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Anger as an Ethnographic Trope: Changing Views from Aristotle to Seneca

In the Roman philosopher Seneca's three books dedicated to understanding the causes and remedies of anger, the philosopher identifies this emotion as the most destructive of human passions.[1] While he of course takes for granted anger's presence in his own society, he seems to have believed it could be especially prominent amongst certain non-Roman peoples. To take one instance, in response to an interlocutor who suggests that surely anger is at least useful in military contexts, Seneca asserts that nothing could be further from the truth:

> For what else could it be that cripples the barbarians who are so much more powerful in body, so much more resilient towards sufferings [than we are], other than anger, a thing most inimical to oneself?[2]

He then asserts that various tribal groups along Rome's frontier are the most fierce, warlike, and hardy of all peoples. Yet they can be defeated by Romanized Spaniards, Gauls, and men of Syria and Asia, the latter two often represented as being comparatively weak and unwarlike in traditional Greco-Roman ethnography.[3] For Seneca argues that the northern tribes can be defeated for no other reason than the crippling effects of their *ira*, their anger. What wins wars in Seneca's opinion are *ratio* and *disciplina*, which in the Roman military context means the capacity to obey commands and restrain other impulses. So despite characteristics that might be supposed to confer a military advantage on the barbarians of Seneca's day, he asserts that Rome's enemies are decisively hampered by their susceptibility to the emotion anger, a thing "most inimical to oneself." Nor was Seneca alone in focusing on the tendency towards anger as a characteristic of peoples east and north of the Rhine and Danube frontiers, as will be discussed below.[4] In the writings of Seneca, then, anger plays a prominent role among the list of characteristics separating the peoples of the Hellenistic, Romanized world from their civilizational inverse, the barbarians of the periphery. That this is the

1 I would like to thank Douglas Cairns and David Konstan for their generosity with their time and comments in reviewing drafts of this essay.

2 *De Ira* 1.11.1.

3 For examples and references, see Isaac (2004) 324–351.

4 On ethnographic stereotypes for groups inhabiting these geographical areas, see Lampinen (2011) 218–27. On characteristics associated with the term "barbarian" in Latin texts in general, see Dauge (1981) 424–31.

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case reflects a not only a marked shift in the *locus* of the "barbarian" in the Greco-Roman world, first associated with the Achaemenid Persian Empire, but also the fact that perception and construction of the concept itself could be remarkably fluid, if not outright contradictory.[5]

Seneca wrote in the first century AD under the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors, some six hundred years after the point at which scholars have argued that the concept of the barbarian itself took on a new significance. The conventional view is that, initially, "barbarian" was a vague term referring to foreign or corrupt speech but that it gradually became an important factor in processes of pan-Hellenic self-definition.[6] As has been supposed by many scholars, however, it was only following the surprise victories over the Persian forces of the Great Kings Darius and Xerxes that the Greeks came to think of themselves as sharing common cultural characteristics in opposition to a barbarian Other.[7] It is a familiar assertion among modern scholars that the "barbarian" was a useful concept for first Greek and then Roman societies in determining who belonged and who was an outsider.[8] One might reasonably expect the emotion anger, then, to be one of the defining features of the barbarian in the classical Greek world, as it certainly appears to be so in the writings of Seneca the Younger, who lived in the first century of the Roman principate.

And so it is: anger is central to the delineation between Greeks and barbarians, as early as the fifth century BC, but in ways that are perhaps surprising. For in fact, anger – or at least the capacity for, or predisposition and tendency

5 It has of course been recognized that this ambiguity of the term was present already in the fifth century BC, as illustrated by Herodotus' observation that "the Egyptians call all those who speak a language different from their own 'barbarians'": βαρβάρους δὲ πάντας οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι καλέουσι τοὺς μὴ σφίσι ὁμογλώσσους (Herodot. 2.158.5). A similar relativism appears in a fragment of Antiphon, when he states that "we have become barbarians in one another's eyes; for by birth, at least, we are all naturally adapted in every respect to be either Greeks or barbarians": πρὸς ἀλλήλους βεβαρβαρώμεθα· ἐπεὶ φύσει γε πάντα πάντες ὁμοίως πεφύκ[α]μεν καὶ βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλλην[ες] εἶναι (quoted in Pendrick (2002) 180, Pendrick's translation). At least from the fifth century BC, one sees the notion that "barbarian" could be a relative concept predicated on one's point of view.

6 See Almagor (2005) 44–47. For an intriguing and novel discussion of the origins and early function of the term, see Kim (2013) 25–48.

7 Two of the most influential studies describing processes of Hellenic identity formation are those of Edith Hall (1989) and Jonathan Hall (1997).

8 To take just one example, in the *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, Andrew Gillett summarizes the function of the term: "The figure of the barbarian served to define and unify 'us' while reducing 'them' to a single, alien category." Gillett (2013) 1043. For a recent affirmation of the validity of the Greek-barbarian dichotomy in the classical Greek imagination, see Harrison (2020) 139–63.

towards, this emotion – functions in some of the earliest ethnographic discourse of the classical Greek world in the exact opposite way to that indicated by Seneca. For in this earlier age, it was the Greeks themselves who employed terms associated with the emotion anger in sketching characteristics of their own Hellenic identity. The correlate of this assumption was that the *absence* of anger could be imagined as a characteristic of certain non-Greeks, or "barbarians," who posed the greatest threat to the Greek world in the imagination of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, i.e., the inhabitants of the vastly larger and more powerful Achaemenid Persian Empire. In some of the most influential Greek ethnographic texts of the fifth century, a defining characteristic of the barbarian was not a predisposition towards anger but rather the very lack of such an inclination[9] – just the opposite of what the above excerpt from the Roman philosopher Seneca in the first century AD might have led one to expect. This essay explores the ethnological significance attributed to the emotion anger at either end of this 600-year period and considers some of the implications of the evolving discourse of anger for Greek, and then Roman, conceptions of the civilized Self and the barbarian Other.

As there were of course multiple words for anger in both Greek and Latin, a brief discussion of terminology will be helpful.[10] In Greek, there are two words in particular that were primarily used to cover the semantic range of the modern English "anger:"[11] The first of these is *orgē*-ὀργή, which has been variously glossed as "natural impulse," "temperament," "disposition," "passion," "anger," "wrath." The second, and the one that concerns us most here, is *thymos*-θυμός, whose meanings are much more wide-ranging: "spirit," "heart," "mind," "will," "anger," or "the basis for the expression of anger." It has been argued that *orgē* may in some cases have had a stronger sense of madness or blind rage about it, but *thymos* too could express these very qualities, and we see this even in the very beginnings of Greek literature.[12] The first line of the *Iliad*, "sing goddess of

9 An important, though qualified, exception is the tendency of Herodotus, discussed below, to represent eastern despots or tyrants as especially susceptible to anger. See cairns (2021) and note 50 below.

10 For a discussion of terms in both languages as well as the Stoic understanding of the emotions, see Vogt (2006) 60–66.

11 It is interesting to note that the English word "anger" itself has changed over the centuries as to the emotion it represents. In its original form, it was directly derived from Old Norse *angr*, meaning "sorrow," "regret," and even "harm." Illustrating the overlapping shades of meaning attributed to a given word within a given language group, the word *harme* itself in modern Norwegian means "anger." Not surprisingly, the modern Norwegian word *anger* is closer to the Old Norse original, meaning "regret" or "sadness."

