



61. So Cambyses,<sup>8</sup> the son of Cyrus, dallied in Egypt, crazed in his wits. There rose against him in conspiracy two Magi, brothers, one of whom Cambyses had left as the steward of his house. This man, as soon as he had learned that the death of Smerdis<sup>9</sup> had been kept secret—and how, indeed, there were few of the Persians who knew anything of it and that the most of them believed that he was still alive—laid his plots to win the throne. I have said he had a brother, who helped in the conspiracy. This man was exceedingly like Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, in his appearance, the very brother whom Cambyses had killed. Moreover, he had the same name, Smerdis. The Magian Patizeithes persuaded this man that he, Patizeithes, would manage the whole thing for him, and he took his brother in and put him upon the royal throne. When he had done

8. We go back to the direct narrative, interrupted at 3.38, where we left the fortunes of Cambyses and followed the stories of Polycrates, Amasis, and the Cypselids of Corinth—the dynasty of Periander and his sons. In the digression, the focus of interest shifts to Samos, Corinth, and Corcyra. The feuds and special interests of these very important Greek centers and their relations with Egypt are part of the web of events, for Cambyses subdued Egypt preparatory to the eventual Persian attack on Greece. As we learned in 3.17, after his conquest of Egypt, Cambyses had planned expeditions against the long-lived Ethiopians, the Ammonians, and the Carthaginians, but all these were canceled or were abandoned after a great measure of failure. When we now revert to the story of Cambyses, we are faced with the last phase of the first family of Persian despots (that of Cyrus and Cambyses) as they were destroyed by internal trouble. We then get to the transfer of the monarchy, by a measure of choice on the part of the Persian nobility, to Darius and his descendants, who directed the actual invasion of Greece and retained the throne for many hundreds of years—the Achaemenids.

9. Murdered by order of Cambyses (3.30).

that, he sent heralds around to various places, and especially one to Egypt, to declare to the army there that for the future they must obey the orders of Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, instead of Cambyses.

62. The other heralds did their work, and so did he that was sent to Egypt. He had found Cambyses and his army in Ecbatana—but the Ecbatana that is in Syria—and he stood there in public and made the proclamation with which the Magian had instructed him. Cambyses heard the herald's proclamation and was convinced that the man spoke truth and that he had been betrayed by Prexaspes; for he was sure that, although he had been sent to kill Smerdis, he had not done so. Fixing his eyes on Prexaspes, he said, "Prexaspes, is this how you dealt with the matter I entrusted to you?" Prexaspes answered: "Master, all this is not true: your brother Smerdis has not risen in rebellion against you, nor shall there be any quarrel from him that can affect you, either great or small. For I myself, when I had done all that you bade me, buried him with my own hands. If the dead rise again, you may look for Astyages the Mede, too, to rise against you in rebellion. But if all is in the world as before, nothing new to hurt you shall grow out of Smerdis. As it is, I would have you send for the herald and examine him, asking from whom he came when he proclaimed that we should obey King Smerdis."

63. These were Prexaspes' words, and, as he pleased Cambyses, the herald was sent for at once and came. Prexaspes asked him, "You, fellow, you say you come from Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, as a messenger. Now tell the truth and get out of here—you will be lucky to do so: was it Smerdis, in visible form before you, that gave you these instructions, or did you hear it from one of his servants?" He said: "For my own part, I have not seen Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, from the day King Cambyses marched into Egypt. It is the Magian whom Cambyses installed as steward of his household who gave me my instructions. It was he who told me that Smerdis, son of Cyrus, charged me to tell you what I have told." This was the answer of the man; he had no intent to lie about it. Cambyses said: "Prexaspes, you have done what a good man should and performed my bidding, and you are clear of all blame. But which of the Persians can it be that trades upon the name of Smerdis and rebels against me?" The other answered: "I believe I understand what has happened, my lord. It is the Magians who have risen against you—the one whom

you left behind as steward of your house, Patizeithes, and his brother, Smerdis."

64. When Cambyses heard the name of Smerdis, the truth of both word and dream struck home. In his dream it had seemed to him that someone brought him the news that Smerdis, sitting on the royal throne, reached to touch the sky with his head. He learned now that he had killed his brother all for nothing, and he wept for Smerdis. When his tears were over and the agony of the whole event laid hold of him, he jumped on to his horse. He had in mind to get to Susa as quickly as he might and make war upon the Magian. But as he leaped on the horse's back, the cap fell off the scabbard of his sword, and the naked blade pierced his thigh. He was wounded at just that point of his body at which he had struck the Egyptian god Apis. Cambyses felt that the wound was mortal and asked what was the name of this city. They told him "Ecbatana." Now, there had been given him an oracle from the city of Buto that he would end his life in Ecbatana. He, of course, thought that he would die an old man in the Median Ecbatana, where all his concerns were; but the oracle had meant, as it now showed, the Ecbatana in Syria. As he asked the question and heard the name, he was overwhelmed at once by what the Magian had done to him and also by his wound, and he came to his senses. He understood the prophecy and said, "Here is where Cambyses, son of Cyrus, is fated to die."

65. For this occasion, that was all; but some twenty days later he sent for the most notable of the Persians who were with him and spoke to them as follows: "You men of Persia, I am forced to tell you openly what of all matters I would have hidden from you. When I was in Egypt, I saw in my sleep a vision—I would I had never seen it. It seemed to me that a messenger came from home and told me that Smerdis sat upon the royal throne and reached for the heavens with his head. I was afraid that my brother would take the power from me, and I acted with more speed than wisdom. For it is surely not in the nature of man to be able to turn aside that which is fated to be. Vain fool that I was, I sent Prexaspes to Susa to kill Smerdis, and when that great evil deed was completed, I lived free of fear, giving no further thought that, with Smerdis removed, some other man might rise against me. So I missed utterly the meaning of what was to be. I have become a brother's murderer for no need, and I am

cast out from my kingdom nonetheless. Smerdis, you see, was the Magian whom the god wished to reveal to me in a dream as the rebel against me. But the deed *was* done by me; you must count Smerdis, son of Cyrus, as no longer among the living. It is the Magians, you will find, who are masters of the royal power, the one whom I left as steward of my house and his brother, Smerdis. I have been shamefully wronged by the Magians, and the one who, most of all, should have avenged me is dead, killed by his closest kinsman. He is no more; therefore, as the second choice possible for me, I lay upon you, men of Persia, my most urgent command for what I want to be done, as I now am dying. I lay this charge upon you, calling to witness the gods of my royal line and appealing to all of you, and particularly those of you here present who are Achaemenids, that you do not suffer the supremacy again to pass to the Medes. If they have won it by craft, you must take it away from them by craft; if they have made it theirs by some kind of violence, then with violence must you take it back again. If you do this, may the earth bear you its fruits, may your women and your flocks and herds be fruitful, and may you live for all time as free men! But if you do not recover the power to yourselves, nor make any effort to do so, I pray upon you the contrary of these good things and that, besides, the end of every man in Persia may be such as has now overtaken me." These were Cambyses' words, and he wept for all that had happened him.

