

PANHELLENISM IN HERODOTUS

BY

DONALD MITCHELL BERRY



A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

APRIL 1962

## ABSTRACT

of an M.A. Thesis

PANHELLENISM IN HERODOTUS

by

Donald Mitchell Berry

This thesis attempts to trace in the writing of Herodotus the growth of that solidarity and unity of purpose or national spirit among the Greeks which may be called panhellenism. The only indication of the attitude of Herodotus himself to this development is to be found in a few significant comments or characterizations which occur incidentally throughout the narrative. The histories written by Herodotus cover a period during which the Greeks were able, finally after many reverses, by common action, to repulse the Persian invasion of their own country and also to free the Ionian colonies on the coast of Asia Minor which had previously been subjugated by Lydian or Persian generals. It is the purpose of this thesis to follow, step by step, the emergence of panhellenism in this conflict.

The earliest indications of any serious desire for a united front appeared among the Ionians in the face of threatened subjugation by Darius. Several abortive efforts were made at resistance. The meetings held at the Panionion produced little result in this direction because the participants put most of their energy into more localized defensive efforts. The leadership for Greek resistance which might have been expected from the religious centres to which the Greeks habitually turned for advice in their troubles, notably the oracles at Branchidae and Delphi, was not forthcoming. The most promising material for

potential leadership was discovered in certain prominent individuals who, however, were unable to overcome the divisive tendencies existing among the various states.

The stimulus to national consciousness which might have been expected to be generated by Greek contact with other cultures was fostered in a positive way by Egypt which was influential just because it was friendly; and in an entirely different and negative way by Scythian hostility to Greek penetration.

Another influence which tended to encourage or provoke panhellenic feeling, either positively or negatively, was the imperialism of the tyrant of Samos who at various times fought against both Persians and Greeks. Just as threatened annexation by a foreign power could force the Greeks to make attempts to unite in their own defense, so the possibility of subjection at the hands of another Greek state produced the same reaction. The danger in both cases was the same - loss of autonomy - and this was sufficient to bring about defensive efforts.

The Ionian Revolt constituted a slightly more organized attempt to throw off the Persian yoke. But again, lack of solidarity resulted in failure and the panhellenic aspirations of the Ionians were extinguished in the naval defeat at Lade.

The sequel to this reverse was the attempt by Darius to subdue Greece itself. Further panhellenic resistance was merely sporadic until the massive and final expedition of Xerxes in his invasion of Greece. Conclusive victories ~~at~~<sup>at</sup> Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale proved to the Greeks that Persia was not invincible and thus made the resistance movement viable and insured its success.

The early efforts of far-sighted leaders like Themistocles were continually frustrated by the limited vision of most Greek states which were obsessed by considerations of their own separate territories. This explains why the propaganda tried by Themistocles at the drinking places in Euboea was almost without result. Nothing but a demonstration of success like that at Marathon seemed capable of counteracting these separatist tendencies. The failures at Thermopylae and Artemisium resulted in further loss of morale and the panhellenic idea made little headway before Themistocles proved at Salamis how successful it could be.

The final triumph of the allies at Mycale was a turning point in the development of panhellenism. Previously defensive and by no means universal, it assumed the offensive, proceeding to liberate whatever Greeks were still under the domination of Persia.

The sense of solidarity with which we are concerned, developed usually in response to an external stimulus, most often the pressure of foreign attack. The leadership which was necessary to carry it to success was found, not in the timid and medizing centres of religion, but in the courageous and patriotic policies of statesmen of the outstanding quality of Themistocles.

While panhellenism is not the theme of Herodotus' writing, it is seen to be a real factor in the events which he records and from a few significant passages it is possible to infer that he himself rejoiced to note any evidence that this was a guiding motive in the conduct of his heroes or the outcome of their policies.

