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen"*, Innsbruck, 24–28. November 2008 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011).
- H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Achaemenid History*, vol. 2: *The Greek Sources* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1987).
- R. Seager, "The Congress Decree: Some Doubts and a Hypothesis," *Historia* 18 (1969) 129–40.
- R. Seager, C.J. Tuplin, "The Freedom of the Greeks of Asia: On the Origins of a Concept and the Creation of a Slogan," *JHS* 100 (1980) 141–54.
- R. Sealey, "The Origins of the Delian League" in Badian (1967) 233–56.
- J. Seibert, "'Panhellenischer' Kreuzzug, Nationalkrieg, Rachefeldzug oder Eroberungskrieg?—Überlegungen zu den Ursachen des Krieges gegen Persien" in Will (1998) 5–58.

- P. Siewert, *Der Eid von Plataiai* (Vestigia 16) (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1972).
- R.J. van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and the Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations" in Kozuh, Henkelman, Jones, Woods (2014) 233–64.
- P. Tozzi, "Per la storia della politica religiosa degli Achemenidi: Distruzioni persiane di templi greci agli inizi del V secolo," *RSI* 89 (1977) 18–32.
- H. van Wees, "The Oath of the Sworn Bands': The Acharnae Stela, the Oath of Plataea and Archaic Spartan Warfare" in Luther, Meier, Thommen (2006) 125–64.
- W. Will (ed.), *Alexander der Grosse. Eine Welteroberrung und ihr Hintergrund. Vorträge des Internationalen Bonner Alexanderkolloquium, 19.–21.12.1996* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1998).