66. When the Persians saw their king in rears, they rent their garments and lamented bitterly. Afterwards the bone gangrened and the thigh rotted, and this carried off Cambyses, son of Cyrus, who had reigned, in all, seven years and five months and was entirely childless, having neither female nor male issue. The Persians who were present were filled with disbelief that it was the Magians who had seized the power. They thought that Cambyses had said this about Smerdis' death out of malice, that all the stock of the Persians might be at war with him. They believed that Smerdis, son of Cyrus, had indeed been installed as king. For Prexaspes vehemently denied that he had ever killed Smerdis; it would not have been safe for him, now that Cambyses was dead, to say that he had killed a son of Cyrus with his own hand.

67. The Magian, then, on Cambyses' death, ruled with nothing further to fear, trading on the identity of his name and that of Cyrus'

son Smerdis, for the seven months that were left to fill out the eight years of Cambyses' reign. During this time he did all his subjects great kindnesses, so that, on his death, all those in Asia except the Persians themselves missed him sorely. For this Magian sent to every nation that he ruled and made a proclamation freeing them from military service and taxation for three years.

68. This proclamation he made at the very beginning of his reign, but in its eighth month he was discovered, and this is how it happened. There was one Otanes, the son of Pharnaspes, the equal of the very greatest of the Persians in birth and wealth. This Otanes was the first to suspect the Magian to be the person he actually was and not the son of Cyrus. He suspected it because the Magian never came out of the citadel and never summoned to his presence any of the Persian notables. With such suspicions, Otanes did as follows. Cambyses had married Otanes' daughter—her name was Phaedyme. The Magian now had this girl and lived with her, as he did with all the other women who had been Cambyses' wives. Otanes sent to his daughter and inquired of her who it was with whom she slept: was it Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, or someone else? She answered and said she did not know, since she had never seen Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, nor did she know with whom she slept. Otanes sent to her a second time, saying, "If you yourself do not know Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, find out from Atossa with whom she and you are sleeping. Certainly she knows her own brother."

69. His daughter sent him a message in answer: "I cannot get to speak with Atossa or see any of the women who live in her household. As soon as this man, whoever he is, took over the kingdom, he scattered us all, some here and some there." When Otanes heard this, the matter became clearer and clearer. He sent a third time to the girl, saying, "Daughter, you are of noble birth, and it is your duty to venture on any risk your father orders you to undergo. If this is not Smerdis, son of Cyrus, but the man I suspect he is, he should not get off scot free with sleeping with you and ruling Persia; he must pay for both crimes. Do this now: when he is sleeping with you and you know he is deeply asleep, feel for his ears. If you find that he has ears, you may be sure that you are sleeping with Smerdis, the son of Cyrus. If not, you are with Smerdis the Magian." Phaedyme sent him an answer that she would be in sore danger; for if it turned out

that he had no ears and she were discovered feeling for them, she was very sure he would kill her; all the same, she would do as her father bade her. So she undertook the task set her by him. (Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, had cut off the ears of the Magian Smerdis when he detected him in some grave offense.) The girl discharged the task she promised her father to do, for, when her turn came for going in to the Magian—among the Persians the wives go to their husbands in regular rotation—she came to him and slept with him, and, when the Magian was fast asleep, she felt for his ears. She found out without difficulty—indeed, very easily—that the man did not have any. And so at daybreak she reported to her father all that had happened.

70. Otanes took to himself Aspathines and Gobryas, who were chief among the Persians and his closest and most trusty friends, and he told them the whole business. They had themselves suspected that things were as they were, and so they readily accepted what Otanes said to them. They resolved that each of them would take as a comrade whichever among the Persians he trusted most. Otanes brought in Intaphrenes; Gobryas, Megabyzus; and Aspathines, Hydarnes. These, then, were six, when there came to Susa, from Persia, Darius, the son of Hystaspes. His father was vice-gerent of Persia. When he arrived, the six Persians resolved to coopt Darius to their number.

71. So the Seven came together and discussed matters and exchanged oaths of trust. When it came to Darius' turn to declare his judgment, he said, "I believed that I was the only one to know that it was the Magian who had become our king and that Smerdis, son of Cyrus, was dead. It was for that reason that I came here in haste to arrange death for the Magian. Since, however, it turns out that it is not only myself but you, too, who know this, it is my belief that we should act at once and not delay. It would be better not to delay." Otanes answered, "Son of Hystaspes, you are the son of a good man, and you look to me as though you are proving yourself to be no less good than your father. Still, do not be foolish about this plan, in hastening it unduly; follow your plan, but do so at a more prudent pace. It would be better to make the attempt when there are more of us in the plot." Darius said, "You men who are here: if you follow the way described by Otanes, you will find that you will die, and die

most horribly. For someone will give information to the Magian; this someone's aim will be personal gain. You would have done best to have run the risk on your own. Since you decided to enlarge the conspiracy and take me in, we must either act today or, I would have you know, if a single day goes by beyond this, no informer will outstrip me myself: I will go and tell the whole matter to the Magian."

72. When Otanes saw how angry Darius was, he said, "Since you compel us to hasten and will not let us postpone the attempt, come, tell us how we are to get into the palace and attack these men. You know yourself how the guards are set all around; if you have not seen them, you at least have heard of them. How shall we get past these guards?" Darius answered, "Otanes, there are many things which cannot be described in word and yet they may be done; again, there are many that are capable of being planned in word, and yet no great action has ever resulted. You know that it is no great matter to pass these guards that are set. None of the sentries will deny admittance to such as we are, partly out of respect for us and partly out of fear. Moreover, I have the finest excuse for passing in; I can say that I have just come from Persia and wish to convey a message from my father to the king. Where a lie must be told, let it be told. Those of us who lie and those of us who tell the truth are bent upon the same object. The liars lie when they would win profit by convincing others of their lies; the truth-tellers tell truth so that by their truth they may draw gain to themselves and be the more trusted. Our practices are different, but our aim is the same. If it were not for the hope of gain therefrom, the man who tells the truth might equally well lie, and the liar tell the truth. Whichever of these guards lets us in willingly, it will be better for him in the time to come. Whoever tries to stand against us, let him be declared there and then as our enemy, and let us at once push him aside and go in to deal with our work."

73. Gobryas said, "My friends, when will we have a fairer opportunity of winning back our power or, if we cannot do that, of dying? Seeing, that is, that we Persians are being ruled by a Mede, a Magian—and an earless fellow, at that. Those of you who were present at the death of Cambyses will surely remember the curses he laid upon the Persians at this, his life's end, if they did not attempt to recover the rule. We did not believe him at the time, for we thought that he spoke to spread hatred among us. But now I give my vote on

the side of Darius: no breaking-up this council without an immediate attack upon the Magian!" That is what Gobryas said, and the other five agreed with him.