12 See Harris (2003) 123–124.

the wrath of the son of Peleus" uses the noun *mēnis*-μῆνις, which suggests an even stronger sense of madness; yet in Book 19 when Achilles looks back on the origins of his wrath, he refers to the *thymos* that Agamemnon had aroused in his breast, saying, "Father Zeus, you give great blind recklessness [*atē*-ἄτη] to men; not at all would Atrides then ever have aroused *thymos* in my breast . . ."[13] It is difficult to precisely translate *thymos* in this passage. Yet the context suggests that there is a connection between the *atē*-ἄτη, "blind recklessness," fostered in mortals by Zeus and the emotion experienced by Achilles that is at the root of actions whose commission he regrets.[14] In avoiding cumbersome, multi-word approximations of what *thymos* seems to signify here, I would suggest "anger" or "rage" as the most suitable translations. Still, as has been demonstrated at length by Douglas Cairns, *thymos* covers a remarkably wide semantic range in the poems of Homer, and association with the emotion anger is only one of many different possible usages of the word. This semantic richness of *thymos* persisted in later centuries, and the term continued to express a wide range of meanings; its possible equivalence with the more straightforward term *orgē* is only one of these.[15]

A brief discussion of ways in which *thymos* is used by Herodotus provides further illustration of the semantic range expressed by this single word. On its first appearance in Book 1, *thymos* simply has the sense of "desire,"[16] and this meaning of the word appears frequently throughout the work in the compound verbal forms *epithymein*-ἐπιθυμεῖν and *prothymein*-προθυμεῖν, the noun *epithymia*-ἐπιθυμία (and, less frequently, *athymia*-ἀθυμία), the adjective *prothymos*-πρόθυμος, and the adverb *prothymōs*-προθύμως. Other senses of the word include, but are not limited to, to consider or mull over (ἐς θυμὸν ἐβάλετο, 1.84.4; ἐς θυμὸν ὧν

13 'Ζεῦ πάτερ ἦ μεγάλας ἄτας ἄνδρεσσι διδοῖσθα:/ οὐκ ἂν δή ποτε θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἐμοῖσιν/ Ἀτρεΐδης ὥρινε διαμπερές (*Iliad* 19.270–272).

14 In Book 1, Achilles uses the expression of being "enraged at heart," θυμῷ κεχολωμένον (*Iliad* 1.217). Yet a translation of *thymos* as "heart" in the passage quoted above of course fails to convey the sense of the word in this particular context. On the relationship between *thymos* and *atē*, see Cairns (2019); for more in-depth discussion of *atē* see Cairns (2012) 1–52.

15 For comprehensive and informative discussion of the various meanings of *thymos* in Homer and later authors, see Cairns' (2019) entry in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. For an additional survey and discussion, see Kalimtzis (2012). On usage of Greek terms for anger in the fifth and fourth centuries, see Harris (2001) 50–70.

16 "for which they had desire": τῶν σφι ἦν θυμός (Herodot. 1.1.4); σφι θυμὸς ἐγένετο (8.116.2). Associations of *thymos* with desire appear in a number of forms: καταθυμίης, "much thought about" or even "loved," (5.39.1); ἀποθύμιον, "something undesired," (7.168.3); καταθύμια, "things desired," (9.45.2).

βάλευ, 7.51.3; 8.68c.1), to take heart in an exhortation (θυμὸν ἔχε ἀγαθόν, 1.120.3; 3.85.2; θυμὸν ἔχων ἀγαθὸν, 7.52.2),[17] to fulfill the desire of someone (ἀποπιμπλάναι αὐτοῦ τὸν θυμόν, 2.129.2), and for something to be a matter worthy of serious consideration (ἐνθύμιον, 2.175.5; 8.54.1). At other times, *thymos* appears as a sensory or cognitive organ in phrases such as "the things one wishes for in one's *thymos* ["heart"?]," [18] or simply the thing that "dwells in the ears of men," which reacts to the good and bad things it hears and produces corresponding sensations in the body.[19] Elsewhere, *thymos* may simply indicate the mental or emotional, as opposed to physical, aspect of a person or group, e.g., when the Athenians are said to be defeated "at heart."[20]

Still, the word *thymos* and its derivatives in the *Histories* of Herodotus at times also conveys a more direct sense of "anger" or the capacity to be driven by this emotion. For example, it appears in a passage where one is advised against "being angry at one's parents or those who are stronger than oneself";[21] accusations may stir up one's anger;[22] one may be simply "furious," as is the case with the Egyptian king Apries, who is described as being in a rage (περιθύμως ἔχοντα), or the Greek Periander, who is enraged (περιθύμως ἔχων).[23] So while it is clear that *thymos* and its derivatives may at times refer to a wide range of cognitive functions or capacities, "anger," or perhaps even "temper," are not infrequently the most suitable English equivalents in a given context.

As to why it was the case that some peoples might be more inclined towards the emotion anger than others, the Greeks developed a theoretical explanation, later adopted by the Romans to varying extent, that was rooted in the climatological thought of the day.[24] The Hippocratic text *Airs, Waters, Places* offers the earliest extant exposition of Greek climatological thinking and ways in which the environment was believed to condition not only human physiognomy but also emotional disposition. In this text, the case is made that attributes

17 The inverse is also possible, for one can be told not to despair, δυσθύμεε (8.100.3).

18 τὰ θυμῷ βουλόμενοι (5.49.4).

19 ἐν τοῖσι ὠσὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἰκέει ὁ θυμός (7.39.1).

20 ἐσσωμένοι ἦσαν τῷ θυμῷ (8.130.3).

21 ἐς τοὺς τοκέας καὶ ἐς τοὺς κρέσσονας τεθυμῶσθαι (3.52.5).

22 ἐπανάγειν τὸν θυμὸν (7.160.1).

23 Apries at 2.162.5; Periander at 3.50.3.

24 Among the most commonly discussed examples of climatological impact on human populations, in addition to those of the Hippocratic corpus and Aristotle, are Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 2.78; Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 6.1.3–12; Manilius, *Astronomica* 4.711–43; Ptolemy, *Apotelesmatika* 2.2–3. For modern discussion of Greco-Roman climatological thought, see Woolf (2011) 44–51; Jouanna (1999) 211–231. For a more in-depth discussion, including later reception of climatological thought, see Isaac (2004) 56–74, 82–109.

of different societies are significantly shaped, though not entirely determined, by the forces of climate. Beginning with a presumed division between peoples of Europe on the one hand and Asia on the other, the author of the Hippocratic text *Airs, Waters, Places* notes that the climate of Asia is both more mild and more consistent than that of Europe, and that this has important physiological and ethical consequences:

> For I say that Asia differs most from Europe in relation to the natures of all of the things produced by the land there and of the human beings. For all things are much more beautiful and large in Asia, and the one land is more mild than the other, just as the customs of the people are more gentle and good-tempered [ἠπιώτερα καὶ εὐοργητότερα] . . . [It is likely that in Asia] the men will be well-fed, most beautiful in form, greatest in size, and least differing in appearance and size among one another . . . boldness, pertinacity, grit, and the predisposition to anger [*thymoeides*-θυμοειδές] could not occur in a natural state such as this, whether among those of the indigenous inhabitants or those coming from elsewhere, but it is necessary that comfort should be predominant.[25]

The result of the pleasant and less erratic climate in Asia is that plants, animals, and human beings are larger, more beautiful, and more alike amongst themselves when compared to living things in Europe. The author concludes, then, that qualities such as courage, toughness, and propensity to anger are naturally absent or diminished amongst the peoples of Asia. There, the inhabitants' customs and manner are characterized as being "more gentle," ἠπιώτερα, and "better tempered," εὐοργητότερα; this latter term directly suggests the absence of anger, using as it does the comparative form of the adjective *eu-orgētos*-εὐόργητος, based on the root word *orgē*-ὀργή but with the prefix *eu*, "good." As noted above, *orgē*, like *thymos*, had a variety of possible meanings including "temperament," "disposition," etc., but it is also one of the most common words for the emotion anger. The clear assumption in the Hippocratic text is that inhabitants of Asia are less likely to become angry and are otherwise characterized by having a mild temper.