## Table of Contents

Chapter		Page
I	Introduction	1
II	First Attempts at Joint Defense	5
III	Contact with Egyptian Culture	15
IV	Contact with Scythian Barbarism	20
V	Panhellenism and Imperialism	26
VI	The Ionian Revolt	31
VII	Marathon, Sequel of the Revolt	37
VIII	Failure at Thermopylae	43
IX	Success at Salamis	51
X	Triumph of Panhellenism	61
XI	Influence of Oracles	72
XII	Conclusion	78
	References	87
	Modern Works Consulted	103

For many helpful suggestions and  
valuable criticisms in preparing  
this thesis, the author wishes to  
express his indebtedness to  
Professor William Meredith Hugill,  
Professor of Latin and Greek.

## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The main theme of Herodotus' history, in the opinion of modern historians of Greece, like Bury, is the relationship between the Greeks and the oriental powers from the accession of Croesus to the capture of Sestos in 478 B.C.<sup>1</sup> For Herodotus, this relationship found expression in the contact and collision of two different types of civilization. Especially when he comes to relate the final struggle between Persia and Greece, the contrast between the slavery under the barbarians and the Greek aspiration for liberty is repeatedly stressed. The external theme is the political and military struggle, but there is also an inner meaning, the contest between Hellenic and oriental culture, between despotism and freedom.<sup>2</sup> Adolph Holm points out that this antithesis between East and West found its most marked expression in the wars of Darius and Xerxes against Greece and that therefore it is these wars which receive Herodotus' chief attention and constitute the climax of his work.<sup>3</sup> A more recent writer, N. G. L. Hammond, has this to say of the viewpoint of Herodotus:

As the central theme of the Persian wars, and therefore of his history, he took the clash between two cultures, or rather between two groups of cultures, Greek and non-Greek, and this comprehensive view enriched his treatment and understanding. In political terms, he saw the clash as one between the spirit of freedom and the exercise of despotism, and he fully realized the significance of the outcome for the future of the world.<sup>4</sup>

The capture of Sestos which concludes Herodotus' history and this phase of the war against Persia,<sup>5</sup> represented total victory for the

Greeks. It had been possible to drive off the invader and preserve the freedom of Greece only by united action. It was to Athens that the Greeks largely owed the growth of a national spirit, and Glover states that regardless of his attitude to party politics and his treatment of individuals like Themistocles, Herodotus was clear as to the supreme ~~an~~ achievement of Athens in arousing Greek resistance by withstanding Xerxes.<sup>6</sup> By the time his work was published, Athens had become the rallying point of every Greek who was conscious of antagonism to Persia.<sup>7</sup>

Was the attitude of Herodotus himself a panhellenic one? The authors cited above seem to suggest that he recognized both the need of a Greek sense of solidarity to beat off the Persians and the contribution of Athens in bringing this feeling into being. Grote goes even further and states that the panhellenic participation of Athens was strongly attested by Herodotus and praised as the course which he himself approved.<sup>8</sup> The evidence of Herodotus' own life furnishes additional grounds for believing that he had at least some interest in this cause, for later in life he migrated to Thurii in Italy, where a panhellenic colony was being founded under the auspices of Athens.<sup>9</sup>

The purpose of this investigation is to find, in the writings of Herodotus, evidence of the growth of a Greek national spirit and to attempt to evaluate his own appreciation of this sense of solidarity. Some of the first centres in which one would expect to find encouragement for the emerging spirit of panhellenism were the institutions of the common religion, especially the oracle at Delphi in Phocis. This shrine was consulted by Greeks from many states and was in fact a monument to group effort. When the temple there was to be rebuilt in 548 B.C., the

Amphictyons were able to collect throughout Greece funds amounting to 300 talents.<sup>10</sup> But the role played by this oracle in the struggle against Persia proved contrary to expectations and the Authors Parke and Warmell have this to say about its policies:

