

# Saturday 10 December 2022

09:00 **Coffee and refreshments**

09:15 **Antti Lampinen**, Opening of the workshop

## SESSION 1

### Early Greek Perceptions of the North

10:00 **Serena Bianchetti**, The Insular North: a Long-Unknown Reality

10:45 **Gościwit Malinowski**, European North before the Celts and Scythians

**Break for coffee and refreshments**

## SESSION 2

### Scythians in Herodotus and After, I

12:00 **Juha Isotalo**, Dehumanizing of Scythians in Herodotus' Scythian logos

12:45 **Ekaterina Ilyushechkina**, The Miraculous Scythia of Mela, Pliny and Solinus

13:30 **Lunch break**

## SESSION 3

### Marking the North and the Northerners, I

15:00 **Joanna Porucznik**, Northern Women in Greek and Roman Thought

15:45 **Despoina Tsiadaki**, Recognizing Thracians: Tattoos as an Ethnic Marker

19:00 **Dinner**

# Sunday 11 December 2022

## SESSION 1

### Marking the North and the Northerners, II

10:00 **Petra Pakkanen**, Wearing Hides and Furs as a Sign of Social, Geographic and Ethnic Marginality and Barbarity

**Break for coffee and refreshments**

## SESSION 2

### Scythians in Herodotus and After, II

12:00 **Massimo Giuseppetti**, A Scythian Incursion in Syria: Herodotus and the Enarees

12:45 **Maia Kotrosits**, From Herodotus to Heresy: Scythians in the Long Historical Perspective

13:30 **Lunch break**

## SESSION 3

### Conquering and Converting the Northerners

15:00 **Maijastina Kahlos**, From Gigantomachia to Mission Possible: Late Antique Visions of Northern Barbarians

15:45 **Philip Harland**, 'You are the bandit!': Criminalizing Conquered Peoples, and Some Retorts

16:30 **Closing discussion, coffee & refreshments**

19:00 **Dinner**





ΦΙΝΛΑΝΔΙΚΟ ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ  
FINNISH INSTITUTE AT ATHENS

## ABSTRACTS

### MARKERS OF NORTHERNNESS IN GREEK ETHNOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHY

**Serena Bianchetti**

*The insular North: a long-unknown reality*

In the 3rd century, BC Pytheas of Massalia set out on a voyage to verify the laws of the *sphairopoia* and explored the North of the western oceanic coast. He subsequently collected the findings of his journey in a work called *The ocean*, a work which never reached the general public and was successful only within the small circle of scientists (Eratosthenes, Hipparchus and Ptolemy).

While political geography denied, through Polybius and Strabo, the results of the Pythean discoveries, the historical-literary tradition swiftly took possession of the information relating to Northern Europe, leading to sagas and myths being set in exotic places and forming the core of a memory shared among the Greeks. Many sources, amongst which Timaeus of Tauromenion and Hecataeus of Abdera, lifted concepts from Pytheas' description, enriching them with data not present in the original account, and building an idea of the North, where in contrast to that of continental Europe, insularity became the essential feature of a landscape.

The world of the northern islands entered the literary tradition with force, underlining the otherness of this reality compared to that of the Mediterranean. This is an important trait worth focusing on in order to understand the reasons behind the persistent descriptions of northern regions as islands inhabited by monstrous people. Unlike the north-western sector, which entered the Roman *oikoumene* of the Imperial age, the north-eastern sector maintains, for example in the descriptions of Mela and Pliny, the characteristics of an accentuated otherness, the causes of which I will try, in my paper, to understand.

**Massimo Giuseppetti**

*A Scythian Incursion in Syria: Herodotus and the Enarees*

In Book 1 of his *Histories* Herodotus narrates how, after driving the Cimmerians out of Europe, the Scythians became the new masters of all Asia (though for just twenty-eight years, 1.106.1). In the part of Syria called Palestine the Scythians were met by Psammetichus, king of Egypt, who persuaded them to come no further. At that point, the Scythians turned back and came on their way to the city of Ascalon, in Syria. Most of them passed by and did no harm. A few of them, however, stayed behind and plundered the temple of Heavenly Aphrodite. This impious act, says Herodotus, is the reason why some Scythians are affected by a 'female disease', for this is indeed how the goddess punished those Scythians and their descendants after them. This narrative poses several questions. I shall focus on the peculiar ethnography that underpins it: why does Herodotus have the Scythians responsible for this episode? Were there specific aspects in the way Greeks considered Scythian ethnography that made them fit to be included in a narrative of failed/corrupted masculinity?