The opposite is claimed for the inhabitants of (parts of) Europe. In this case, I have chosen to translate *thymoeides*-θυμοειδές as "having a predisposition to anger," and a brief digression on this choice of translation is relevant. In perhaps its most familiar context, the term *thymoeides* appears in Plato's tripartite division of the soul.[26] However, in the works of Plato and other authors, the term clearly conveys a sense very similar to "anger" or "irascibility."[27] For

25 *Airs*. 12.7–44.

26 See Harris (2001) 90–92 with references.

27 For example, see Plato *Respublica* 2.375a, 4.440a-c, 4.441b-c, etc. I am grateful to Douglas Cairns for these references.

example, both *thymos* and *thymoeides* appear in Plutarch's essay *De Cohibenda Ira* ("On Restraining Anger") in contexts suggesting an equivalence between these terms and the emotion discussed by Seneca in his three-part treatise *De Ira* ("On Anger"). Indeed, Plutarch at times uses *thymos* and *orgē* as virtual synonyms: ἐν θυμῷ καὶ ὀργῇ.[28] Elsewhere in Plutarch's essay, *thymos* is compared to a flame, a thing that smokes and burns.[29] In such instances, it is perhaps the word "temper" that is the best equivalent in English to the words *thymos* and *orgē*, "temper" being a term that can have a neutral sense (i.e., one may have either good or bad temper), yet it clearly has just as strong, if not stronger, associations as the negative emotion anger. And yet also in Plutarch's *De Ira Cohibenda*, *thymos* is used to indicate the seat of the emotions or the seat of anger itself when one is encouraged to speak directly towards one's *thymos*.[30] Still, it is clearly established usage for Plutarch to assume that the word *thymos* may also signify the emotion anger directly when he refers to *thymos*, i.e., "anger," as the most destructive of the passions,[31] and he describes *thymos* as a tyrant to be dethroned.[32] Plutarch also makes use of the term *thymoeides*, here conveying a sense of "irascible" or "prone to anger," to describe the underlying temperament of a person who is exacting, luxurious, dissatisfied, and abusive, arguing that such an individual lives as a slave (δουλεύων) to his disposition.[33] The usage of terms for anger can at times be almost dizzying in Plutarch: he argues

28 *De Cohib*. 454a.

29 τῷ θυμῷ . . . καπνίζοντα καὶ διακαόμενον (*De Chohib*. 454e-f); *orgē* is mentioned in the following sentence with a near identical sense and using the same simile. On anger compared to fire or a flame, cf. Seneca, *De Ira* 1.7.1. Elsewhere, Seneca likens anger to smoke, *caligo mentium* (*De Ira* 2.10.1), or he combines the images of heat and smoke together (*fervor* and *caligo*). Seneca also considers anger to be most typical of those possessing a *fervidus*, "fiery," temper (*De Ira* 2.15.2; 2.19.1–2). As yet another example of climatological thought, Seneca identifies an excess of heat as responsible for the *ira* so common in northern peoples (*De Ira* 2.15.2); fieriness of mind or temper is his explanation for redness or fairness of hair and complexion, stereotypically associated with northerners (2.19.1–5). (The Hippocratic author provides an alternative explanation for complexion of northerners at *Airs* 20.21–24.) As has often been noted, the Indo-European etymology of *thymos* suggests associations with burning or smoke, and this same root appears in words for incense (θυμίημα) or the burning thereof. See Cairns (2019).

30 εἰπεῖν πρὸς τὸν θυμόν (*De Cohib* 458c).

31 διὸ καὶ [θυμὸς] μισεῖται καὶ καταφρονεῖται μάλιστα τῶν παθῶν (*De Cohib*. 455e). On *thymos*-θυμός as one of the passions, see also *De Cohib*. 459b.

32 *De Cohib*. 455b. Seneca describes a life in the service of any emotion (*adfectus*, the Latin equivalent of *pathos*-πάθος) as being under a tyranny (*De Ira* 1.10.2). For a discussion of these two works of Seneca and Plutarch, see van Hoof (2007) 59–86.

33 *De Cohib*. 461c.

that it is most shameful of all when we angrily (μετ᾽ ὀργῆς) blame those who are angry (ὀργιζομένοις) and punish them with anger (θυμῷ) for the things they have done wrong on account of anger (διὰ θυμὸν).[34] All of this is simply to demonstrate that while *thymoeides*, and indeed *thymos* itself, conveys a wide array of meanings, there are many contexts where "anger" or a predisposition to that emotion is clearly the sense intended by the author.

Returning to the climatological view of Hippocrates, who argued that the characteristic of *thymoeides* could not arise among peoples living in the consistently mild and pleasant climate of Asia, it is important to note that the Hippocratic text suggests that such qualities as irascibility or tendency to anger are also absent at the opposite extreme of the climatic continuum, i.e., the far north. There, one does not see the various "positive" features ascribed to the inhabitants of Asia, such as beauty and high stature that are engendered by climatological forces. In contrast, the physiognomy of the northernmost peoples known to the Greeks, the Scythians, is described as being "gross, fleshy, showing no joints, moist and flabby, and the lower bowels are as moist as bowels can be."[35] Like inhabitants of Asia and Egypt, the Scythians are similar amongst themselves in appearance as a result of the climatic consistency of the regions they inhabit.[36] In terms of the character of these northern peoples, they are generally described as being effeminate: they do work which would be reserved for women in Greek societies and otherwise live their lives as women; they are even described as being eunuchs.[37] The Scythians are represented as being so affected by the consistently cold climate that they are effectively "emasculated," ἀνανδρωθῆναι.[38]

Although an Asia-Europe dichotomy is clearly referred to in the text, a subtler formulation appears in the comparison between two different kinds of climates: those where the weather is consistently warm or cold, on the one hand,

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34 αἴσχιστόν ἐστιν, ὀργιζομένοις ἐπιτιμῶμεν μετ᾽ ὀργῆς καὶ τὰ διὰ θυμὸν ἡμαρτημένα θυμῷ κολάζομεν (*De Cohib*. 463f).

35 τὰ εἴδεα αὐτῶν παχέα ἐστὶ καὶ σαρκώδεα καὶ ἄναρθρα καὶ ὑγρὰ καὶ ἄτονα, αἵ τε κοιλίαι ὑγρότατοι πασέων κοιλιῶν αἱ κάτω (*Airs* 19.36–38). Trans. W.H.S. Jones. In addition to the opposition between Asia and Europe, the text also opposes Egypt to Scythia, noting the homogeneity of the inhabitants in the one region due to consistent heat, in the other to consistent cold (*Airs* 18.1–5; 19.1–7).