The Pythia did not need to commit herself on the issue of the Marathon campaign. Greece, however, was soon threatened by Xerxes' great land and sea expedition; not like Marathon, a mere punitive raid against a couple of states that had offended the great King, but a systematic campaign of conquest and ~~of~~ annexation. Delphi, as we have seen, had always, since Croesus' fall, avoided giving advice to resist Persia. This policy was maintained even in the face of a direct attack, which, if successful, would have meant the permanent incorporation of Delphi in the Persian empire. In continuing to follow this weak line, Delphi was acting in accord with most of the states of North Greece, which formed together the majority in the Amphictyony. These northern Greeks knew that it would be impossible to induce the armies of the Peloponnese to march in full force for the defence of their land. To protect them, nothing less would be of any use. So Thesaly and her hinterland medized immediately on the approach of Xerxes. Also even in Sparta the defeat of Cleomenes had removed the last person who could induce Delphi to support the Hellenic cause. Hence Delphi consistently discouraged effective resistance to Persia.<sup>11</sup>

The contact between Greek culture and that of another country with quite different customs like Egypt which Herodotus describes at considerable length, might be expected to produce a sense of something distinctively Greek. The encounter with the more primitive Scythian culture did in fact result in sharper friction. And here the consciousness of Greek difference and superiority is more apparent. The recognition of such common characteristic differences is a contributing factor in the realization of panhellenism.

The pressure of foreign invasion by Persia, first against Ionia and later mainland Greece, was a more potent force in drawing the Greeks together. In this attempt to ward off attack, certain states and individuals were inevitably conspicuous. Here one immediately thinks of Athens, which came to be regarded as the headquarters of Greek resistance, and of Themistocles who was the most notable leader of the Athenians.<sup>12</sup>

Because the first attempts at Greek resistance to Persia arose among the Ionians, the earliest tendencies to unity there will be examined at the beginning of this study. The effects produced upon Greek feeling by contact with Egypt on the one hand and Scythia on the other will be discussed in the following two chapters. Greek reaction to the imperialism of Polycrates of Samos is considered next. The first serious general movement in the direction of panhellenism, known as the Ionian Revolt, is the subject of Chapter VI. The crushing by Persia of this revolt was followed by an unsuccessful invasion of Greece itself by Darius and an attempt is made to assess the repercussions from this invasion. The following three chapters are concerned respectively with Xerxes' invasion of Greece up to the Battle of Thermopylae, the reversal of his fortunes at Salamis, and third, the final triumph of the Greeks at Plataea and Mycale. Because of the great importance of religious institutions, and especially oracles, in Greek life, a separate chapter is devoted to examining their role in the development of panhellenism.

The sequence of topics followed in this order in this essay is closely parallel to the order of events in the narrative of Herodotus. It is also the order which marks the progressive growth of panhellenism from symptoms scarcely identified as such to its final realization as a successful policy.

## CHAPTER II

## FIRST ATTEMPTS AT JOINT DEFENSE

In the first book of his History, Herodotus describes the Persian subjugation of the Ionian Greek cities, which were conquered one after another by the generals of Cyrus. However, in the story of their futile efforts to resist separately, there were some indications that they realized the need of united action and of national leadership. In neither of these cases were they successful, but the attempts they made are interesting, both for what they reveal about Greek politics and also because Herodotus thinks them significant enough to mention.

Community of interest, primarily religious, among the Ionian cities, had resulted in the organization of the Panionion. It was a sacred precinct in Mycale, facing the north and set aside for Poseidon of Helicon by the joint will of the Ionians. Twelve Ionian cities founded the Panionion and assembled there for the purpose of celebrating the festival of the Panionia.<sup>1</sup> These cities were: Miletus, <sup>Myos</sup>~~Myasa~~, and Priene, cities of Caria; Ephesus, Colophon, Lebedos, Teos, Clazomenae, and Phocaea, all of which were in Lydia; Erythrae, on the mainland opposite the island of Chios, and finally two cities situated on the islands of Chios and Lesbos.<sup>2</sup> Only these twelve cities which founded the Panionion, and no others, were permitted to use it.<sup>3</sup>

