

Historiography as Translation: Persian Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC) in Classical Greek Histories¹

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Abstract

Historiography, the writing of history, is thought of as translation of facts into narrative fictions. The translational nature of historiography holds more tenable when historians engage in writing the history of other cultures in their own native language. Some historians also, like cultural anthropologists, engage in cultural translation, since they usually not only travel and use translation to gather their raw material, but also translate the cultural practices of land they are writing its history. Relying on Asad's (2018) view of cultural anthropology and narrativist historians and in the light of a transdisciplinary view of translation, the present article seeks to show how Greek historiography can be assumed as a translational practice. Second, it aims to explore the translational character of the three leading Classical Greek historians of ancient Persia, Herodotus, Ctesias and Xenophon, and seeks to show how the historiography of the Persian Achaemenid empire is folded through translation, not only in ancient era, but also in modern times, through (re)translations of these so-called primary sources.

Keywords: Cultural translation, Greek historiography, narrativist philosophy of history, Persian Achaemenid empire, transdisciplinarity, translational practice

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Introduction

Translation, as a conceptual and operative tool, has become “a fecund and frequent metaphor for our contemporary intercultural world” (Arduini and Siri Nergaard, 2011, p. 8) which keeps enlarging its definition and role along with epistemological transformations in Humanities. Today, such narrow and text-centric definitions of translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (Catford, 1965, p. 20; cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, p. 181) can no longer catch up with the current roles and representations of translation. Interestingly, scholars outside Translation Studies have been using translation as a conceptual metaphor to speculate about the epistemological status of their scholarly fields (e.g., anthropology, psychoanalysis, history writing and cultural studies), so that humanities are believed to witness a “translation turn” (Arduini and Siri Nergaard, 2011, p. 8). In the introduction to their Journal, *Translation*, Arduini and Siri Nergaard (2011) introduce the term “post-translation studies” to take account of new kinds of translational texts and phenomena and invite translation scholars to go beyond disciplinary borders of Translation Studies. They hold that: “We invite original thinking about what translation is today and where translation occurs. [...] We propose the inauguration of a transdisciplinary research field with translation as an interpretive as well as operative tool.” (p. 8). They attempt to enhance thinking of translation as a “multiple transdisciplinary concept” (p. 10) in the light of “fragmented, hybrid nature of cultures and texts” (p. 12). In 2017, Gentzler further advocated this transdisciplinary view of translation and suggested that “the field open itself to investigations of translation from outside the discipline” (p. 1). He held that: “Research on translational phenomena need not be inscribed within a single discipline. Rather, translation phenomena appear in all languages, major and minor discourses, and in many forms of communication, not just written texts.” (p. 1)

Among the neighboring fields to TS, is historiography which has always used translation, both as a conceptual metaphor and an operative tool. On the one hand, as stated by Payas (2004, p. 544), “historians and anthropologists sometimes need to translate or to use translations in order to have access to sources written in other

languages." On the other hand, translation scholars have also been engaged in exploring the history of translations and translators in various times and places. However, As Foz (2006) states, despite the reciprocal ties between the two disciplines, "the use of translation by historians has long been considered "normal" and "natural," while translators studying the history of their profession are in general careful not to identify themselves as historians" (p. 131).

In the Iranian academia, historical studies on translation is a burgeoning field which was developed in response to the need to build a body of indigenous knowledge about translations and translators in Iran and was advocated by scholars such as Farahzad (2016) who conducted a large-scale research project on Iranian women translators in contemporary history. The present study, inspired by such academic milieu, seeks to speculate how historiography can be assumed as translation. It focuses on Classical Greek historiography (ca. 500–320 BC) on the Persian Achaemenid empire (550–330 BC), since with the exception of the trilingual Darius *Bisotun* inscription and some Neo-Babylonian inscriptions (e.g., the Cyrus Cylinder, Nabonidus Chronicle, etc.) no indigenous written narrative account is left from the early Achaemenid empire (e.g., see Lecoq, 1997/2010). Thus, what is known about this empire, largely comes from the Classical Greek historical accounts and their modern translations. To this end, the present article proceeds at two levels. First, it will explore the role of translation in the birth and development of ancient Greek historiography. Second, it will analyze three historical works of three leading Classical Greek historians of the Persian Achaemenid empire (550–330 BC): *The Histories* written by Herodotus (ca. 484–425 BC), *The Persica* by Ctesias (5th century BC) and *Cyropaedia* by Xenophon (ca. 430–355/4 BC). All three historians were contemporaries of the Achaemenid Empire and are, hence, counted as the primary sources of the Achaemenid Empire. Attempt will be made to see how these historians can be counted as historians and how they used translation to write their historical accounts.