74. While the conspirators were debating, the following chanced to happen. The Magians, in their planning, had resolved to woo Prexaspes to their side because of the vile thing Cambyses had done to him when he shot and killed his son with an arrow. They also wanted him because he alone knew of the death of Smerdis, son of Cyrus (since he had killed him with his own hand), and, besides all this, Prexaspes was a man in the greatest esteem among the Persians. So for these reasons they summoned him to join their party, with pledges and oaths that assuredly he would keep the secret to himself and unveil to no human being the deception they had put upon the Persians; and they promised to give him every treasure in the world. Prexaspes agreed to do all this; and, having so convinced him, the Magians made him a second proposition. They said that they were calling together all the Persians to the palace wall, and they ordered Prexaspes to go up on to a tower and make a speech to the effect that the kingship was in the hands of Smerdis, son of Cyrus, and no one else. They laid this charge upon him because he was certainly the man most likely to be believed by the Persians and because he had already many times declared his judgment that Smerdis, son of Cyrus, was alive; he had also disowned his own act in murdering him.

75. When Prexaspes said he was ready to do this also, the Magians summoned the Persians and put Prexaspes on the tower and bade him speak. But he chose to forget every word of what they requested of him, and, beginning from Achaemenes downward, he traced the family of Cyrus; and when at last he came to Cyrus himself, he described what benefits he had done the Persians, and, as he went through it all, he told the clear truth, saying that formerly he had concealed it, for it had not been safe to say what had actually happened, but that now he must tell it all. So, as he went on, he said how he himself had been compelled by Cambyses to murder Cyrus's son, Smerdis, and that it was the Magians who had the kingship. He called down many curses on the Persians if they should not win back the power and punish the Magians. Then he threw himself headlong down from the tower. Such was Prexaspes, a notable man all his life and in his death also.

76. The Seven, having resolved to attack the Magians at once

and not delay, said their prayers to the gods and, so far knowing nothing of what had happened about Prexaspes, were halfway on the road to their object before they *did* learn what had befallen in that matter. Then they went aside from the road and discussed with one another again. Those of Otanes' party were strongly for postponement; they were against an attack while the "boil was still swelling." But Darius' men were for going at once and putting their intentions into action without delay. While they were hotly disputing, there suddenly appeared seven pairs of hawks, pursuing and tearing and savaging two pairs of vultures. As the Seven watched, all of them agreed with the opinion of Darius and went on toward the palace, heartened by the birds.

77. When they approached the gates, everything happened as Darius had thought it would. The guards were full of respect for these, the chief men of the Persians, and never suspected that any such matter would come from them as was actually planned, and so they let them through. God was somehow on their side; no one even asked them a question. When they came into the inner court, they encountered the eunuchs who carry messages to the king. These men asked them what they had come there for, and, as they put the questions, they threatened the sentries for letting them through, and, when the Seven wished to go further, they stopped them. The Seven cried aloud to one another, drew their daggers, and stabbed those who would have held them up, right where they were, and themselves headed for the men's quarters at a run.

78. It happened that at this time the Magians, both of them, were inside and were consulting about what would come of the affair of Prexaspes. When they saw the eunuchs in confusion and yelling loudly, they both sprang to their feet; and when they saw what was afoot, they made to defend themselves. The one of them was quick to get his bow; the other seized his spear. Then the two parties, seven and two, joined battle. The Magian who had taken up the bow could do nothing with it, for his enemies were too near him and at close quarters. The other defended himself with his spear and struck Aspathines in the thigh and Intaphrenes in the eye. Intaphrenes lost the eye from the blow but did not die. So this one of the Magians wounded these two. The other Magian, finding his bow useless, took refuge in an apartment that opened into the men's

chamber and tried to shut the doors. But two of the Seven, Darius and Gobryas, rushed in with him. Then Gobryas was locked in a fight with the Magian, and Darius stood by, and, for it was dark, was at a loss to strike for fear he would hit Gobryas. Seeing Darius doing nothing, Gobryas asked him why he did not strike. "For fear of hitting you," said Darius. Gobryas answered: "Drive the sword through, even through the two of us." Darius obeyed, struck with his dagger, and by some chance reached the Magian only.

79. So they killed the Magians and cut off their heads; and they left their own wounded where they were, partly because of their inability to move and partly so that they could guard the citadel. The Five then, with the Magians' heads, ran with great shouts and clamor and called on all the other Persians to join them; they explained what had happened and showed the heads, and, at the same time, they killed every Magian that they met. The general body of the Persians, finding out from the Seven what had taken place and the deception put upon them by the Magians, thought fit to do like the Seven; they drew their daggers and killed, wherever they found a Magian. If night had not come on, they would have left not a single Magian alive. This day the Persians now celebrate publicly, more than any of their other holy days, and conduct a great festival on it. It is called by the Persians "The Slaughter of the Magians." On it no Magian dare appear in public, but they must keep strictly to their own houses.

80. When the confusion had settled, five days later, the conspirators against the Magians held a debate about the entire condition of affairs. Here speeches were made that some of the Greeks refuse to credit, but the speeches *were* made, for all that. Otanes proposed that power should be entrusted to the main body of the Persians: "It is my conviction that we should no longer have a monarch over us. It is neither pleasant nor good, the monarchy. You yourselves know how far Cambyses' outrages went, and you have had a taste of the outrageousness of the Magian. How can a monarchy be a suitable thing? The monarch may do what he pleases, with none to check him afterwards. Take the best man on earth and put him into a monarchy and you put him outside of the thoughts that have been wont to guide him. Outrageousness is bred in him by reason of the good things he has, and envy is basic in the nature of man. He has these

two qualities, then, and in them he has all evil. Out of his satiety his outrageousness grows, and he does many appalling things out of that; but he does many, too, out of envy. You would think that a man who was an absolute sovereign would be free of jealousy, for he has all good things at his disposal, but the contrary is true of him with respect to his fellow citizens. He is jealous that the best of them should continue alive; he is pleased that the worst of them should continue alive. He is a master at receiving slanders. He is the most difficult of all men to deal with: if your admiration of him is moderate, he is offended because the flattery is not abject; if the flattery is abject, he is offended with you as a toady. I have still my biggest charge to make against him: he turns upside down all ancestral observances, forces women, and kills men without trial. When the people is ruler, in the first place its title is the fairest of all—namely, equality before the law; secondly, it does none of those things I have objected against the monarch. The government holds office by decision of lot, and the power it holds is subject to the check of audit, and all its propositions it must put before the commonalty for judgment. I vote therefore that we abolish the monarchy and increase the power of the people; for in the Many lies All.”