The twelve Ionian cities, which participated in the festival at the Panionion, also used it as a place of refuge when they were threatened by foreign attack. After Cyrus subdued the Lydians, the Ionians

offered to be his subjects on the same terms as they had been subjects of Croesus. Cyrus rejected this proposal. Then the Ionians fortified themselves in their cities and assembled in the Panionion, except for the Milesians, who made a treaty with Cyrus.<sup>4</sup> The only definite result of this assembly was a resolution to send envoys to Sparta, in the name of all, to ask for help for the Ionians.<sup>5</sup>

The assembly at the Panionion, then, did not result in much political solidarity among the Ionians. In the face of Persian aggression, the Milesians defected from the Panionion and made a separate treaty with Cyrus.<sup>6</sup> They had previously resisted the invasion of their country by the Lydian Alyattes, the father of Croesus. It was Croesus who, misinterpreting the Delphic oracle, attacked Persia. Perhaps it was because the Milesians had fought successfully against the Lydians that Cyrus was willing to make a separate treaty with them.<sup>7</sup> This treaty tended to undermine the morale of the other cities. Though assembling at the Panionion, the Ionians fortified their cities severally with walls. This action shows that each city considered its own interests first and the general safety second, or at least that they did not have sufficient faith in the security of the Panionion as a centre of successful common action and so did not put forth their full effort to make it succeed.

Two other plans for common action were proposed to the Ionians, possibly when they assembled at the Panionion in the face of threats from Cyrus.<sup>8</sup> Before the subjugation of Ionia, Thales of Miletus had made a suggestion which Herodotus judged good.<sup>9</sup> Thales advised the Ionians to establish one common "bouleuterion" at Teos, one of the twelve cities, located north of Lebedos and south of Clazomenae. Teos was almost in the

centre of Ionia. A strong central authority should be set up there and the other cities regarded only as demes. This plan was not adopted. The cities were not willing to give up any of their independence for the common interest.

Thales, who suggested the plan, came from Miletus, a city which by making its separate treaty with Cyrus, showed that it was willing ~~to~~ to abandon the others in order to insure its own safety. Thales' proposal may have been prompted by disapproval of the defeatist policy of his own city.

A more radical plan was suggested by Bias of Priene after the subjugation of the Ionians. He advised them to put out to sea, sail all together to Sardinia, and there found one city for all the Ionians.<sup>10</sup> Sardinia was, he suggested, the greatest island in the world. Were they to settle there, they could rule others, be freed from slavery, and win prosperity. Bias saw no hope of freedom for them if they stayed in Ionia.

This plan may have seemed to Bias the only useful course of action left after the loss of his own and the other Ionian cities to the Persians. It was by this time impossible to carry out the advice given by Thales. Bias himself came from Priene, just north of Miletus. The people of Priene had been enslaved by the Persians. It was natural for Bias to suppose that emigration provided the only means to escape the same fate.

The Phocaeans had adopted this policy when their city was attacked by Harpagus. They first sailed to Chios, but, on being unable to purchase the islands of Oenussae from the Chians, they made ready to sail to Cynus (the ancient name for Corsica). Twenty years before this,

they had, at the command of an oracle, established a city called Alalia on Cynus.<sup>11</sup> Half the citizens sailed back to Phocaea, but the others went to Cynus from the Oenussae. The plan which Bias suggested was not a new idea and its feasibility had been demonstrated by many prosperous Greek colonies founded from their mother cities. But it was not adopted. Perhaps the suggestion came too late.

Herodotus commends the plan of emigration advocated by Bias. He states that if the Ionians had followed this very useful advice, they might have become the most prosperous of all Greeks.<sup>12</sup> Indeed Herodotus himself followed the same course of action when he went as a colonist to Thurii in Italy where a panhellenic colony was being founded.<sup>13</sup>

When effective efforts for self-defense by common action were not forthcoming through lack of strength or lack of determination, the natural alternative was to seek leadership and protection from elsewhere. After Cyrus refused to accept them as subjects on the same terms as they had enjoyed under Croesus, the Ionians assembled at the Panionion resolved to ask for aid from Sparta. The envoys of the Ionians and Aeolians came to Sparta and Pythermos, the Phocaeen, spoke for all. But the Spartans would not listen and refused to aid the Ionians.<sup>14</sup>

The Spartans may have felt that it was futile to send aid against so strong a power as Persia. The Ionian cities were too far away for the Spartans to be vitally interested in them, and Sparta was more interested in maintaining its own hegemony in Greece.