36 τὰ εἴδεα ὁμοῖοι αὐτοὶ ἑωυτοῖς εἰσι (*Airs* 19.28–29). Also 19.2–5.

37 εὐνουχίαι γίνονται οἱ πλεῖστοι ἐν Σκύθῃσι καὶ γυναικεῖα ἐργάζονται καὶ ὡς αἱ γυναῖκες δαιτεῦνται διαλέγονταί τε ὁμοίως (*Airs* 22.1–4).

38 *Airs* 22.69. The Hippocratic author explains that the impotence the Scythians experience is caused by their attempted remedies for alleviating the effects too much time spent on horseback. Yet the cold climate itself, along with fatigue, causes them to become emasculated before feeling any stimulation of desire.

and those where climatic conditions are varied and subject to frequent changes on the other. Asia is described as having a consistently warm climate, just as the northernmost regions of Europe have a consistently cold one. The result in either case is unwarlike human beings and greater degree of uniformity in physiognomy. It is therefore the variability in climate, the frequent and erratic shifts in temperature that supposedly obtain in some, but not all, parts of Europe that produce a temperament characterized by *thymoeides*, a predisposition to anger.[39]

It is also important to note that the Hippocratic understanding of climatic influence is not limited to physiognomy but extends to customs and behavior as well. This connection is equally explicit in the Hippocratic author's comments on what he perceives as typical traits among some European peoples. After describing the frequent and disruptive changes of the seasons and their impact on the physiognomy of those living in Europe, a phenomenon that leads the Hippocratic author to believe that some of the inhabitants of Europe vary physically much more amongst themselves than do peoples living in regions with less extreme changes in the weather, he correlates this more varied climate explicitly with behavioral dispositions:

> And regarding their customs, the logic is the same: the wild [*agrion*-ἄγριον], the doggedly independent [*ameikton*-ἄμεικτον], and the tendency to anger [*thymoeides*-θυμοειδές] are produced in the same nature. For the presence of constant [climatic] shocks engenders savagery of the disposition while it obstructs what is gentle and mild.[40]

Due to the forces of climate, the presence of *thymos*, here in its embodied/dispositional form *thymoeides*, is represented in correlation with a tendency to preserve their independence from other groups alongside a potentially angry and violent disposition. Still, it is important to note that the author's emphasis throughout is not on ethnic groups or peoples for the most part: Scythians,

39 That the author assumes this quality is apparent in some Europeans as a function of geography and climate, as opposed to heredity, is clear as well from the phrasing employed at various points: contrary to the impression produced by some English translations, the text refers not just to Asians and Europeans – Ἀσιηνοί and Εὐρωπαῖοι – but also "those who inhabit Europe," τοὺς τὴν Εὐρώπην οἰκέοντας, and "those who dwell in Asia," τοὺς τὴν Ἀσίην. There is a single instance each where the author refers collectively to the "Asian population," τὸ γένος τὸ Ἀσιηνόν (*Airs* 16.15–16), and the "population in Europe," τὸ γένος τὸ ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ (*Airs* 23.2). As has often been noted, the term *genos*-γένος could be employed in a wide range of contexts: by virtue of one's *genos*, one might be identified as a Greek, a Roman, a Scythian, a Lydian, a barbarian, a Cilician, a Byzantine, or even a Christian. The term could thus indicate one's ethnic or regional origins, one's political or civic status, or religious identity. Translating it here with "population" is perhaps imperfect, but nevertheless preferable to the term "race."
40 *Airs* 23.19–23.

Libyans, and Egyptians are indeed named in the text, as are other more obscure groups such as the Makrokephaloi, Phasienoi, and Sauromatai; but otherwise, one rarely sees references to specific ethnonyms. Indeed, "Greeks," i.e., Hellenes, appears only once and "Persians" not at all (unless understood in the sole instance where "barbarians," in opposition to Greeks, are mentioned).[41] Instead, the author is primarily concerned with different regions, climatological conditions, and the impact of those conditions on the respective populations. The assumption to be inferred throughout is that human physiognomy and temperament are by nature more or less the same but are conditioned by different climatological forces and local customs.[42]

Yet the author of *Airs, Waters, Places* also points to a secondary cause for this contrast between the customs of inhabitants of Asia and at least of certain regions of Europe: the difference in political systems. For the author argues that the fact that a monarchical form of government is more widespread in Asia than in Europe further inclines the inhabitants of Asia toward what he sees as an obedient and submissive disposition, a disposition contrasted with the independent and warlike temper of certain European societies. There is, of course, a certain circularity in the argumentation as to the relationship between climate, national characteristics, and dominant form of political regime: the Hippocratic schema seems to argue that a given climate predisposes a population to have a certain ethical disposition, which in turn makes it suitable to be organized politically in a fashion appropriate to that disposition; the form of political organization, in turn, reinforces the ethical disposition fostered by the specific climatological conditions. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this observation too does not imply that these differences are somehow hereditary or immutable characteristics; Greeks and barbarians, or Europeans and Asians for that matter, are not divided by any postulated essential difference. For the Hippocratic author explicitly states that in Asia, whatever Greeks *or barbarians* are not ruled by a single monarch are the most warlike – again, irrespective of any ethnic category.[43] Neither *thymos* nor *thymoeides* is explicitly noted; yet as discussed above, the tendency toward anger indicated by these terms is elsewhere

41 See below, note 43.

42 Jouanna (1999) 220–25.

43 ὁκόσοι γὰρ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ Ἕλληνες ἢ βάρβαροι μὴ δεσπόζονται, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτόνομοί εἰσι καὶ ἑωυτοῖσι ταλαιπωρεῦσιν, οὗτοι μαχιμώτατοί εἰσι πάντων: "whatever Greeks or barbarians are not ruled despotically in Asia, but are autonomous and labor for their own benefit [as opposed to that of a ruler], these are the most warlike of all." (*Airs* 16.33–36). This is the sole instance in *Airs, Waters, Places* where the term "barbarian" appears.

associated with having a warlike disposition and an insistence on political autonomy.

So it turns out that there are two factors in determining whether a population is warlike, quick to anger, and independent on the one hand, or peaceful, mild, and submissive on the other: climate – either its mildness or lack of variation – and form of political organization. Difference between human populations is thus not understood in terms of an ethnic essence in either case but is rather presented as the result of forces that act predictably and with (supposedly) empirically observable results. While the Hippocratic text clearly assumes the importance of nature, *physis*-φύσις, it also notes the alternative influence of *nomos*-νόμος, law or custom, which may exert a countervailing force.[44] Interestingly, however, when one of these two factors trumps the other, it is the latter. As noted above, the author claims that irrespective of whether one is Greek or barbarian, the members of a given community will be warlike if they are politically autonomous and have possession of the fruits of their labor, even if they are in Asia. Moreover, if inhabitants of a particular kind of environment are not naturally endowed with certain qualities, these may be effected in the population by a change of social custom.[45] It is thus clear that even in the consistently pleasant climate of Asia, the temperament of a given population, irrespective of whether or not it is a Greek or non-Greek community, may be determined by the form of political regime. Nevertheless, it remains the case that in the Hippocratic view, *thymoeides*, a predisposition to anger, is generally absent in the populations of Asia but characteristic of those in parts of Europe. Greeks, Thracians, and others living in the regions experiencing frequent changes in climate are therefore characterized by their thymotic disposition.