### **Philip Harland**

#### *'You are the bandit!': Criminalizing Conquered Peoples, and Some Retorts*

Curtius Rufus (*History of Alexander* 7.8.19-21) imagines an encounter between a Scythian ambassador and Alexander of Macedon just before the “bloody slaughter” of these northern peoples. Challenging Alexander’s assumption that all such “barbarians” are merely “bandits,” the Scythian enumerates all of the territories that Alexander has wrongly taken and retorts that, in fact, it is Alexander who is the true bandit. Using this episode as a launching point, this paper examines both labelling by the conqueror and potential responses by the conquered with a focus on ethnic outgroups, including northern peoples, criminalized as “bandits.” Naturalizing assumptions concerning the barbarian-bandit connection that we find in the likes of Imperial-era authors such as Strabo, Livy, and Achilles Tatius are also found put into practice to legitimize control and conquest at the Danube frontier, as the epigraphic evidence shows. Beyond the imaginations of Greek or Roman authors like Rufus, seldom do we hear potential responses from the conquered, but Judean retorts provide further insights into the options.

### **Ekaterina Ilyushechkina**

#### *The Miraculous Scythia of Mela, Pliny, and Solinus*

Gaius Iulius Solinus’ compilation *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (3rd century AD), despite the “secondary” nature of the information contained in it, is a promising source for researchers of the ethnogeography of the Northern Black Sea region and Scythia. My topic considers Solinus’ testimonies about the peoples and tribes that inhabited this region in antiquity, as well the other types of descriptions (as hydronyms, local fauna and the customs or lifestyle of the Scythian tribes), drawing attention to the peculiarities of Solinus’ world picture. The main sources of Solinus’ compilation were the works of Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder. In using their texts Solinus applies rhetorical techniques and in his transmission supplements the information of his predecessors with digressions of the paradoxographic direction, i.e. he inserts unusual facts and amazing natural phenomena into the ethnogeographical context. Apparently, this manner of description was supposed to make Solinus’ ethnogeographical material more attractive in the eyes of the ancient reading public, to contribute to the “popularization” of knowledge about the ancient *oikoumene*, in other words, to serve didactic purposes. And if the use of *mirabilia* in the ancient texts has been observed from the earliest times, then in the work of Solinus “amazing examples” are put at the forefront; thus, we can talk about its closeness with the ancient paradoxographers. This by no means excludes the use of Solinus’ work as a historical source containing reliable facts and details that not only eliminate the difficulties in understanding Solinus’ ethnogeographical map, but also supplement the known evidence on the history and culture of the North Black Sea region in antiquity.

### **Juha Isotalo**

#### *Dehumanization of Scythian people in Herodotus’ Scythian logos*

Herodotus frequently wrote in his *Histories* about the peoples surrounding the Greek world. In Book 4 he gives an ethnographical account of the peoples of Scythia, a vast area extending from the northern coast of the Black Sea to the Central Asia. Among the Scythians were a people called Neuri. Herodotus tells how the other Scythians say that Neuri could turn into wolves once a year (4.105). The

Herodotean description of Scythians includes also a depiction of Androphagoi, or the Man-Eaters, as one of the Scythians. Why are the themes of cannibalism and savagery found in ancient sources often in reference to peoples living in the margins of the known world? Herodotus' sources were not these peoples, themselves. It was their neighbours.

In this paper, I examine the depiction of deeds – made by their informants – that would be unacceptable to Ancient Greeks. I will first locate the Androphagoi and the Neuri and identify the probable sources of the stories about them. Using the framework of social identity formation through narratives about one's past (or someone other's past), I will then try to understand what purpose these kinds of stories served. I also compare these stories to later equivalent stories from the Roman era and to some interpretations made in modern Herodotean research literature.

### **Maijastina Kahlos**

#### *From Gigantomachia to the Mission Possible: Late-antique visions of northern barbarians*

In the fourth and fifth centuries, the Romans encountered several groups of Goths as well as other ethnic groups (such as Vandals). Some encounters were more or less peaceful; groups and individuals were recruited to the Roman army or used as labour. Other encounters were hostile as Romans and Goths were involved in constant frontier war with each other. Many Goths and other northern 'barbarians' entered the Roman Empire by forced movement – as captives and slaves.

In this paper, I discuss the range of attitudes among late Greco-Roman writers and how these writers interpreted the encounters with northern barbarians through their religious and mythic worldviews. Religion was an intrinsic part of late Roman society and political life. I focus on the late-antique writers Synesius, John Chrysostom, and Themistius. These writers, Christian and non-Christian like, pondered how to deal with Goths (and other 'barbarians') and how to harness them into the use of the Empire or the Church. We will see how the barbarians were, on the one hand, argued outside the human civilization (which in Late Antiquity was increasingly identified as Christian *Romanitas*). Here the classical imagery of Gigantomachia was used to conceptualize the enmities. On the other hand, we will see that ecclesiastical writers deliberated on the possibilities of converting northern barbarians to Christianity. Was mission possible?