However, as an afterthought, envoys were sent from Sparta in a ship from Ionia. They landed at Phocaea and sent Lacrines to Sardis to issue a manifesto to Cyrus that he must not harm any Greek city of the

mainland, for they would not allow it.<sup>15</sup> This action showed that they had some measure of sympathy with the Ionians, but were unwilling or unable to make a serious effort to help them.

Cyrus replied to the Spartan proclamation with contempt. He said to the Spartan herald, "I never yet feared men who have a place set apart in the midst of their city where they perjure themselves and deceive each other."<sup>16</sup> The reference was to Greek market-places, which represented commercialism and a disinclination for action. People who spent much of their time haggling and debating in the market-place were likely to be inefficient in action. Cyrus implied that because of these customs he had nothing to fear from the Greeks. His assumption seemed to be justified by the failure of the Ionians to organize any effective resistance against him.

The vivid story of Cyrus' reception of the Spartan embassy and his dramatic quotation of Cyrus scornful reply may imply a certain sympathy on the part of Herodotus for Cyrus' point of view. It is true that in this emergency the Spartans did nothing but talk and try to bluff. In some other comparisons which Herodotus makes of Greeks and Persians in this book, the Greeks may seem to come off second best. The Persians, he says, have never believed the gods to be in the likeness of men as do the Greeks.<sup>17</sup> The religion of the Persians did not lead them to set up statues, temples, and altars, but they believed those who did so to be foolish. The Greeks had an anthropomorphic religion. It was from the Greeks, furthermore, according to Herodotus, that the Persians learned unnatural sexual practices.<sup>18</sup>

When the Ionians did appeal for help, why was it to Sparta that

the appeal was directed? They evidently felt that Sparta was the natural leader of Greece. Croesus, when he intended to march against Cyrus, was advised by the Delphic oracle to discover the mightiest of the Greeks and make them his allies.<sup>19</sup> By the most careful inquiry he learned that the Spartans were the leaders of Hellas, and then made an alliance with them.<sup>20</sup> In this story Herodotus has explained the reason for the Ionian appeal to Sparta by showing that the Spartans were generally considered the leaders of Greece.

The oracle at Branchidae was another source from which advice was sought by the Ionians in the face of Persian demands. Branchidae was located in the territory of Miletus above the harbour of Panormus. Herodotus states that this was an ancient place of divination which all the Ionians and Aeolians were wont to consult.<sup>21</sup> The attitude of this oracle toward the Greek resistance to Persian expansion is an interesting one.

After Cyrus subdued Lydia and marched away from Sardis, Pactyes caused the Lydians to revolt from Tabalus, the Persian to whom Cyrus had entrusted Sardis. Pactyes, who held all the gold of Sardis, went down to the sea and hired men of the coast for his army. He marched to Sardis, penned Tabalus in the citadel, and besieged him there.<sup>22</sup> Cyrus, on the advice of Croesus who wished to save the rest of the Lydians, ordered Mazares, a Mede, to forbid the Lydians to possess weapons of war, to enslave those who had joined them in attacking Sardis, and to bring Pactyes alive into his presence.<sup>23</sup>

Pactyes, learning that a formidable army was marching against him, fled to Cyme, but Mazares sent messengers there to demand his

surrender. At this, the Cymaeans decided to make the oracle at Branchidae their judge as to whether they should surrender Pactyes.<sup>24</sup> They indicated a desire to shift the responsibility for their action, whatever it might be. The oracle ordered them to hand over Pactyes to the Persians, but Aristodicus, one of their notable citizens, suspecting that the report was inaccurate, since he did not agree with the response, held them from surrendering Pactyes and went with a second group to Branchidae.<sup>25</sup> The god again gave the same answer. Then Aristodicus went around the temple, removing the birds and nestlings from their nests. On being rebuked by the oracle, he asked why the god saved his own suppliants, but ordered the men of Cyme to give up theirs. The oracle replied that he did so in order that the Cymaeans might perish for their impiety and never again consult an oracle about the giving up of suppliants.<sup>26</sup>

More than one interpretation of the oracle's advice is possible. It may have considered that the Persians were likely to win and that, therefore, it should not jeopardize its own position by supporting a lost cause. The oracle may have honestly felt that it would be best for the men of Cyme to surrender Pactyes and make the best terms they could with Cyrus. This seems the more likely view.