81. Such was the judgment contributed by Otanes. But Megabyzus would have them turn things over to an oligarchy, and his speech was as follows: “What Otanes has said about the abolition of the monarchy you may regard as being my opinion also. But when he proposes to turn over power to the Many, he has fallen short of the nicest judgment. There is nothing stupider, nothing more given to outrage, than a useless mob. Yet surely for men who are fleeing the outrage of the despot to fall into the clutches of the outrageous Many, on whom, too, there is no restraint, is in no way bearable. The despot, if he does something, does it of knowledge; but knowledge is what does not inhere in the Many. How can men know anything when they have never been taught what is fine, nor have they any innate sense of it? They rush into things and push them this way and that without intelligent purposes, like a river in winter spate. Let those who have ill will to the Persians press for a democracy; but let us choose a society of the Best Men and entrust the power to them. Among this number we shall be ourselves, and we may reasonably assume that, when the men are the Best, their counsels will be so too.”

82. Such was the judgment of Megabyzus. Darius gave his judgment as third among them: “What Megabyzus has said about the Many seems to me truly said; not so his comments on oligarchy. Suppose, for the argument, that all three constitutions are of the very best—the best democracy, the best oligarchy, the best monarchy. I declare to you that, of these three at their best, monarchy is far superior. Nothing is manifestly better than the one best man. He will have judgment to match his excellence and will govern the Many blamelessly, and what measures he must devise against ill-doers will be wrapped in a similar well-judging silence. In an oligarchy, many try to practice virtue for the public good, but in doing so they engender bitter private enmities. Each of the oligarchs wants to be chief man and to win with his opinions, and so they come to great hatreds of one another, and from this comes faction, and from faction comes murder. From murder there is a relapse into despotism—and *there* is an indication again how much despotism is the best! When the Many are rulers, it cannot but be that, again, knavery is bred in the state; but now the knaves do not grow to hate one another—they become fast friends. For they combine together to mal-administer the public concerns. This goes on until one man takes charge of affairs for the Many and puts a stop to the knaves. As a result of this, he wins the admiration of the Many, and, being so admired, lo! you have your despot again; in this case, too, it is clear that monarchy is the best of the systems. In one word: from what source did we gain our freedom, and who gave it us? The people, or the oligarchy, or the despot? I give my vote that, as we were freed by one man,<sup>10</sup> so we should keep this freedom *through* one man; apart from this, we should not abolish any of our ancestral laws that are sound. It would be better so.”

83. These were the three opinions that were put forward. Four of the Seven gave their support to the last—that of Darius. So when Otanes was worsted in his proposition to establish among the Persians equality before the law, he made the following statement to all the conspirators: “My friends and partners: it is clear that one of us must become king, either by choice of lot, or by our turning over to

10. It is worth noticing that Darius' position is that Cyrus conferred freedom on the Persians because he delivered them from the rule of the Medes. This *freedom* was quite compatible with the internal rule of an absolute monarch—Cyrus himself.

the Persians the privilege of choosing whomever they please, or by some other method. For my own part, I abdicate from this contest with you; I will not rule or be ruled. But I withdraw from any chance of rule on one condition: that I shall not be ruled by any one of you, neither myself nor my descendants." That is what he said, and the six others accepted his proposition on these conditions. He, then, would not join the contest but withdrew, and till this day his house continues as the only free one in Persia and is under the rule of another only insofar as it itself chooses, providing it does not overstep the laws of Persia.

84. The remainder of the Seven debated as to how they might most justly choose a king. They resolved that if the kingship should devolve upon someone else among the Seven, other than Otanes, there should be given to him and all his descendants, every year, special privileges: a gift of Median dress and all the awards that are most honorable among the Persians. They resolved to give him these things because he had been the first to plan the conspiracy and had brought them all together. These, then, were to be Otanes' special privileges. But in regard to all the other conspirators, they made the following decisions: any one of the Seven that pleased might come into the palace without formal announcement unless the king was sleeping with a woman; the king should not be allowed to marry of any other stock than that of the Seven. As for the selection of a king, they resolved this: that all of them should mount their horses in the outskirts of the city and, as the sun rose, whichever horse neighed first, his rider should possess the throne.

85. Now, Darius had a groom whose name was Oebares, and he was a clever fellow. When the meeting broke up, Darius spoke to this man: "Oebares, we have resolved to deal with the kingship this way: when we are all on horseback, whichever of our horses neighs first, as the sun rises, makes his rider king. Now if you have any trick to deal with this, contrive that we win the prize and not someone else." Oebares answered him: "Master, if being king or not being king lies in this only, be confident and of good cheer as far as this goes, for no one will become king other than yourself; I have potent medicines for that." Darius said: "If you have any such contrivance, you had better put it into practice without delay, for our game is on for tomorrow." When Oebares heard this, he did the following: at

nightfall he led out that one of the mares that Darius' stallion loved most and tied her in the outskirts of the city. He then led out Darius' stallion and led him around a great while in the neighborhood of the mare, at times just suffering him to touch her; finally he let him go, to mount and breed her.

86. At the day's dawning, the Six, as they had agreed, came mounted; they rode through the city's outskirts, and when they came to the place where the mare had been tied up the night before, Darius' horse plunged forward and neighed. At the very moment this happened, there was a flash of lightning (though the sky was cloudless) and a rattle of thunder. These additional signs clinched the selection of Darius; they were additional to the trick, and what happened was, as it were, a collusion between it and something else. The other riders jumped down from their horses and did obeisance to Darius.

87. That is one story of how Oebares contrived the outcome. There is another—for the Persians tell the story both ways—that Oebares had rubbed his hand against the mare's loins and then hidden his hand in his breeches. As the sun rose and the Six were letting their horses go, Oebares, stretching out his hand, brought it close to the nostrils of the stallion, who, immediately he smelled it, neighed and whinnied.

88. So Darius, son of Hystaspes, became king," and all the peoples in Asia became his subjects, having been conquered by Cyrus and, after him, by Cambyses. All, that is, but the Arabians. These were never reduced to slavish subjection to the Persians but were guest-friends, because they had let Cambyses through into Egypt. Without the good will of the Arabians, the Persians could not have invaded Egypt. The first two marriages Darius made were among the Persians. He married the two daughters of Cyrus, Atossa and Artystone. Atossa had previously been married to her brother Cambyses and also to the Magian; Artystone was still a maid. He also married the daughter of Smerdis, son of Cyrus, whose name was Parmys; also Otanes' daughter, who had discovered the Magian to the conspirators. Everything was full of the power of Darius. First of all he made and set up a monument of stone. On it was an engraving

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the barbarians, that issues into a sea toward the north, from which it is that amber comes; nor do I know of the actual existence of the Tin Islands, from which our tin comes. The very name Eridanus speaks against their story, for it is a Greek, not a barbarian, word, made up by some poet or other. Nor have I been able, for all my efforts that way, to hear from anyone who was an eyewitness that there is a sea beyond Europe. But certainly our tin and our amber come from the edges of the world.