Review of Literature

Since the 1970s, in the light of deconstructive theories of language and meaning, there has been a resurgence of interest in the textual and rhetorical nature

of history writing among some philosophers of history, who are commonly referred to as *narrativists* or adherents of *linguistic turn* in historical studies (e.g., White, 1973, 1974; Ankersmit, 1994; Munslow, 1997, 2000). It was in White's (1973) landmark book, *Metahistory*, that this linguistic turn announced itself unequivocally. Stressing the literary and narrative nature of history, White (1974) thought of historical works as "translations of fact into fictions" (p. 88) and compared the historical past to a text (Ankersmit, 1994, p. 64; Munslow, 2009, p. 152). Following White (1973), there emerged a vast body of literature which highlighted the narrative, textual and translational character of history (e.g., Jenkins, 1991/2003, 2009; Munslow, 1997, 2000, 2013; Zagorin, 2009; Burke, 2013). Comparing history writing to translation, Hernadi (1976) holds that

The historian tends to see his evidence as mainly consisting of original texts. *Yet all documents at his disposal, as well as the very work he is engaged in writing, are translations in this enhanced sense of the word: they are verbal accounts of the largely nonverbal fabric of historical events. To the extent that the historian succeeds in communicating "thoughts, things, and images" as "words, names, and signs," he translates-from the idiom of events, forever past, into the idiom of continually present discourse. All histories of France, for example, may be considered partial translations-based on the even more partial translations making up the documentary evidence-of that lost original, the History of France.*

Hernadi undermines the status of historical documents as original writing and sees them as translations. Likewise, Munslow (1997, p. 48) points out:

Historical evidence is turned into "facts" through the narrative interpretations of historians. *History is indeed a process of translating evidence into facts. As such, "facts" are never innocent, as they are invested with meaning in the process of contextualization undertaken by the historian within the larger process of interpretation. (emphasis added).*

In quite a similar vein, Ankersmit (1994) states:

Just like a text, the past possesses a meaning that we are trying to discover, it needs interpretation, and consists of lexical, grammatical, syntactical, and semantic elements. Therefore, *what the historian essentially does is translate*

the text of the past into the narrative text of the historian (emphasis added) (p. 64).

In a radical assertion on the relation between translation and history, Burke (2007, as cited in Sales, 2019, p. 7) metaphorizes translation and history as follows:

[I]f the past is a foreign country, it follows that even *the most monoglot of historians is a translator*. Historians mediate between the past and the present and face the same dilemmas as other translators, serving two masters and attempting to reconcile fidelity to the original with intelligibility to their readers (emphasis added).

Narrativist historians strongly hold that there is no single authentic historical narrative of a certain past just as translation scholars believe there is no single translation of any source text. The past is a lost source text for which there can be an endless host of translations. Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest that the narrativist historians accord with the idea of history as a translational episteme; - the past, which is now considered "a text", is translated according to the historian's interpretive and ideological frame of mind and the discourse of the time.

The idea of historiography as translation proves even more sound when historians write not the history of their own land, but that of another land or culture, e.g., when Greek historians wrote the history of the Persian people. Such historians, like translators, act as inter/cross cultural mediators and agents; they translate, in a metaphoric sense, the past of another culture into their own language. Further, in order to collect their data, they might travel and engage themselves in eye and ear witness observations and use translation to communicate with local informants.