The place of anger in the Greek climatological framework has perhaps its most famous expression in Aristotle, who wrote some fifty to eighty years after the conventionally accepted dates for the composition of the Hippocratic *Airs, Water, Places*. Like the Hippocratic text, Aristotle works within the dichotomous schema that divides the known world between Asia and Europe. Within these two geographical zones, the Hippocratic text had referred to three climatological types: the consistently cold regions of Europe and the north, the consistently warm regions of Asia, and the parts of Europe where the climate

44 οὕτως οἱ νόμοι οὐχ ἥκιστα τὴν εὐψυχίην ἐργάζονται (*Airs* 23.40–41).

45 τὸ δὲ ἀνδρεῖον καὶ τὸ ταλαίπωρον ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ φύσει μὲν οὐκ ἂν ὁμοίως ἐνείη, νόμος δὲ προσγενόμενος ἀπεργάζοιτ' ἄν (*Airs* 24.19–22). For another example of this line of thought, see Polybius' digression on the customs employed by the Arcadians to mitigate the effects of the climate in which they live. Polyb. 4.21.1–4.

and seasons show great variation. Only the inhabitants of this third zone within Europe exhibit a tendency towards aggression and are presumably characterized by their *thymoeides*, a quality the Hippocratic author suggests is absent in inhabitants of Asia.[46] Aristotle makes a further and more pointed use of this *tertium quid*, a move that explicitly separates the Greeks in particular from other Europeans in general and elevates them to a position that embodies Aristotle's highest ethical ideal of reasoned and balanced moderation:

> The peoples living in cold regions and those within Europe are full of a predisposition to anger [*thymos*: θυμοῦ μέν ἐστι πλήρη], but they are comparatively lacking in terms of their understanding and technical capability; therefore, they remain more free but they are politically unorganized and unable to dominate those near them. In contrast, the nations of Asia are intellectual and adroit in their minds, but they are wholly without any propensity to anger [*athyma*-ἄθυμα]; therefore, they remain ruled over and in the state of slaves. But the nation of the Greeks, since it inhabits the regions in between, has share of both parts: for it is both endowed with *thymos* and is also intellectual; therefore it remains free and best organized politically – even able to rule all others, should it ever achieve a single regime.[47]

Aristotle here presents the Greeks as the people most truly blessed by their geographical position, for their location allows them to enjoy the benefits of either end of the climatological continuum. Yet his schema differs from that seen in *Airs, Waters, Places* in important respects. The Greeks are still located between climatological extremes, as was the case in the Hippocratic schema, but the primary significance of climatic differences (at least in so far as they impact the emotional disposition of human populations) no longer rests on a contrast between varying and unvarying climatic patterns but is now a simpler continuum between warm and cold regions, where the presence of *thymos*, and corresponding lack of mental acuity, increases in proportion to the coldness of the climate. Like the Hippocratic author, Aristotle believes that certain Europeans fail to achieve his idealized mean; yet Aristotle claims it is because they are thymotic to an excessive degree. While the Hippocratic text had attributed the unwarlike and effeminate temperament of the Scythians to the unchanging nature of their cold climate, Aristotle argues that northerners are full of the capacity for anger, of *thymos*, to an extreme, and it is this condition that makes them

46 The Hippocratic author does not explicitly refer to an absence of *thymos* or *thymoeides* among the Scythians of the north; yet he clearly draws a parallel between the unvaried cold of the regions they inhabit with the consistently mild climate of Asia, where the inhabitants are characterized by their lack of *thymos* or *thymoeides*. Moreover, the effeminate or emasculated qualities attributed to the Scythians would seem to suggest a correlate to the passivity the author attributes to the athymotic inhabitants of Asia.

47 *Politica* 7.1327b.24–34.

politically independent. But it does so to a fault, for as they cannot obey they cannot be organized politically and thus command others.[48] Moreover, this excess of *thymos* is correlated with a perceived dimness of intelligence. Looking eastward, he claims that the opposite is true of the inhabitants of Asia, who are clever and of quick intelligence but are *athyma*-ἄθυμα, "lacking in *thymos*," or the capacity for anger that is so prevalent in certain inhabitants of Europe. They are thus accustomed to be ruled by others, since, according to Aristotle, they are entirely without the necessary predisposition to anger that prompts independence. In Aristotle's imagination, it is of course the Greeks who enjoy the perfect balance of intelligence and *thymos*.

It is important to stress, however, that Greek characterizations of the inhabitants of different regions were not absolute. Herodotus, perhaps not surprisingly, is one of the authors who defies the patterns sketched above. While it is true that he does not ever refer to "anger" as being characteristic of the Persians, he does make clear that Persians are as capable of experiencing and expressing the emotion as anyone else. For example, he notes with approval the conditions under which it is permissible for a Persian, whether the Great King himself or any other, to indulge in anger.[49] That Herodotus does this in a generalized sense within an ethnographic digression is indicative of his assumption that Persians, as well as others, had the capacity to express, and a similar need to restrain, the emotion anger in social contexts. Indeed, it seems that Persian Great Kings in Herodotus have a particular tendency to be subject to the emotion, at least as it is expressed with terms derived from *thymos*.[50] Still, it is

48 Seneca subscribes to this same notion: nemo autem regere potest nisi qui et regi ("for no one is able to rule but he who can also *be* ruled"), *De Ira* 2.15.4. Yet it is interesting to note that Xenophon's description of Persian education includes an emphasis on this very capacity: παῖδες ὄντες μανθάνουσιν ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ("as children they learn both to rule and be ruled"), *Anabasis* 1.9.4.

49 τῷ θυμῷ χρᾶται (Herodot. 1.137.1).

50 Cyrus is advised by Croesus not to wholly express his anger: μὴ πάντα θυμῷ χρέο (Herodot. 1.155.3). Cyrus' son Cambyses also receives such an admonition from the former king of Lydia: μὴ . . . θυμῷ ἐπίτραπε (3.36.1); still, Cambyses is described as being angry at several points: θυμωθέντα (3.1.5; 3.32.4; 3.34.3). Xerxes, while in a state of anger, θυμωθεὶς, accuses the Persian Artabanos of being ἀθύμῳ (Herodot. 7.11.1). This instance is interesting in that it seems Artabanos is clearly being accused of what was an "Asiatic" stereotype in the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places*. Xerxes himself appears particularly susceptible to anger; he appears on multiple occasions as the subject of the verb *thymoō*-θυμόω, e.g., 7.39.1; 7.210.1; 7.238.2; 9.111.5. For further discussion of this point, see Cairns (2021), who statistically demonstrates a marked tendency for Herodotus to characterize Persian rulers as being quick to anger. While Herodotus associates anger with despotic or tyrannical rule in general, Cairns shows that he does so with far greater frequency in accounts of Asiatic rulers or commanders. There is not space to go

worth observing that while Herodotus notes there are conditions under which the Persians are inclined to express anger, in the part of his work most suited to include ethnographic generalization, i.e., within an ethnographic digression, he does not indicate any particular propensity among the Persians toward this emotion.