116. It is clear that there is far the greatest supply of gold to the north of Europe, but how it is got is again something I cannot tell exactly; it is said that the Arimaspi—men with one eye—steal the gold from the griffins. I cannot be persuaded about this either—that there exist in nature men who are just like everyone else except that they have only one eye. Certainly, however, it seems likely that the ends of the earth, which enclose and entirely shut in all the rest, should have in themselves what we think most beautiful and rarest.

117. There is a plain in Asia shut in on every side by mountains, and there are five ravines that break through the mountains. This plain was once owned by the Chorasmians; it lies on the borders of the Chorasmians themselves and the territory of the Hyrcanians, Parthians, Sarangians, and Thamanæans; afterwards, when the Persians conquered, the land became the property of the Great King. From the mountains that surround the plain flows a mighty river, the name of which is the Aces. Now this river in the old days divided into five and watered the territories of the five nations just mentioned, each one through its ravine; but when the Persians took over, this is what was done with the river and its openings: the King built and set up a gate at each ravine. As the water was cut off from getting out, the plain within the mountains became a huge lake; for the river flowed in but had nowhere egress. So those who were wont to use the water and now have none are greatly at a loss. For in winter there is rain there, as in all other countries, but in summer the inhabitants have constant need of water for the millet and sesame seed that they sow. So when no water is given them, they and their womenfolk come to the Persians and, standing at the gates of the royal palace, raise a great to-do, and the King gives orders to open the gates that lead to these people's country, for those who need it worst. When their land is satiated with drinking up the

water, these gates are closed off again and the King orders the other gates opened to the other peoples who are in need. From what I hear, the King levies great sums for the opening of the gates, apart from the other tribute he exacts.

118. So much for that. Of the Seven who had formed the conspiracy against the Magian, one—Intaphrenes—had already been overtaken by death; he had done a deed of violence and insolence shortly after the uprising, and he died. This is how it was. He wanted to enter the palace on some business with the King, and the law stood, as I have related, that the Seven had free entry to the palace without announcing themselves, except at such times as the King was in bed with a woman. Therefore, Intaphrenes thought fit that no one should announce him, but that, since he was one of the Seven, he might enter. Now, the gatekeeper and the messenger-bearer would not suffer it; for, they said, the King *was* in bed with a woman. Intaphrenes thought that the men lied; he drew his scimitar and cut off their ears and their noses, threaded them on his horse's bridle and tied this round the men's necks, and so let them go.

119. They showed themselves to the King and told him why they had so suffered. Darius was terrified that the Six might have done this by common agreement, and so he sent for them, one by one, and made test of their mind toward himself—as to whether what had been done was done to their common liking. When he found out that Intaphrenes had not acted with the consent of the rest of them, he had him arrested, together with his sons and all his household. For he had strong thoughts that the man was plotting a rising against him, together with his kinsfolk. So he arrested them and put them in prison, to await their death. The wife of Intaphrenes came constantly to the King's door and wailed and lamented. And this she did again and again—so much so that Darius was moved to pity her. So he sent his messenger to her and said, "Woman, King Darius grants you the release of whichever of your imprisoned household you will choose." She took thought and then said, "If the King gives me the life of one of them, I will, of all of them, choose that of my brother." Darius heard this and was astonished at what she said, and so he sent again: "The King asks you on what grounds you would abandon your husband and sons and choose your brother to survive. Surely he is more distant from you than your children and less dear

to you than your husband." She answered and said, "My lord, I can get a husband again, if it is God's pleasure, and other children if I lose these; but my father and mother being dead, in no way can I have another brother. This is why I have spoken as I did." Darius thought that the woman had spoken well, and so he released the brother she had asked for and also her eldest son, he was so pleased with her; but he killed all the others. So one of the Seven died immediately, and I have told how.

[REDACTED]

17. See 3.39.

18. The lyric poet.

[REDACTED]

124. [REDACTED] determined to make his voyage to Orontes—the [REDACTED] many oracles that [REDACTED] it and much [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] in his [REDACTED] support. Besides, his daughter [REDACTED] her sleep there was her father, aloft in the air, being [REDACTED] and anointed by the wind. [REDACTED] having seen this vision, she stopped at nothing in begging Polycrates not to go to

the Persians the privilege of choosing whomever they please, or by some other method. For my own part, I abdicate from this contest with you; I will not rule or be ruled. But I withdraw from any chance of rule on one condition: that I shall not be ruled by any one of you, neither myself nor my descendants." That is what he said, and the six others accepted his proposition on these conditions. He, then, would not join the contest but withdrew, and till this day his house continues as the only free one in Persia and is under the rule of another only insofar as it itself chooses, providing it does not overstep the laws of Persia.

84. The remainder of the Seven debated as to how they might most justly choose a king. They resolved that if the kingship should devolve upon someone else among the Seven, other than Otanes, there should be given to him and all his descendants, every year, special privileges: a gift of Median dress and all the awards that are most honorable among the Persians. They resolved to give him these things because he had been the first to plan the conspiracy and had brought them all together. These, then, were to be Otanes' special privileges. But in regard to all the other conspirators, they made the following decisions: any one of the Seven that pleased might come into the palace without formal announcement unless the king was sleeping with a woman; the king should not be allowed to marry of any other stock than that of the Seven. As for the selection of a king, they resolved this: that all of them should mount their horses in the outskirts of the city and, as the sun rose, whichever horse neighed first, his rider should possess the throne.

85. Now, Darius had a groom whose name was Oebares, and he was a clever fellow. When the meeting broke up, Darius spoke to this man: "Oebares, we have resolved to deal with the kingship this way: when we are all on horseback, whichever of our horses neighs first, as the sun rises, makes his rider king. Now if you have any trick to deal with this, contrive that we win the prize and not someone else." Oebares answered him: "Master, if being king or not being king lies in this only, be confident and of good cheer as far as this goes, for no one will become king other than yourself; I have potent medicines for that." Darius said: "If you have any such contrivance, you had better put it into practice without delay, for our game is on for tomorrow." When Oebares heard this, he did the following: at

nightfall he led out that one of the mares that Darius' stallion loved most and tied her in the outskirts of the city. He then led out Darius' stallion and led him around a great while in the neighborhood of the mare, at times just suffering him to touch her; finally he let him go, to mount and breed her.

86. At the day's dawning, the Six, as they had agreed, came mounted; they rode through the city's outskirts, and when they came to the place where the mare had been tied up the night before, Darius' horse plunged forward and neighed. At the very moment this happened, there was a flash of lightning (though the sky was cloudless) and a rattle of thunder. These additional signs clinched the selection of Darius; they were additional to the trick, and what happened was, as it were, a collusion between it and something else. The other riders jumped down from their horses and did obeisance to Darius.

87. That is one story of how Oebares contrived the outcome. There is another—for the Persians tell the story both ways—that Oebares had rubbed his hand against the mare's loins and then hidden his hand in his breeches. As the sun rose and the Six were letting their horses go, Oebares, stretching out his hand, brought it close to the nostrils of the stallion, who, immediately he smelled it, neighed and whinnied.