### **Maia Kotrosits**

#### *From Herodotus to Heresy: Scythians in Long Historical Perspective*

This paper offers a history of the representation of Scythians over time as gendered, pathologized, and socially deviant subjects. It takes as its starting point the Christian bishop Epiphanius of Cyprus' diagnosis of the heresy of "Scythianism" in his 4<sup>th</sup>-century *Panarion*, in order to trace the persistence of ethnographic tendencies over time. Scythians, I argue, offer a conceptual key for understanding the continuity of social strategies of population production despite the vast social changes that also take place between the classical period and Christian late antiquity.

### **Gościwit Malinowski**

#### *European North before the Celts and Scythians*

Europe north of the Mediterranean region was divided by Diodorus Siculus (6.32) into the lands of Gauls and Scythians. Indeed, these two (super)ethnic groups, the horse nomads of the Eurasian Great Steppe and the bearers of the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures dominated the Barbaricum north of the Alps and Danube in the Iron Age. The peoples encountered by Greeks and Romans in these areas were usually described according to the patterns typical for Celts and Scythians, even if with time another two (super)ethnic groups of the Germanic tribes and Sarmatians emancipated from the Gauls and Scythians. The awkwardness in classifying the peoples of the North by the Greco-Roman authors is best seen in the future Polish lands, where the Vistula River flowing in the middle of the uniform Przeworsk archaeological culture (3rd century BC - 5th century AD) used to be treated as a border between Germania and Sarmatia or Dacia.

### **Petra Pakkanen**

#### *Wearing hides and furs as sign of social, geographic and ethnic marginality and barbarity*

Peoples using skins and hides for garments tended to be regarded as barbaric humans living (in contrast to the 'civilised' Greeks) in close proximity to animals and nature in geographically and symbolically remote locations. To be clad in hides and furs therefore signalled wild(er)ness, but also socially marginal, servile status and poverty. It served as a marker for the lack of technological knowledge (of actual leather-making), but also of freedom. A view of evolutionary development from animalistic barbarity to civilised way of being was implied when peoples were placed in 'stages' according to their ethnically characteristic garments: peoples climbed up in social scale from wearing skins and leathers to woven clothes in the way the 'civilised' Greeks did. In this paper the attributions of fur- and leather-wearing are regarded as markers of ethnic and social marginality, and its implications to signal the associations of northernness are scrutinised.

### **Joanna Porucznik**

#### *Northern women in Greek and Roman thought*

This contribution will discuss Greek and Roman ideas on gender constructs among the so-called 'barbarian' societies who inhabited Northern Europe in antiquity. These societies were often categorized as Germanic, Celtic, Scythian, Sauromatian and Sarmatian tribes. The image of a non-Greek/non-Roman woman will be brought into focus in relation to her 'otherness' when compared to Greek and Roman women. In Greek and Roman sources, it is noticeable that male and female roles were often seen as opposite to what was normally expected in ancient society. An example of this is Tacitus who praises Germanic women for breastfeeding, a practice that was much avoided both by Greek and Roman upper-class mothers who preferred to employ a wetnurse. Similarly, Boudica the queen of the Celtic Iceni is represented as acting opposite to what would be perceived as acceptable in Roman society. The North was also one of the possible regions where the legendary Amazons could be found, which might have been a result of a Greek misunderstanding of gender roles among ancient nomadic societies. According to Herodotus, the Amazons and the Scythians were ancestors of the Sauromatians, who in turn were believed to be predecessors of the Sarmatians whose women seem to have enjoyed high social status as suggested by the archaeological record from Sarmatian burials.

Notably, in Greek and Roman thought such factors as climate zones and the geographical location played an important role in determining peoples' characters and therefore, these factors will also be analysed and discussed in more detail, based on ancient literary sources.

### **Despoina Tsiafaki**

#### *Recognizing Thracians: tattoos as an ethnic marker*

Thracians formed a distinct group in the ancient Greek imagination and literary sources. They were clearly placed in the North of Greece with their land (Thrace) to cover a sizeable area that extended from the Northern Aegean shores to Istros (Danube) and reached the Euxeinos Pontos (Black Sea). Βορέας, Βορράς or Βοριάς was the name given by the ancient Greeks to the cold untamed North wind for whom it would be appropriate to have Thrace as his home, since it was considered to be a cold northern land from a Greek orientation and this tradition was first cited by Homer (*Iliad* 9.5, 23.230).

Ancient authors as well as visual arts present Thracians as ferocious and warlike people and assign to them specific characteristics, which make them distinguishable among other barbarians. The most characteristic among them are their clothing and the tattooing on their body. The latter is the focus of this paper, which aims to explore this practice of the Thracians through the framework of the Greek perception of it. Literary sources and ancient Greek iconography will be examined in order to present the Thracian tattooing and how it was considered as an attribute of the sociocultural construction of the Thracians. Goal is to see if and how tattoo was an ethnic marker for the people of ancient Thrace.