Some intercultural historians, just like cultural anthropologists, might translate the cultural practices of a society in their own language, just like what the Greek historians did for writing the history of Persia. Alongside, writing the history, they provide ethnographic details of the peoples they are writing their history. Asad (2018) resembles culture to a text and thus considers cultural anthropology as a sort of translation. Asad (2018) defines cultural anthropology as a type of inter-semiotic translation, as defined by Jakobson (1959/2012), and asserts that:

Cultivated practices of the self are not (necessarily) nonverbal sign systems— that is, carriers of meaning— although they can be meaningfully described as translations. They are, for the subject, ways of learning how to live in a given tradition. That is to say, discursive tradition is not merely a verbal process; it is also and primarily an implicit continuity embodied in habit, feeling, and behavior that one acquires as a member of a shared way of life that is translated from one time to another. (p. 6)

Greek Historiography: Translating *Others*

According to Burrow (2007), history as “the elaborated, secular, prose narrative (all these qualifications are necessary) of public events, based on inquiry— was born, we can claim with confidence, in Greece between roughly 450 and 430 BC” (p. 1)¹. However, there were “proto-forms” of history in the form of royal annals in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia since the late 4th and early 3rd millennium BC² (Burrow, 2007, p. 1; de Blois and van der Spek, 2019, p. 9).

Broadly speaking, the writing of history in ancient Greece was a progressive process, from the mythography of Homer in the 8th century and of Hesiod in the 7th century BC to the cosmography of the Pre-Socratics in the 6th century BC and finally to the historiography of Herodotus in the 5th century BC (see Cartledge, 1997; Hartog, 2002). Prior to history writing, epics were counted as the reliable records of the past among the Greeks, and even after the invention of historiography, mythic epics were still preferred to look back at their distant past (Marincola, 2007, p. 15; Breisach, 1994, p. 6; Said, 2007, p. 80).

With the establishment of the Greek *polis* and urban social stability in the mid-8th century BC, the Greeks gradually began to shift their attention from the concern for a mythic and distant past to the critical reflection over present time and the origin and substance of the physical world (Copleston, 1993, pp. 22–25).

Being equipped with rational reflection and personal observation (autopsy) inherited from the early Greek philosophers known as the Pre-Socratics, the early

1. For a review on pre-Greek historical traditions, see Hartog, 2002, Burrow, 2007.

2. For a collection of these texts, see Pritchard (1969) *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament*.

historians replaced the concern over the distant mythic past, populated by gods, goddesses and heroes, with a fresh concern over a near past for which first-hand visual information could be found. Interestingly, a glance at the etymology of the concept history yields a more vivid picture of the Greek historians' passion for writing history based on eye and ear witness. Darbo-Peschanski (2007) believes that the Greek noun 'histor' derives from:

the root 'wid' meaning "see" and which also gives the verb oida, "I know." Just as history means "the one who knows because he has seen" (Benveniste 1948:29, 32, 35, 51), so historie would be, or would prepare one for, a knowledge founded more specifically on visual observation. (p. 29)

History, thus, means knowledge acquired by seeing, by personal observation. It is in fact Herodotus who first used the word *Histories* for his account (Burrow, 2007, p. 4; Cartledge, 1997, p. 20).

Since the late Greek Dark Age (ca. 1100–750 BC), due to emigration of the Greeks to sites around the Mediterranean and Black Sea, the Greeks began to face Eastern peoples (see Cartledge, 1997, p. 23; Cavendish, 2011, p. 40). Encountering the cultural *others*, the Greeks came to perceive their own Greek *selves*. They distinguished themselves as a united ethno-cultural group against all the non-Greek speaking peoples whom they called *barbarians* (see Cartledge, 1997). The Greeks, anthropologically speaking, turned to translate the *others* to distinguish their own selves, a process which is commonly called "othering" in the scholarship on travel writing (e.g., see Polezzi, 2001, p. 81; Thompson, 2011, p. 132). Othering entails the act of travelling which in turn, at least when traveling into other countries and cultures, implies some form of translation (see Polezzi, 2001, p. 177; Bassnett, 2008). Bassnett (2008) resembles travel writing to translation in that both must have a source text to rely on: "Without that source in that other language, a translation would be a piece of original writing. Similarly, without the journey, a travel account would be simply a piece of fiction" (p. 70). Similarly, Greek

historians based their accounts on the travels they made to the Persian Empire so as to win authenticity and reception among their audience.