88. So Darius, son of Hystaspes, became king,<sup>11</sup> and all the peoples in Asia became his subjects, having been conquered by Cyrus and, after him, by Cambyses. All, that is, but the Arabians. These were never reduced to slavish subjection to the Persians but were guest-friends, because they had let Cambyses through into Egypt. Without the good will of the Arabians, the Persians could not have invaded Egypt. The first two marriages Darius made were among the Persians. He married the two daughters of Cyrus, Atossa and Artystone. Atossa had previously been married to her brother Cambyses and also to the Magian; Artystone was still a maid. He also married the daughter of Smerdis, son of Cyrus, whose name was Parmys; also Otanes' daughter, who had discovered the Magian to the conspirators. Everything was full of the power of Darius. First of all he made and set up a monument of stone. On it was an engraving

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of a man on horseback, with an inscription: "Darius, son of Hystaspes, with the help of his horse's excellence" (he there mentioned the stallion's name) "and that of Oebares the groom, won the kingship of Persia."

89. Having done these things in Persia, he set up twenty provinces, which the Persians themselves call satrapies. He set up the satrapies and appointed governors to them and appointed the tribute they should pay, nation by nation. He assigned to each nation those that were nearest to it, but the farther peoples he assigned to one nation or another. The governments and the yearly taxation were as follows. Those who were paying in silver must use the Babylonian talent, those in gold the Euboic. The Babylonian is worth one and one-sixth of the Euboic. In the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses there had been no regular fixed tax, only collection of gifts. Because of his tax assessment, and other things of the same kind, the Persians have a saying that Darius was a shopkeeper, Cambyses a master of slaves, and Cyrus a father. What they mean is that Darius kept petty accounts for everything, that Cambyses was hard and contemptuous, and that Cyrus was gentle and contrived everything for their good.

90.<sup>12</sup> From the Ionians, the Magnesians in Asia, and the Aeolians, Carians, Lycians, Milyans, and Pamphylians there came an aggregate of 400 talents of silver; this was the total tax assessed. This was the first tax province. From the Mysians, Lydians, Lasionians, Cabalians, and Hytennians came 500 talents; this was the second province. From the Hellespontines (as you go in on the right-hand side), Phrygians, Asiatic Thracians, Paphlagonians, Mariandynians, and Syrians there was a tribute of 360 talents; this was the third province. From the Cilicians came 360 horses, all white, one for each day of the year, and 500 talents of silver. Of these silver talents,

12. What follows is a systematic account of the provinces (satrapies) of the Persian empire under Darius. The information involved roughly coincides with what we know from the inscriptions of Darius that we possess. Herodotus is looking at the geographical organization of the territory as well as its assessment for tax purposes. We do not know where Herodotus got this document—or, rather, the information it contains—but the comparison with Darius' inscriptions seems to warrant us in rating highly Herodotus' accuracy, in the simplest sense of historical accuracy. After chapter 97 he is dealing with the far eastern boundary of the empire, and here he does not have the quality of information that marks the earlier part.

140 were spent on the cavalry that guarded Cilicia; the remaining 360 went to Darius. This was the fourth province.

91. From the city of Posideium—established by Amphilochus, the son of Amphiaraus, on the border between the Cilicians and Syrians—as far as Egypt (and always omitting the Arabians, who were not subject to tax), there was a tax assessment of 350 talents. In this province was all of Phoenicia, Palestinian Syria, and Cyprus. This was the fifth province. From Egypt and those parts of Libya that neighbor Egypt, and Cyrene and Barca (for these areas were all reckoned into this province of Egypt), there came a tribute of 700 talents, apart from the silver from Lake Moeris, which was from the fisheries. Apart from this silver and the grain that was measured out, there came, I say, 700 talents. As concerns the grain, this was 120,000 bushels, measured out to the Persians and their allies who were guarding the White Fort in Memphis. This was the sixth province. The Sattagydae, Gandarii, Dadicae, and Aparytae paid, all together, 170 talents. This was the seventh province. From Susa and the rest of the Cissian country came 300. This was the eighth province.

92. From Babylon and the rest of Assyria came 1,000 talents of silver and 500 boys, to be eunuchs. This was the ninth province. From Ecbatana and the rest of Media and from the Paricanians and the Orthocorybantians, 450 talents. This was the tenth province. The Caspii, Pausicae, Pantimathi, and Daritae paid jointly 200 talents. This was the eleventh province.

93. From the Bactrians, as far as the Aegli, came a tribute of 360 talents. This was the twelfth province. From the Pactyc country and Armenia and the neighboring parts, as far as the Euxine Sea, there came 400 talents. This was the thirteenth province. From the Sagartii, Sarangeis, Thamanaei, Utii, Myci, and those who live on the islands in the Red Sea, where the King establishes the men who are called "The Transplanted"—from all these came a tribute of 600 talents. This was the fourteenth province. The Sacae and the Caspii contributed 250 talents. This was the fifteenth province. The Parthians, Chorasmians, Sogdians, and Arians paid 300. This was the sixteenth province.

94. The Paricanii and Ethiopians in Asia contributed 400 talents. This was the seventeenth province. To the Matieni and Saspiri

and Alarodii was assigned a tax of 200 talents. This was the eighteenth province. To the Moschi, Tibareni, Macrones, Mossynoeci, and Mares was assigned a tax of 300 talents. This was the nineteenth province. The number of Indians is far greater than any other people I know of, and they contributed more also than any others. Theirs was a tax of 360 talents of gold dust. This was the twentieth province.

95. The Babylonian silver, reckoned in terms of the Euboic currency, comes to 9,880 Euboic talents. If one then counts the gold as worth thirteen times the silver, the gold dust is worth 4,680 Euboic talents. Putting all together, the yearly tribute to Darius amounts to 14,560 talents. In this total I disregard units of less than ten talents.

96. This tribute came to Darius from Asia and some few parts of Libya. But as time went on, there was another field of taxation in the islands<sup>13</sup> and again in Europe, as far as Thessaly. His tribute the King stores as follows: he melts it down and pours it into earthen vessels, and when he has filled the vessel, he breaks off the outer layer of baked earth. When he needs money, he cuts off from the ingot as much as he wants for the coinage.

97. These were the governments and the settings of the taxation. I have not recorded any taxation of Persia, which is the only country not subject to tax. The Persians hold their land free of tax. The following peoples are not ordered to pay any taxes, but they contribute gifts. The Ethiopians who are neighbors to Egypt—that is, those Ethiopians whom Cambyses subdued on his way to the long-lived Ethiopians—and those who are settled about holy Nysa and celebrate festivals to Dionysus—these two peoples together bring their gifts every other year. (These Ethiopians and their neighbors are like the Callantian Indians in that they have black semen instead of white; they live in underground dwellings.)<sup>14</sup> The gifts of these peoples, which were still being given in my time, were two choenixes of unrefined gold and two hundred ebony logs, five Ethiopian boys, and twenty great elephant tusks. The Colchians also contributed gifts, and so did their neighbors as far as the Caucasus Mountains (for as far as these mountains the government is Persian, but north of there no one regards the Persians); these people still

13. The Greek islands in the Aegean Sea.

14. See, for the same observation, chapter 101 of this book. Some editors think that the passage was mistakenly transferred from there to here. The Callantians are also referred to in 3.38, where they are called Callatians.

contributed gifts in my time and made the collection every four years. Their gifts were a hundred boys and a hundred girls. The Arabians contributed a thousand talents of frankincense every year. These, then, were the gifts that these peoples brought to the King, apart from the taxes.