Aristotle, however, is quite clear about the presence of *thymos* to varying degrees amongst European peoples and its absence in inhabitants of Asia. As noted above, there had developed a much stronger sense of opposition between Europe and Asia in the Greek imagination of the fifth century BC, and Aristotle's starker division between the peoples of the two continents is surely a reflection of this trend. Yet Aristotle takes this dichotomy one step further: he perpetuates the notion of Greek superiority over the inhabitants of Asia, but he also further distinguishes the Greeks from their European neighbors, those who in the Hippocratic text seem to share an equal, not excessive, allotment of *thymos*. This elevation of the Greeks to a more exalted status is accompanied by an extension of the term "barbarian" by Aristotle explicitly to include northern peoples such as the Celts, referring to their impetuous bravery as "barbarian courage due to their *thymos*."[51] However, it is interesting to note that Aristotle primarily associates the term "barbarian" with peoples of Asia, and with the inhabitants of the Persian Empire above all.[52] In addition to references

into the argument here, but I would disagree with Harris' suggestion that Herodotus associates anger with the Persians as an ethnographic feature; surely the place for such generalizations would be in the ethnographic digression on Persia at 1.131–140, not in the representation of individuals. Harris (2001) 174–76.

51 ἡ βαρβαρικὴ ἀνδρεία μετὰ θυμοῦ ἐστίν. *Ethica Eudemia* 3.1229b.30–31. Also see a reference to Celts and other barbarians who inure their children to the cold from an early age (*Politica* 7.1336a.15–19). I would question, however, Harris' choice to describe the former instance as an Aristotelian reference to barbarians in the "traditional way"; likewise in regard to his evidence for characterization of the Carthaginians collectively in Polybius as "irascible characters." In the passages Harris cites, the Carthaginians are angry at the Romans' breaking of the treaty following the first Punic War by seizing Sardinia and imposing further indemnities (Polyb. 3.10.5; 3.13.1). That the Carthaginians were angry about Roman behavior in this case does not suggest an irrational susceptibility to their emotions. Harris (2001) 194, 198. Also see Erskine (2015) 116–118.

52 Kim summarizes the referent of the term as "the Persians and their Asian subjects invading Greece to deprive Hellas of its political freedom." Kim (2013) 30, 34–35. For a discussion of the term's earliest function in a new dichotomous worldview expressed in Aeschylus' *Persae*, see Edith Hall (1989) 57ff. According to Meier, the term referred primarily to Egyptians and Mesopotamians and then to other peoples the Greeks considered inferior to themselves. Meier (1995) 825.

to the Persian Wars where the Persians are referred to as "the barbarians," τοὺς βαρβάρους, and "the barbarian," τὸν βάρβαρον,[53] Aristotle claims that just as barbarians are more servile, δουλικώτεροι, than Greeks, it is also true that inhabitants of Asia are more servile than those of Europe; this assumption is the basis for his claim that barbarians "tolerate without distress a despotic form of government."[54] He also conflates Persian practice with a general barbarian tendency to adopt, or accept, tyrannical regimes while the general population remains in a state of enslavement, αἰεὶ δουλεύοντες.[55] Despite the occasional inclusion of European peoples north of Greece within the barbarian category, Aristotle maintains a strong association of the term with the supposed "athymotic" character of the nations of Asia.

That he did so conforms to stereotypes that had crystallized over the course of the fifth century, and it is often overlooked that the term seems initially to have been applied far less often to peoples living to the north of Greece. For example, Herodotus does not refer to the northern Scythians as barbarians at all in his *Histories*, whereas the Persians are consistently referred to as such.[56] Modern scholarship consistently overlooks this point. Paul Cartledge has said that "Herodotus . . . could make the Persians appear surprisingly Hellenic by the side of the, for him, most barbarous of barbarians, the Scythians."[57] Similarly, Susan Mattern states that "the most famous of Herodotus' nomadic barbarians are the ferocious, bloodthirsty Scythians."[58] We might then have expected Herodotus to actually use the term "barbarian" to describe them. In fact, the word occurs only once in the fourth book of the *Histories*, which is largely dedicated to

53 *Atheniensium Respublica* 22.7; *Ars Rhetorica* 2.22.7.

54 ὑπομένουσι τὴν δεσποτικὴν ἀρχὴν οὐδὲν δυσχεραίνοντες (*Politica* 3.1285a.20–23).

55 καὶ τἆλλα ὅσα τοιαῦτα Περσικὰ καὶ βάρβαρα τυραννικά ἐστι (πάντα γὰρ ταὐτὸν δύναται) (*Politica* 5.1313b.9–11).

56 The single possible exception I have been able to find appears in book two, when Herodotus refers to "Thracians, Scythians, Persians, Lydians, and nearly all the barbarians": Θρήικας καὶ Σκύθας καὶ Πέρσας καὶ Λυδοὺς καὶ σχεδὸν πάντας τοὺς βαρβάρους (Herodot. 2.167.1). At issue seems to be an association in the minds of modern scholars between barbarism and nomadism; Marshall writes, "While the nomads [of North Africa] are more civilized than the desert Libyans, they are also constructed as barbarian; they are, for example, the only Libyans whom Herodotus defines as barbarian through their promiscuity. Furthermore, the nomads are characterized as barbarian in similar ways to the desert Libyans." Marshall (1998) 51. Yet despite the presence of various cultural attributes some scholars have identified as being typically "barbarian," the word βάρβαρος does not appear in the passages of Herodotus to which Marshall refers the reader, i.e., 4.180 and 4.183.

57 Cartledge (2002) 69.

58 Mattern (1999) 73.

Herodotus' account of Scythia, and in that case it is a general reference to "a report shared by Greeks and barbarians."[59] While it is true that ethnic groups of various regions might be at times labeled barbarians by Greek authors of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, *the* barbarian, ὁ βάρβαρος, remains a clear reference to the Great King and his subjects.[60] Likewise, the "barbarian," when referred to in modern scholarship on fifth and fourth-century contexts, is usually an unambiguous reference to Persia and other inhabitants of Asia.[61] The term's application to Thracians, Scythians, and others seems to convey a more general sense of pejorative non-Greekness;[62] yet this extension of the term is not straightforward, as it assumes a far more universal application of the label than its original, and far more geographically specific, referent(s).

It has been argued that Aristotle's doctrine of natural slavery, equated with a state of barbarism, includes both inhabitants of Asia and Europe on the basis of either deficiency or excess of *thymos* due to climatic influence.[63] Yet this reading does not account for the political independence attributed to northerners by virtue of their thymotic excess – the very thing that allows them to resist enslavement while it limits their capacity to conquer others. Even though the Greeks were in practice quick enough to enslave Thracians and other European peoples (not to mention fellow Greeks), when Aristotle delineates the qualities to be sought among slaves he notes that they should not be taken from peoples of a thymotic character, i.e., that they should not be *thymoeideis*-θυμοειδεῖς.[64] The most consistent attributes of the label "barbarian" in the Aristotelian corpus are servility and associations with the Persian-dominated east, both of

59 ξυνὸς Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ βαρβάρων λεγόμενος λόγος (Herodot. 4.12.3).

60 Herodot. 7.163.2 et passim; Thucyd. 1.18.2; 3.56.4; 3.62.1. This assumption seems quite clear in the sources cited and discussed by Flower (2000) 65–101.