Informed by their own epistemological views and stirred by cultural contacts with the Eastern peoples, the Greeks usually travelled to other lands in order to collect various cultural, ethnographic and geographical information and then translated their observations and inquiries into Greek for their readers. So the Greek historiography, at least in anthropological terms, was a translational practice which was born out of the Greek cross-cultural encounters with the East; the Greeks initially began to write history by translating other cultures. Works of Hecataeus and Herodotus, who first traveled and translated Eastern cultures and then produced their histories, bear the best testimonies.

Greek Historians of the Achaemenid Empire

Among the Eastern cultures, it was the Persian Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC) which immensely grasped the Greeks' attention. The Greco-Persian Wars of 499 and 480–479 BC, the so-called 'the Great Event' (Drews, 1973), immensely provoked the literary and artistic creation curiosity of the Greeks (e.g., the Aeschylus wrote the play, *The Persians*, in 472 BC (Nicolai, 2007, p. 20). Lenfant (2007) asserts that: "Perhaps no foreign people had more detailed histories written about themselves by the ancient Greeks than the Persians" (p. 199). This serious attention and interest lead to the emergence of a specific historical genre on Persia known as *Persica* in the fifth and fourth century BC during the time of the Achaemenid empire (for a review of the *Persicas*, see Lenfant, 2007).

Herodotus of Halicarnassus, referred to as 'the Father of History', or *pater historiae*, by Cicero (106–43 B.C.), Ctesias of Cnidus, the author of the most enticing *Persica* written in the 5th century BC, and Xenophon of Athens, the author of two important accounts of the Achaemenid dynasty, *Anabasis* and *Cyropaedia*, (*Education of Cyrus*), are the three Classical primary historians of the Achaemenid

empire to date, all of whom lived during the Achaemenid Period. The three historians best epitomize the idea of *historian as translator*.

First, they all travelled, albeit in varied ways, to and around the Persian Empire to write their histories. Born during the Persian Wars in the mid-480s BC in Halicarnassus (now Bodrum, Turkey), Herodotus travelled extensively within the Persian Empire (see Drews, 1973, p. 20; Robert, 2011, p. 25). Ctesias of Cnidus travelled to Persia, either willingly or as a war captive, and served first as the physician and then a diplomat-translator at the Artaxerxes II's court for nearly 17 years (Llewellyn-Jones, 2010, pp. 10–15). Finally, Xenophon was an Athenian soldier-philosopher, a disciple of Socrates, who joined the Greek mercenary army of the prince Cyrus the Younger against his brother, the king Artaxerxes II, to usurp the throne in the Battle of Cunaxa (401 BC) (Tamiolaki, 2017, pp. 174–178). Thus the three historians could not have composed their historical accounts, had they not travelled within the Persian empire and found access to the available oral traditions and/or royal archives through translation, interpretation and personal observation. Even if they were conversant in the Persian language, as Ctesias must have been, the very process of transferring the information they collected into Greek language is an undeniable act of interlingual translation.

Second, they all provide various cultural and ethnographic descriptions of the Persian people. Among them, Herodotus stands out; beyond describing the Persian wars, in his magnum opus, *The Histories*, Herodotus also provided intriguing descriptions of the customs, dress, burials, manners and morals of those peoples the Persian Empire subdued or made war against; i.e., the Lydians, the Egyptians, Scythians, the Babylonians, the Massagetae, etc. Indeed, a vast body of scholarship count *The Histories* as one of the earliest ancient ethnographic texts (e.g., Lateiner, 2004; Roberts, 2011; Sheehan, 2018). His account, which, based on Asad (2018), is a cultural translation, is replete with amazing ethnographic