It is, however, possible that the oracle took a more rigid view of right and wrong and considered it an impiety even to entertain the question of surrendering a suppliant. If this is true, it had to justify its first answer that Pactyes should be surrendered which we are assuming it did not think right. This interpretation may be inferred from the final answer that anyone who even contemplated the surrender of a suppliant should perish. This tenuous reasoning by inference is difficult

to credit because it depends upon giving an oracle an even more equivocal meaning than usual. There is no other evidence of courageous championship of the Greek cause by the oracle at Branchidae. The more obvious interpretation, therefore, is the more likely.

Taking the view, then, that the oracle at Branchidae wished to protect itself in case of a Persian victory or that discretion was the better part of valour, one sees that its effect was to discourage unity among the Greeks in their desire to defend their independence. It advised them to hand over a suppliant to an enemy, an action which would be regarded ordinarily as unjust and would tend to destroy mutual trust among the Greeks. The story which Herodotus tells shows that when the oracle disappointed the hopes of those who looked to it for encouragement of their national aspirations, Aristodicus took the initiative and attempted to instil into his fellow-countrymen the spirit of resistance to the aggressor. It was in keeping with this policy that he tried to force the oracle to change from a pro-Persian to a pro-Greek position.

The Ionians sought leadership also from the Delphic oracle. Herodotus has made it clear that even as far away as Sardis, Croesus recognized the Delphic oracle as one of the chief religious centres of the world, and appealed to it when the fate of his kingdom was in question.<sup>27</sup> Much more natural than that a Greek city should seek its advice in time of peril. The oracle could have done much to encourage the growth of a national spirit, for many nations of the Greeks were in the habit of consulting it. In Book I, Herodotus shows the effect which the oracle's response had on the Cnidians, colonists from Lacedaemon. Their city, situated on a long peninsula of Caria, just north of the island of Syme,

was almost completely sea-girt. When Harpagus was subduing Ionia, the Cnidians started to dig a trench so that their territory would be completely an island and therefore better protected. However, when many unnatural injuries were suffered by the workmen, especially injuries to the eyes caused by breaking stones, the Cnidians sent messengers to Delphi to inquire what hindered them. The oracle ordered them to stop digging, saying that Zeus did not wish their country to be an island. They did cease from their digging and surrendered to Harpagus when he came.<sup>28</sup>

Clearly the Delphic oracle here failed to encourage Greek solidarity, though perhaps this was a policy of prudence. It may have thought that futile Ionian resistance must inevitably be overwhelmed by superior Persian power and that it was in the interest of the Ionian cities themselves to make the best possible terms with Persia. But it discouraged the Cnidians, fellow-Greeks, from defending themselves against the Persian invaders. The reply destroyed the morale of the Cnidians so that they surrendered to the Persians without resistance.

In the first critical conflict between Greek cities and Persia - and this is to be the main leading theme of the history of Herodotus - the Greeks were overwhelmed as was to be expected, and this apparently was expected by the oracles at Branchidae and Delphi, but even in the first round of the great conflict, we have noted evidence of a will to resist and a quest for leadership in this resistance. The Panionion was a step in the right direction, but its possibilities were not realized. The oracles at Branchidae and Delphi, perhaps from prudential motives, discouraged abortive attempts by fellow-Greeks to resist the barbarians.

Potential leadership existed in certain individuals like Aristodicus, Bias, and Thales, but the divisive tendencies among the various states were too great for them to overcome.