98. The great abundance of gold, from which they bring to the King their gold dust, is won by the Indians as I shall show. All the eastern portion of India is sand. Indeed, of all the people whom we know and about whom there can be said anything with exactness, the Indians, of all the nations in Asia, live furthest to the east and the rising sun; and all the country of the Indians to the east is desert because of the sand. There are many peoples among the Indians, all speaking different languages, and some of them are nomads and some are not, and some of them live in swamps round rivers and eat raw fish, which they catch out of the reed boats from which they fish. Each boat is made of a single section of a great reed. These Indians also wear garments made of reeds. They mow and cut the reeds from the river and then weave them together, in the fashion of a mat, and put it on like a breastplate.

99. Others of the Indians, living to the east of these, are nomads and eaters of raw meat. They are called Padaei, and these are their customs: when one of their citizens falls sick, be it man or woman, those of closest association with him—men if he be a man—kill him, saying that, as he wastes away with disease, his flesh is being lost to them. If he denies that he is sick, they will still not grant him that but will kill and eat him anyhow. If it be a woman that is sick, it is again those that have had most to do with her that treat her just as the men treated the man. When a man comes to old age, they kill him and make a banquet of him; but not many of the people come to be of this kind because, before that, they fall sick and are, every one, killed.

100. There are other Indians, again, and another style of life. These will not kill any living thing, nor do they sow or possess houses; and what they eat is herbs. There is among them a grain about the size of millet within a husk, and this grain grows unsown out of the earth. The people collect it and boil and eat it, husk and all. When one of these falls sick, he wanders into the desert and lies down, and no one troubles about him, whether he is sick or dead.

101. Among the Indians I have spoken of, sexual intercourse is

quite public, as it is among the animals; their skin is as black as that of the Ethiopians. The seed that they ejaculate into their women is not, like the rest of mankind, white but black, as their skin is. The seed of the Ethiopians is likewise black. These Indians live furthest from the Persians, toward the south, and they were not subjects of King Darius.

102. There are others of the Indians who are neighbors of the city of Caspatyrus and the Pactyic country, north of the rest of India, and these live much like the Bactrians. They are the most warlike of the Indians, and it is they who go in quest of the gold; for in these parts all is desert because of the sand. In this desert, and sand, there are ants that are in bigness lesser than dogs but larger than foxes. Some of them have been hunted and captured and kept at the palace of the Persian king. These ants make their dwelling underground, digging out the sand in much the same fashion as ants do in Greece, and they are also very like them in form. The sand that they dig out has gold in it. The Indians start off into the desert to get at this sand. Each of these hunters harnesses together three camels, a male on either side, on a trace, and the female in the middle, on which the rider is mounted. He takes care that this mare camel should have offspring as young as possible, from which she has been taken away for the ride. Among these people, camels are every bit as quick as horses, apart from being far more capable of carrying burdens.

103. The Greeks know camels, so I will not write to describe their shape; but I will tell something that is not known. The camel in the hind legs has four thighs and four knees, and its genitals are turned toward the tail, between its hind legs.

104. Such is the gear of the Indians and such their method of harnessing when they go after the gold. They go expressly at that hour of day that will allow them to be in their hunt for gold when the heat is greatest; for by reason of the heat the ants will have vanished underground. In India the sun is hottest early in the morning—not, as among other people, at midday; in India it is hottest from sunrise till the breaking-up of the market. During this period it is far hotter than at midday in Greece, so that it is said the inhabitants at this time wet themselves over with water. The midday heat is in India about the same as it is among other men. But, as the afternoon comes on, the Indian sun becomes much as it is elsewhere in

the early morning, and from then it grows cooler and cooler, till at sunset it is indeed exceedingly cold.

105. The Indians then come to the place with bags, and after they have filled their bags with sand, they make off for home as fast as they can. For, as the Persians say, the ants become aware of them by smell and pursue them. There is nothing quicker than these ants, and so, if the Indians did not get well ahead of them while the ants were collecting, not one of the men would escape alive. The male camels, which are inferior to the females in quickness, begin to lag behind and are cut loose by the riders, one at a time. But the mare camels, as they think of their young, do not slack off at all. This is how, say the Persians, the most of the gold is won by the Indians. The rest of it, a smaller amount, is mined in their country.

106. Somehow the furthest parts of the world have the finest things in them; but, in the same way, Greece has much the best blend of seasons. So, as I have just said, there is India, furthest to the east. In it all living things, four-footed and winged, are far bigger than elsewhere, except for the horses. Indian horses are inferior to the Median horses that are called Nesaeian. And there is this tremendous store of gold, some of it mined, some of it carried down by rivers, and some plundered from the ants, as I have shown. They have wild trees there that bear a fruit that is in beauty like wool and in excellence as good as that which comes from sheep. The Indians wear clothes made from these plants.<sup>15</sup>

107. Furthest to the south of all the world is Arabia, and this is the one country on earth for growing myrrh and cassia and cinnamon and gum-labdanum. All of these are won by the Arabians, but with difficulty, except for the myrrh. They collect frankincense by burning storax, which the Phoenicians export to Greece. This burning is a part of the harvesting of the frankincense. For the bushes that grow frankincense are guarded by tiny winged snakes, of dappled color, and there are great numbers of them around each bush; these are the snakes that attack Egypt.<sup>16</sup> There is nothing that can drive them from the bushes except the smoke of the storax.

108. The Arabians say that the whole land would be filled with

15. Cotton.

16. Cf. 2.75.

these snakes if something did not happen to them which I have known to happen to vipers. There is a divine providence, with a kind of wisdom to it, as one might guess, according to which whatever is cowardly of spirit and edible should be prolific in progeny, so that, with all the eating of them, they should not fail to exist; while things that are savage and inflict pain are infertile. For instance, the hare is hunted by every wild beast, bird, and man; but it is very prolific. It is the only one of all creatures that conceives on top of an existing pregnancy. Some of its children in the womb have fur already, while others are still bare; some are being shaped in the womb while others are being conceived. That is how the hare is. But the lioness, which is the strongest and most daring of animals, gives birth only once in her life and to but one cub. When she gives birth, she expels the womb with the cub. The reason is that, when the cub in the womb begins to stir, it has the sharpest nails of any creature and tears at the womb; as it grows bigger, the scratching grows worse, and, when the birth is near, there is hardly any of the womb left whole.