descriptions (e.g., see: *The Histories*, 1: 131–140 on the Persians; 1: 181–182, 194–200 on the Babylonians; 1: 215 on the Massagetai; and 2: 35–42 on the Egyptians¹). Ctesias wrote his *Persica* in 13 volumes, only fragments of which survives. Unlike *The Histories*, which is a political, cultural and ethnographic account, Ctesias' *Persica* has been called a "Court History" (Llewellyn-Jones, 2010, p. 66). He relates legendary tales of ancient Near Eastern Empires of the Assyria, Media and Persia. He reports on the Persian court life in Books 7–11 and presents invaluable depictions on the Persian royal customs (e.g., royal ceremonies, sacrifices, omens, marriage patterns, etc.) which might have a kernel of truth, although harshly attacked as being orientalist (Briant, 2002, as cited in Robson, 2010, p. 81). *Cyropaedia*, the lengthiest and the most controversial among Xenophon's oeuvre, is difficult to be classified in terms of genres of biography and encomium, historiography, fiction and novel or political treatise (Tamiolaki, 2017, p. 18). It is basically anchored on the political concept of an ideal ruler. Xenophon mainly seeks to portray an ideal ruler as someone who comes to power through righteousness, military prudence, toil and discipline, and, more importantly, the willing obedience of his subjects. For him, Cyrus II, the founder of the great Achaemenid empire best embodied these qualities, since "Cyrus the Persian [...] who won for himself obedience from thousands of his fellows, from cities and tribes innumerable." (*Cyropaedia*, 1: 1). Throughout his account of the life of Cyrus, he touches on Persian cultural practices and customs too (e.g., see *Cyropaedia*, 1: 2 (2, 5, 6, 9); 1: 2 (15); 8: 13).

On the basis of their interviews and personal observations, these historians acted as field workers and gathered the available oral traditions from local informants about the Persian past and present affairs. Herodotus claims to have interviewed with mainly Egyptian and Babylonian priests, Lybians and Lydians as

1. As *The Histories* consists of 9 books, each having multiple chapters, these numbers refer to the number of related books and chapters.

his local informants. Given that he could speak only Greek (Kuhrt, 2002, pp. 481–2), translation was an inevitable data-gathering tool. Ctesias lived in proximity with the Persian royal family and must have known Persian language. He received his information from the courtiers, including the eunuchs, cooks, translators, etc. (Drews, 1973). But, as claimed by himself, he was a confidant of the Queen Mother, Parysatis, and had access to Royal archives too. Finally, although the fictional character of *Cyropaedia* has been affirmed more than its historical authenticity, Xenophon, nevertheless relies on “previous authors who had also treated the life of Cyrus, including Herodotus, Ctesias, and Antisthenes, as well as on Persian oral tradition, to which he was exposed during his participation in the expedition of Cyrus the Younger” (Tamiolaki, 2017, p. 174).

Based on the above discussion, Figure 1 offers a schematic view of the way Greek historians found access to their Persian source texts and produced their final target texts. It’s worthy to mention that using ‘text’ for the concept of ‘past’ is inspired by the narrativist view of history.