61 E.g., Mitchell (2007) 113–68.

62 See, for example, Thucydides' comparison of the Thracians to other barbarians (Thucyd. 7.29.4) and Aristophanes' use of the term barbarian in reference to a Scythian guardsman in Athens (*Thesmophoriazusae* 1051, 1171).

63 Heath (2008) 253–258. Aristotle writes, "Therefore, the poets say that it is proper for Greeks to rule barbarians, since that which is barbaric and that which is slavish are by nature the same thing": διό φασιν οἱ ποιηταὶ "βαρβάρων δ' Ἕλληνας ἄρχειν εἰκός," ὡς ταὐτὸ φύσει βάρβαρον καὶ δοῦλον ὄν (*Politica* 1.1252b.9–10). A similar idea appears in Isocrates, who claims that Greeks "think it proper to make use of barbarians as servants": τοῖς βαρβάροις οἰκέταις ἀξιοῦν χρῆσθαι (*Panegyricus* 181). For a discussion of Aristotle's view of slavery, especially in the poetic context he cites, see Cherry (2014) 632–655; on Aristotle's notion of natural slavery, see Teisserenc (2014) 121–134. Teisserenc rightly points to the difficulty of reconciling the servility Aristotle associates with inhabitants of Asia with the excessive freedom from any subjugation exhibited by some Europeans, Teisserenc (2014) 130–131.

64 *Politica* 7.1330a.27. On the enslavement of Thracians, see Harrison (2019) 42–43, 47–49.

which are tied to the perceived absence of *thymos* and any tendency to be compelled by the emotion anger in a manner that might have political consequences. Aristotle's choice to broaden the barbarian category to include Celts and other European groups north of Greece by virtue of their excess of *thymos* indicates not only a tension between changing conceptions of the barbarian but also an elasticity and malleability of the concept itself.[65]

There is a demonstrable trend, therefore, in fifth and fourth-century Greek ethnographic discourse that words associated with the emotion anger, or the predisposition to feel and express anger, were indeed employed in delineating the general boundaries of those who regarded themselves as Greeks in at least some of the major texts of the period. Yet in contrast to later correlations made between a tendency to feel or express anger and peoples identified as "barbarians" in Greek and Latin sources, this tendency was understood as a characteristic of the Greeks themselves – when present in moderation.[66] Moreover, this predisposition towards anger (or the closely related "high-spiritedness" or "temper") could serve as an explanation for the otherwise inexplicable events of the early fifth century: that a greatly outnumbered coalition of Greek cities had somehow managed to fend off the most powerful empire the world had yet seen. While Aristotle would, in contrast to the Hippocratic schema, explicitly attribute an excess of *thymos* to Europeans north of Greece, this quality may have also served to explain their independence and freedom from subjugation by Persia; like the Scythians, the Greeks (those of the European mainland, at least) had managed to remain outside the sway of the empire. Even though other authors of the fourth century note the harmful repercussions of anger, especially in political contexts, the absence of the capacity to feel anger, the state of being *athyma*- ἄθυμα, remained a central characteristic of the imagined figure of the "barbarian," itself a term initially associated with the East in general and Persia in particular. Moving beyond the Hippocratic formulation, Aristotle provided a climatological rationalization for extending the term to include northerners characterized by the opposite extreme of temperament as well.

When we return to Seneca, we see the extent to which anger and its function in ethnographic discourse had changed: in Seneca's case, the barbarian is

65 Monteils-Laeng (2019) 40–41.

66 And indeed, it was an emotion to be encouraged in certain civic contexts. Konstan (2007) 186–187; Harris (2003) 127–128. For further discussion of ways in which Plato and Aristotle ascribed positive functions to regulated anger in civic contexts, see Kalimtzis (2012) 33–34ff., 103ff. As Konstan has argued, a greater emphasis on the need to restrain anger in public or political contexts is more typical of the Hellenistic Age and later centuries. Konstan (2006) 75–76.

represented as inextricably associated with *ira*, the anger that impels and weakens those subject to it. By Seneca's day, the capacity to feel anger was no longer the thing that separated the philosopher's world from that of the barbarian; anger had become a characteristic feature of the barbarian Other in a way that builds on Aristotle's observation of excessive *thymos* in European societies north of Greece. There are several factors that may have contributed to this development, but the most significant are surely geopolitical. Following Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire in the late fourth century BC, the potential threat from Persia had vanished. Though the Parthian Empire eventually took its place, this successor to Achaemenid Persia and the empire of Alexander was neither as formidable nor as aggressive as its predecessors or its western neighbor, Rome.[67] Instead, as the Greek and then Roman gaze shifted northwards beyond the shores of the Mediterranean, new objects of both ethnographic and military interest appeared on the horizon. By Seneca's day, the new community fashioned by Rome had contributed to extending, if not relocating, *barbaricum* from the east to the north.[68]

Indeed, Aristotle's view that northerners suffered from an excess of *thymos* must have appeared to correspond well to the societies of Celtic and Germanic-speaking Europe, which lacked the economic complexity of urban centers, the centralization of political power over broad territories, and the discipline of organized military tactics on the battlefield. In accordance with the Hippocratic description of some inhabitants of Europe, they would have appeared in Greek eyes as characterized by their "wildness, dogged independence, and tendency to anger."[69] Later Greek literature largely maintained the association of excessive *thymos*, a condition predisposing certain groups towards an irascible temperament, with peoples living north of the Mediterranean shores. This association was only reinforced as new knowledge of different societies expanded in step with first Greek commercial – then Roman imperial – penetration of the inland regions of Illyria, Gaul, and Iberia. It is in this context that the *locus* of the barbarian shifted northwards to include new military enemies, and occasional invaders, of the Hellenistic world.

67 Isaac (2013) 241–246. On renegotiations of Hellenic identity and its relationship to the "barbarian" world, see Vlassopoulos (2013) 278–320.

68 Isaac (2004) 83–85. For discussion of the relevant philosophical discourse in this period, see Müller (1993) 46–52. Still, even if the term "barbarian" began to be associated with northern peoples in later centuries, the impact of fifth-century Greek literature assured that Achaemenid Persia and succeeding empires in the region could always be referred to as "barbarian."

69 τό τε ἄγριον καὶ τὸ ἄμεικτον καὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς (*Airs* 23.19–23).

For by the mid second century BC, Polybius associated the presence or abundance of *thymos* with Celtic peoples of Europe, and, as will be discussed below, these societies clearly fell within the barbarian category. Polybius thereby illustrates the shift from primarily associating the barbarian label with inhabitants of Asia, peoples characterized by the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* and, for the most part, Aristotle as deficient in *thymos*, to those driven by anger to an excessive degree. For example, describing the decision of the Gauls, or Galatai-Γαλάται, to attack Roman-held parts of Italy, Polybius depicts them as being "full of irrational anger," θυμοῦ μὲν ἀλογίστου πλήρεις.[70] Fiercer in battle for their insistence on fighting without clothes, much less protective armor, Polybius describes how some of the Gauls died after recklessly falling upon the Romans under the influence of their "anger and rashness," ὑπὸ τοῦ θυμοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀλογιστίας.[71] This kind of behavior became a recognizable stereotype in later Roman depictions of northern societies, and it is clearly on display in the passage of Seneca with which this essay began. Indeed, Polybius directly correlates this kind of reckless charge with northern *thymos*, when he notes that the Gallic peoples are most to be feared in their rage, τοῖς θυμοῖς, in the first onrush.[72] Polybius also has nothing but disdain for the inability of the Gauls to make tactical decisions according to rational planning instead of the impulses of their *thymos*.[73]