109. So it is also with the vipers and the winged snakes in Arabia: if these were to be born as nature is in them to do, there would be no living for man. But, as it is, when they are mating in couples and the male is in the very act of emitting his seed, the female, as he does so, seizes him by the neck and, hanging on, never lets him go till she has bitten the neck through. This is how the male dies; but the female pays a kind of recompense, too, to the male. For the children, while still in the womb, take vengeance for their male parent by eating through their mother's insides and so make their entry into the world after eating up her womb. Other snakes, which are not destructive of man, lay eggs and hatch out an infinity of children. Vipers are all over the earth; but these winged snakes are all concentrated in Arabia and nowhere else. That is why they seem so numerous, because they are all in this place only.

110. That is how the Arabians get their frankincense; and this is how they get the cassia: they bind ox-hides and other kinds of leather over all their body and their faces, except their eyes, when they go out to get cassia. This grows in shallow ponds, and round the pond and in it there live winged creatures, very like bats, with a dreadful squeak and very ready to fight. You must ward these off your eyes if you are to harvest the cassia.

111. Their method of collecting cinnamon is even more remarkable. Where it grows and what sort of land produces it they cannot say, except that they declare, with a show of reason, that it grows in the places where Dionysus was reared. They say that great birds carry these dry sticks, which we have learned from the Phoenicians to call cinnamon, and that the birds carry the sticks to their nests, which are plastered with mud and are placed on sheer crags where no man can climb up. The Arabians have found the following trick to deal with this. They cut out the limbs of dead oxen and asses, taking as much of the limbs as possible, and carry them to the part of the country where the nests are, and there they put them near the nests and themselves withdraw to a distance. The birds swoop down and carry off the limbs of the beasts to their nests, and the nests, being unable to bear the weight, break and fall down, and the Arabians approach and collect what they want. Thus is cinnamon gathered in these parts, and so from there it comes to other countries.

112. Gum-labdanum, which the Greeks call ledanum and the Arabians ladanum, is even more strangely produced. It is the most sweet-smelling of all things, and yet its birth is in the worst of stinks. For it is found growing in the beards of he-goats; it forms in them like tree gum. This is a substance useful for many perfumes, and the Arabians burn it chiefly as incense.

113. That, then, is enough about spices and perfumes. There is a most marvelous sweet smell from all this land of Arabia. There are there also two varieties of sheep that are worthy of wonder and occur nowhere else. The one of these has a long tail, not less than four and one-half feet. If this were suffered to trail after the sheep, it would be injured because of the rubbing of the tail on the ground. As it is, every shepherd knows enough of carpentry to make a small cart on which to fasten the tail, one for each sheep. The other variety of sheep has a thick tail that is one and one-half feet broad.

114. To the southwest of the world, Ethiopia is the furthest of all inhabited lands. It has much gold and abundant elephants, and all manner of wild trees and ebony, and the tallest, handsomest, and longest-lived men.

115. These, then, are the countries that are at the uttermost ends of the earth in Asia and Libya. But about the limits of the world toward the west, in Europe, I cannot speak with certainty. For my own part, I do not accept that there is a river, called Eridanus by

the barbarians, that issues into a sea toward the north, from which it is that amber comes; nor do I know of the actual existence of the Tin Islands, from which our tin comes. The very name Eridanus speaks against their story, for it is a Greek, not a barbarian, word, made up by some poet or other. Nor have I been able, for all my efforts that way, to hear from anyone who was an eyewitness that there is a sea beyond Europe. But certainly our tin and our amber come from the edges of the world.

116. It is clear that there is far the greatest supply of gold to the north of Europe, but how it is got is again something I cannot tell exactly; it is said that the Arimaspi—men with one eye—steal the gold from the griffins. I cannot be persuaded about this either—that there exist in nature men who are just like everyone else except that they have only one eye. Certainly, however, it seems likely that the ends of the earth, which enclose and entirely shut in all the rest, should have in themselves what we think most beautiful and rarest.

117. There is a plain in Asia shut in on every side by mountains, and there are five ravines that break through the mountains. This plain was once owned by the Chorasmians; it lies on the borders of the Chorasmians themselves and the territory of the Hyrcanians, Parthians, Sarangians, and Thamanæans; afterwards, when the Persians conquered, the land became the property of the Great King. From the mountains that surround the plain flows a mighty river, the name of which is the Aces. Now this river in the old days divided into five and watered the territories of the five nations just mentioned, each one through its ravine; but when the Persians took over, this is what was done with the river and its openings: the King built and set up a gate at each ravine. As the water was cut off from getting out, the plain within the mountains became a huge lake; for the river flowed in but had nowhere egress. So those who were wont to use the water and now have none are greatly at a loss. For in winter there is rain there, as in all other countries, but in summer the inhabitants have constant need of water for the millet and sesame seed that they sow. So when no water is given them, they and their womenfolk come to the Persians and, standing at the gates of the royal palace, raise a great to-do, and the King gives orders to open the gates that lead to these people's country, for those who need it worst. When their land is satiated with drinking up the

water, these gates are closed off again and the King orders the other gates opened to the other peoples who are in need. From what I hear, the King levies great sums for the opening of the gates, apart from the other tribute he exacts.

118. So much for that. Of the Seven who had formed the conspiracy against the Magian, one—Intaphrenes—had already been overtaken by death; he had done a deed of violence and insolence shortly after the uprising, and he died. This is how it was. He wanted to enter the palace on some business with the King, and the law stood, as I have related, that the Seven had free entry to the palace without announcing themselves, except at such times as the King was in bed with a woman. Therefore, Intaphrenes thought fit that no one should announce him, but that, since he was one of the Seven, he might enter. Now, the gatekeeper and the messenger-bearer would not suffer it; for, they said, the King *was* in bed with a woman. Intaphrenes thought that the men lied; he drew his scimitar and cut off their ears and their noses, threaded them on his horse's bridle and tied this round the men's necks, and so let them go.

119. They showed themselves to the King and told him why they had so suffered. Darius was terrified that the Six might have done this by common agreement, and so he sent for them, one by one, and made test of their mind toward himself—as to whether what had been done was done to their common liking. When he found out that Intaphrenes had not acted with the consent of the rest of them, he had him arrested, together with his sons and all his household. For he had strong thoughts that the man was plotting a rising against him, together with his kinsfolk. So he arrested them and put them in prison, to await their death. The wife of Intaphrenes came constantly to the King's door and wailed and lamented. And this she did again and again—so much so that Darius was moved to pity her. So he sent his messenger to her and said, "Woman, King Darius grants you the release of whichever of your imprisoned household you will choose." She took thought and then said, "If the King gives me the life of one of them, I will, of all of them, choose that of my brother." Darius heard this and was astonished at what she said, and so he sent again: "The King asks you on what grounds you would abandon your husband and sons and choose your brother to survive. Surely he is more distant from you than your children and less dear