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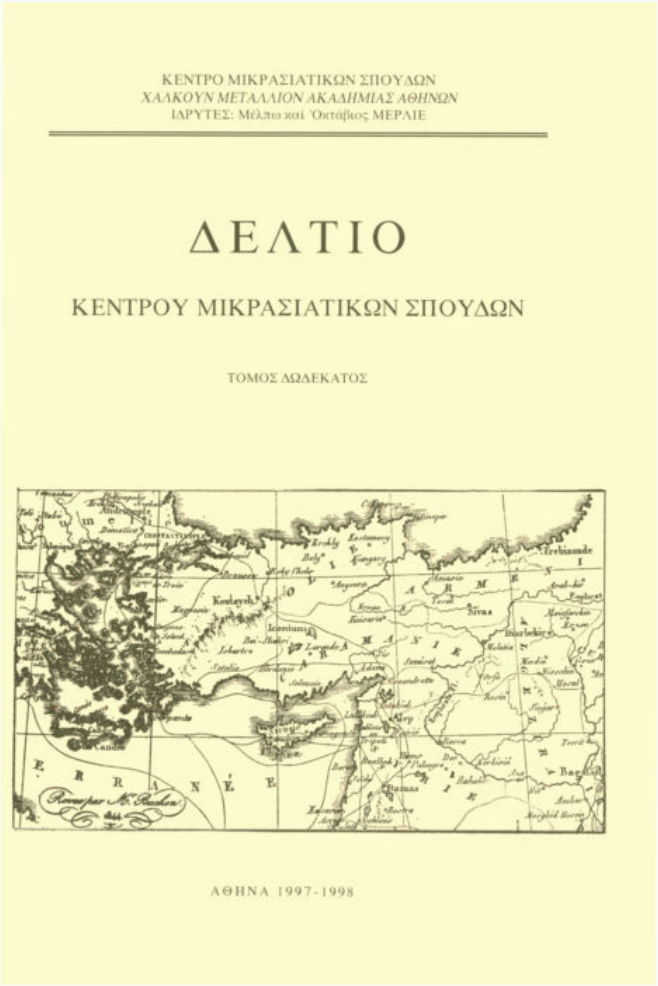

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GEORGE HUXLEY

A LYDO-MEDIAN TREATY IN HERODOTOS (1.74. 3-4)

Herodotos in his account of the war between the Lydians and the Medes, having described the battle interrupted by a total eclipse of the sun, states that the two warring peoples were thereafter more eager for peace. The rulers who reconciled them were a Kilikian, Syennesis, and a Babylonian, whom Herodotos calls Labynetos. The effort of the mediators led to the imposition of a sworn treaty upon the belligerents and to an interchange of marriages. In the interchange (γάμων ἐπαλλαγὴ) it was decided that Alyattes of Lydia should give his daughter Aryenis to the Median king Astyages son of Kyaxares. Herodotos emphasizes the binding force of the arrangements by commenting 'Without firm compulsion firm treaties are not accustomed to hold good'.

C. Hude presents the text of 1.74.4 as follows:

> *οὗτοί σφι καὶ τὸ ὅρκιον οἱ σπεύσαντες*
> *γενέσθαι ἦσαν, καὶ γάμων ἐπαλλαγὴν ἐποίησαν· Ἀλυάττεα*
> *γὰρ ἔγνωσαν δοῦναι τὴν θυγατέρα Ἀρύηνιν Ἀστυάγεϊ τῷ*
> 30 *Κυαξάρεω παιδί· ἄνευ γὰρ ἀναγκαίης ἰσχυρῆς συμβάσιες*
> *ἰσχυραὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσι συμμένειν.*

[*Herodoti Historiae* I³ (Oxford 1927)]

There are no significant variants, and Madvig's conjecture ἀνέγνωσαν 'persuaded' for ἔγνωσαν 'decided' is not obligatory. However, as Hude reports, «post παιδὶ lacunam statuit Cobet». Hude declined to indicate a lacuna; and so did Ph.-E. Legrand in his Budé edition (Paris 1932), who remarked *ad loc.* «Post παιδὶ aliquid intercidisse Cobet coniciebat, ubi alterum conubium (Lydi viri et Medae mulieris) Herodotus referret. Frustra ut opinor. Omne conubium per se mutuum est. Adde quod de Alyatte vel Croeso Medam uxorem ducente nihil innotuit».

Cobet's conjecture has been too readily dismissed or ignored. We have here an ἐπαλλαγή, an 'interchange',[1] not an ἀλλαγή, an 'exchange'; and that more than one marriage is being described is also shown by the joining of the plural γάμων with ἐπαλλαγή. Recognising that something was absent from the passage, W.W. How and J. Wells in *A Commentary on Herodotus* [I (1912), p. 94] suggested that, since no Median queen is known in Lydia, «the mutual element may have been furnished by Nebuchadnezzar's marriage with a Median princess» —here they refer to the report in Berosos (*F. Gr. Hist.* 680 F 7 c, d) of a marriage of Amyitis or Amyite, daughter of Astyages the Median ruler, to Nebuchadrezzar. However, a Lydo-Median marriage and a Medo-Babylonian marriage do not together constitute an interchange, and we are left with the conclusion that Cobet's recognition of lost words mentioning the second of the two marriages is correct: a Median princess married Alyattes or another member of the Lydian royal family. Herodotus insists upon the unusually binding character of the double arrangement with the repetition ἰσχυρῆς-ἰσχυραί. The argument from silence –that we hear nothing elsewhere about a marriage of a Median princess with a Lydian prince— is not compelling in view of the clear implications of the historian's choice of vocabulary in 1.74.4. It does not follow that the princess married Alyattes, but the Lydian king had at least two wives – one an Ionian, the mother of Pantaleon, and one a Karian, the mother of Kroisos (Herodotos 1.92.3. Plutarch, *De Pyth. Or.* 16.401E), and as a practitioner of Near Eastern diplomacy he was not precluded from taking an eastern wife in addition to western ones.