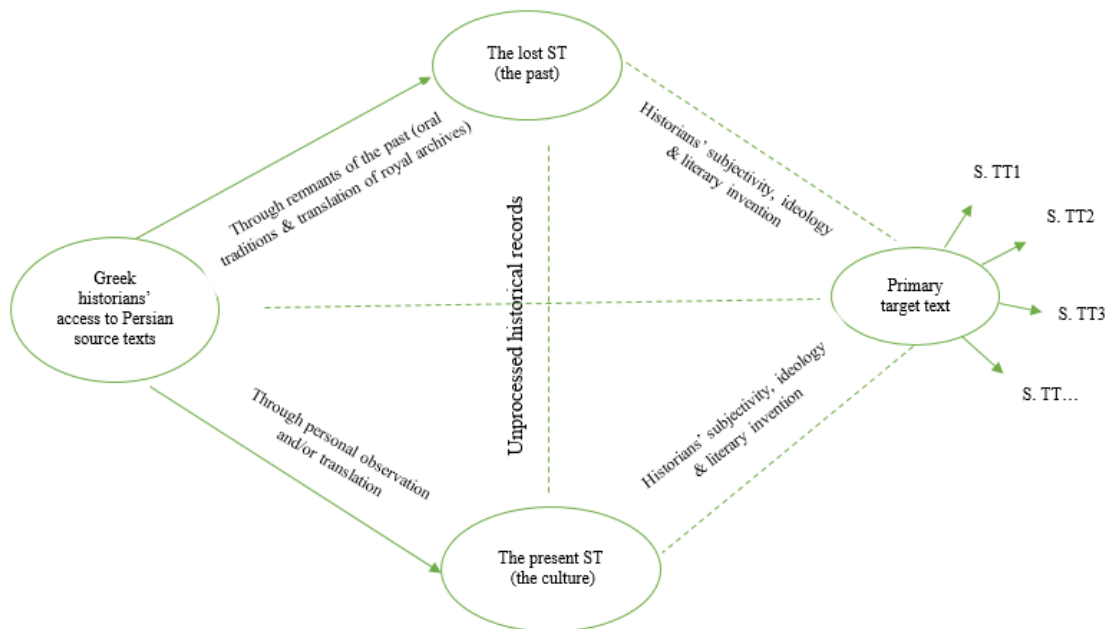


Figure 1: Interrelations of Greek historians, their source materials and final text

As Figure 1 displays, the Greek historians had two sorts of source texts at their disposal: First, the text of the Persian past which was lost, i.e., the history of previous Persian kings (including Cyrus II); second, the text of the Persian current culture, including customs, manners and values, religion, dress, food, architecture, etc. To the first source text, they had indirect access through its remnants, including written documents and oral traditions. These remnants were either understandable by themselves or translated for them. To the second source text, they had access through translation, inquiry and personal observations. Then, the historians emplotted unprocessed information they collected into meaningful stories on the basis of their own interpretations, subjectivities, ideologies and literary inventions. It is this process of emplotment which is called translation by narrativist historians. As the figure 1 shows, the final Greek text is thus distanced away from the lost past and from the present Persian culture. Finally, these primary historical texts served as original sources for later generations of historical accounts, as rewritings, epitomes, (re)translations, etc. For example, the Hellenistic historians, such as Plutarch, Strabo, Diodorus of Sicily and many others wrote their accounts of the Persian Achaemenid empire based on these early texts. Given the scarcity of indigenous narrative historical accounts in the Old Persian language, the history of Achaemenid empire has been largely unfolded through these Greek sources.

In sum, Greek history writing on Persia can be assumed as translation in these senses:

1. In a narrativist sense, translation inheres in every act of writing history, since history writing is essentially translating historical events to historical narrative (e.g., see White, 1973; Munslow, 1997). In this sense, the past is seen to be a lost source text for which there can be indefinite translations.
2. In an inter-cultural sense, some historians engage in writing the history of other cultures into their own language.
3. In an anthropological sense, some historians furnish their historical accounts with ethnographic descriptions of the people whose history they are

translating into their own language. In this sense, the culture is seen to be a text which the historians translate for their receiving culture.

4. In a linguistic sense, all historians might translate or use translations to collect their data (see Payas, 2004).
5. There is a further conceptualization which, might be tentatively called a post-historiographical sense. It means that historical texts, after being composed, circulate via translation, like other cultural productions. Classical Greek historiographical sources were all circulated and preserved through translation into modern languages.

Conclusion

The present study was part of an ongoing PhD dissertation on translation and the historiography of ancient Persia, more particularly Achaemenid period, which had been quite unknown among the Iranians for over a millennium, until discovered by European Iranologists through decoding and translating inscriptions of the period written in ancient Eastern languages. Assuming translation as a crucial condition for knowledge production and dissemination, the researchers initially sought to explore the role of translation, in its conventional linguistic sense, in the revival of interest in the Achaemenid history during the late 19th and early 20th century in Iran. However, the journey for identifying and collecting the historiographical sources on this period was both challenging and illuminating for the researchers in two respects: it was illuminating, because a fairly large number of written historiographical sources, including the Neo-Babylonian, biblical and Greek sources, were found which furnish first-hand accounts of this historical period from different cultural angles. It was challenging, because, while commonly considered as original historical compositions, these sources are potentially translations, because all of them are historical accounts of Persians written by non-Persians, who undoubtedly have used translations to collect their information on the Persians. The challenge was that the traditional disciplinary and as text-centric concept of translation rendered inadequate for the explanation of the use of translation in these historiographical sources.