Herodotos emphasizes the significance of the treaty also in his mention of the royal negotiators who brought about a balance of power in Asia Minor. Syennesis is a throne name of Kilikian dynasts, and 'Labynetos' (if he was not, as D.J. Wiseman suggested, Nabonidus acting on behalf of Nebuchadrezzar)[2] is a mistake by Herodotos for Nebuchadrezzar, who in any case would have initiated the mediation between Lydia and Media.[3] Herodotos does not make clear that the war between Alyattes and Kyaxares continued into the reign of Astyages; but a commentary upon Alkaios (*P.Oxy.* 2506, fr. 98a, 14-17) shows that there was fighting between the armies of Alyattes and Astyages.[4] It may well be therefore that Astyages was already king of Media when the peace treaty ended the war and the interchange of brides was arranged.

1. Thus rendered in J.E. Powell, *A Lexicon to Herodotus* (²repr. Hildesheim 1966, originally Cambridge 1938), p. 127, s.v.

2. *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, London 1961, p. 39.

3. David Asheri, *Erodoto. Le Storie, Libro I*, Fondazione L. Valla 1988, p. 316 on 1.74.4.

4. For the use made of the Alkaian evidence in the chronography of Apollodoros see A.A. Mosshammer, *The* Chronicle *of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition*, Lewisburg 1979, pp. 270-272.

The frontiers of the Lydian empire in the time of Kroisos lay within the Halys (Herodotos 1.28). The Lydo-Median treaty had defined the frontier at the Halys in the time of Alyattes. The demarcation implied a concession on the part of Lydia, because the Lydians had a historic claim to territory in Cappadocia beyond the Halys: not only was the mother of Gyges, the founder of the Mermnad dynasty in Lydia, a woman of the Syroi of Cappadocia,[5] but also after the ruin of Phrygia in the Kimmerian incursions Lydia as the dominant power inherited Phrygian claims to territory beyond the Halys-Phrygian authority had extended as far east as Tyana.[6] With the Persian overthrow of Astyages, Lydian claims to territory east of the Halys could be revived, since the Lydo-Median treaty was in effect cancelled. It is to be noted that when Kroisos asked the Pythia about crossing the Halys, he asked about the consequences of his crossing, not about the rightness of his invading Cappadocia beyond the river.

In the treaty Lydia and Media confront each other as equals after an inconclusive but damaging war. There can be little doubt that Lydia in the time of Alyattes was an empire as that term is conventionally understood, even if the empire was not so powerful or so extensive as in the time of Kroisos. The long task of subjecting the Asiatic Greeks had begun in the time of Gyges (Herodotos 1.14.4). Alyattes took Smyrna and finally drove the Kimmerian remnant out of Lydian Asia Minor (Herodotos 1.16.2). His son Kroisos was established as a Viceroy at Adramytteion in the southern Troad (Nik.Dam., *F.Gr.Hist.* 90 F 65). The excavations at Sardis have revealed Lydian remains of the early sixth century B.C. worthy of an imperial capital, and burial mounds in the Hermos plain also testify to Lydian power under the Mermnadai. But if Lydia was imperial under Alyattes, so too was Media in the reigns of Kyaxares and Astyages. Media experienced strong monarchical government capable of directing an expensive war against a powerful neighbour, capable also of negotiating as an equal to secure a binding peace-treaty with that neighbour. Some scholars have denied that there was a genuine empire of the Medes,[7] but the Lydo-Median treaty described by Herodotos in 1.74.4 shows that in the time of Alyattes two empires confronted, and later came to reciprocal terms with, each other; and two marriages, one Medo-Lydian and one Lydo-Median, secured the treaty of peace between them.

5. Nikolaos of Damaskos, *F.Gr.Hist.* 90 F46 and 47.

6. For the text in Old Phrygian on the Black Stone of Tyana see Johannes Friedrich, *Kleinasiatische Sprachdenkmäler*, Berlin 1932, pp. 127-128, No. 19. Phrygian penetration into eastern Asia Minor before the Kimmerian invasions is discussed by R.D. Barnett in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, II 2 (1975), pp. 424-427, 433-434.

7. For defence of the concept of a Median empire see W.K. Pritchett, *The Liar School of Herodotos*, Amsterdam 1993, pp. 231-235 and W.J. Vogelsang, *The Rise and Organisation of the Achaemenid Empire. The Eastern Iranian Evidence*, Leiden 1992, pp. 112, 119, 177-179.