The use of Asad's (1986, 2018) concept of cultural translation and White's (1974) view of history as translation, to explore the narratives about ancient Persian

history in Greek historiography, helped to reveal how translation studies, as an interdisciplinary area of research, can be used in the discipline of historiography and as a window to how our past has been shaped. Indeed, as Gentzler (2017) holds, “indeed, nearly every discipline derives from and depends upon translation” (p. 5).

The analysis of the historical works of the three Classical Greek historians of, and on, the Achaemenid period, shows that translation is used in five different senses in the field of historiography. It inheres in Greek historiography on the Achaemenid period in narrativist, anthropological, intercultural, linguistic and post-historiographical senses. Translation is both a metaphor for the epistemological status of these historiographical Greek sources and an operative tool in the process of their writing. Anthropologically speaking, Greek historiography emerged through the process of *othering* and *translating*. Among the cultural *others*, the Persians held a paramount position for the Greeks, to the extent that the first ethnographic treatise was written on the Persians by Hellanicus of Lesbos (late 5th century BC) and the writing of *Persica* became a widespread historical genre in the 5th and 4th centuries BC. The Greek historical narratives, have been therefore, considered as the primary sources on the Achaemenid empire across the world. (Re)translated into modern European languages and modern Persian since the 19th century, these narratives and (re)writings now are the major means for us to read the Achaemenid Empire. This might mean that the Achaemenid Empire is a lost original which has been shaped by translations, narratives, and retranslations across times and languages.

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تاریخ‌نگاری به مثابه ترجمه: شاهنشاهی هخامنشی (۵۵۰-۳۳۰ پیش از میلاد) در

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چکیده

تاریخ‌نگاری را نوعی ترجمهٔ واقعیت‌ها به داستان‌های روایی تلقی می‌کنند. هنگامی که مورخان به نوشتن تاریخ فرهنگ‌های دیگر به زبان مادری خود می‌پردازند، ماهیت ترجمه‌ای تاریخ‌نگاری مشهودتر می‌شود. همچنین، برخی از مورخان، همانند انسان‌شناسان فرهنگی، به ترجمهٔ فرهنگی می‌پردازند، زیرا معمولاً نه تنها سفر می‌کنند و از ترجمه برای جمع‌آوری مواد خام خود استفاده می‌کنند، بلکه کنش‌های فرهنگی سرزمینی را که تاریخ آن را می‌نویسند، ترجمه می‌کنند. مقالهٔ حاضر با تکیه بر دیدگاه‌های تاریخ‌نگاران روایت‌گرا همچون وایت (۱۹۷۳) و همچنین دیدگاه اسد (۲۰۱۸) دربارهٔ انسان‌شناسی فرهنگی و نیز در پرتو نگاه فرارشته‌ای به کنش و مفهوم ترجمه، به دنبال این است که نشان دهد چگونه تاریخ‌نگاری در عصر کلاسیک یونان را می‌توان ترجمه قلمداد نمود. در راستای این هدف، ماهیت ترجمه‌ای آثار سه مورخ برجستهٔ یونانی دربارهٔ تاریخ عصر هخامنشی، یعنی هرودوت، کتزیاس و گزنفون، را مورد بررسی قرار داده و تلاش می‌نماید که نشان دهد چگونه تاریخ‌نگاری شاهنشاهی هخامنشی از عهد باستان تا دوران مدرن با کنش ترجمه آمیخته شده است.

واژه‌های راهنما: تاریخ‌نگاری یونانی، ترجمه فرهنگی، روایت‌گرایی در تاریخ‌نگاری، شاهنشاهی هخامنشی، فرارشته‌ای، کنش ترجمه

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