The most significant feature of Polybius' ethnographic depiction of the Gauls for our purposes, however, is that there is no doubt in his mind that a people driven by their temper or tendency to become enraged are to be classified as barbarians. For Polybius refers to the Gauls as such at multiple points in his account of their conflicts with Rome.[74] This usage illustrates the extent to which a deficiency of *thymos* had ceased to be the primary defining characteristic of the barbarian, and Polybius makes clear that he sees no contradiction. For in praising not only the historians who passed on their accounts of the third-century attack on Delphi by Celtic peoples but also those who chronicled Persian campaigns against Greece in the fifth century, Polybius' juxtaposition of

70 Polyb. 2.21.2.

71 Polyb. 2.30.4.

72 τοῖς τε θυμοῖς κατὰ τὴν πρώτην ἔφοδον . . . φοβερώτατόν ἐστι πᾶν τὸ Γαλατικὸν φῦλον (Polyb. 2.33.2).

73 θυμῷ μᾶλλον ἢ λογισμῷ βραβεύεσθαι (Polyb. 2.35.3). The tendency to be subject to their *thymos* is not the only negative characteristic Polybius attributes to the Gauls; he elsewhere notes their faithlessness or unreliability, ἀθεσία (2.32.8). For further examples, see Erskine (2015) 107, n. 9.

74 Polyb. 2.7.12; 2.15.8; 2.35.6.

the two invasions associates the Celtic invaders with the armies of Persia; Polybius suggests that such historical works have inspired the Greeks to preserve their own freedom in the face of foreign invasion.[75] The placement of the two invasions side by side, each serving to emphasize Greek freedom in opposition to aggressive barbarian powers, is striking: there would otherwise seem to be little in common between the ecumenical, wealthy, urbanized empire of Persia and the Celtic invaders from the north.[76] Yet by suggesting an equivalency between the Persians and Celts, at least in terms of the extent to which they provided the Greeks with an opportunity to express their independence, Polybius juxtaposes what in Hippocratic and Aristotelian terms would have been two traditionally distinct categories – the excessively "thymotic" European with the "athymotic" inhabitant of Asia – under a single barbarian label.

Even if Aristotle had already moved in this direction, Polybius represents a further expansion of the geographical scope inhabited by the barbarian portion of humanity. In doing so, he undermines the rationalizing and climatological underpinnings upon which a "scientific" Greco(-Roman)/barbarian dichotomy could be based. It is curious that modern scholars are not more struck by this point. Craige Champion suggests that Polybius' representation of the Celts "conforms to the Greek/barbarian dichotomy which was first articulated in the fifth century as a response to the historical experience of the Persian wars," claiming that Polybius simply perpetuates the barbarian stereotypes of earlier centuries.[77] According to Champion, Polybius' choice to pair the Celtic invasion of Delphi with the Persian invasion of Greece was simply because these were "prime examples of Hellenic *logismos* triumphing over barbarian *thymos*."[78] Yet according to Aristotle and the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places*, *thymos* was the very thing the Persians, *the* barbarians, did not have. I would argue instead that the Greek understanding of the dichotomy, and the role played by *thymos* and the emotion anger, had changed markedly by Polybius' day and that he exhibits a quite different understanding of the term "barbarian" and its potential referents.

75 Polyb. 2.35.7. See Champion (1996) 315–328.

76 That he did so may have been at least partly prompted by the fact that the Celtic Galatians had been settled in Anatolia since the third century. The statement is also curious due to the fact that Roman hegemony over Greece was completed in Polybius' own day. On Greek perceptions of the Romans as barbarians, see Marincola (2011) 347–57; Erskine (2015) 118, n. 59. On Romans associated with the emotion anger, see Erskine (2015) 116–120.

77 Champion (1996) 327.

78 Champion (1996) 325.

The notion of the thymotic, enraged barbarian persisted in the Greek literature of the succeeding centuries, and was adopted by Latin authors as well, as more and more northern societies were subjected to the Mediterranean ethnographic gaze. For example, when Diodorus, writing in the mid-first century BC, describes the way in which druids among the Celts manage to dissuade armies on the verge of attacking one another when drawn up on the battlefield, he notes that "even amid the most savage barbarians, their anger (*thymos*) yields to wisdom and Ares pays his due reverence to the Muses."[79] Writing decades later, Strabo, in his geographical survey of the Roman-dominated world of the early principate also makes use of these Aristotelian ethnographic tropes. He notes that "the entire nation [of the Celts], which they now call Gallic or Galatic, is obsessed with warfare, quick to anger (*thymikon*-θυμικόν), and swift to fight – but they are otherwise straightforward and not malicious."[80] He elsewhere suggests that these two qualities are their most salient characteristics: their frankness or simplicity (*tō haplō*-τῷ ἁπλῷ) and their propensity to anger (*tō thymikō*-τῷ θυμικῷ).[81] The two authors thus employ the more broadly conceived *barbaricum* visible in Polybius; for like Diodorus, Strabo is perfectly clear that the Celts or Gauls may be referred to as "barbarians" throughout.[82]

These characteristics, simplicity on the one hand and propensity to anger on the other, also find expression in the early Latin texts concerned with northern peoples. To take just a pair of examples illustrating the latter, Julius Caesar in the first book of his *Gallic War* has one of the speakers in the text describe the Germanic chieftain Ariovistus as "a barbarian man, wrathful (*iracundum*) and impetuous."[83] Elsewhere, Caesar applies these same characteristics to the Gallic nation of the Aedui, when he notes that "greed drove some of them, anger (*iracundia*) and impetuousness drove others."[84] Caesar's own ethnographic representation of transalpine regions moves in step with the expanding barbarian world created by Hellenistic geographers and historians. In Roman eyes, and in the eyes of Greeks living under Roman rule, the stereotypical northern barbarian of Aristotle had become a new opposing pole to Roman

79 καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἀγριωτάτοις βαρβάροις ὁ θυμὸς εἴκει τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ ὁ Ἄρης αἰδεῖται τὰς Μούσας (Diod. 5.31.5).

80 Τὸ δὲ σύμπαν φῦλον, ὃ νῦν Γαλλικόν τε καὶ Γαλατικὸν καλοῦσιν, ἀρειμάνιόν ἐστι καὶ θυμικόν τε καὶ ταχὺ πρὸς μάχην, ἄλλως δὲ ἁπλοῦν καὶ οὐ κακόηθες (*Geographica* 4.4.2).

81 *Geographica* 4.4.5.

82 The term appears a full six times at 4.1.5 in Strabo's discussion of Massilia and its interactions with the Celts of the interior.

83 Hominem esse barbarum, iracundum, temerarium (*De Bello Gallico* 1.31.13).

84 Impellit alios avaritia, alios iracundia et temeritas (*De Bello Gallico* 7.42.2).

qualities of *temperantia*, *ratio*, and *constantia*, qualities that allowed Roman heroes and statesmen to feel and express anger within the bounds of reasoned moderation and in appropriate contexts – and perhaps to conquer it altogether: "[Fabius] defeated his anger before defeating Hannibal."[85] As the East had receded as a source of political threat to the Greco-Roman world, the peoples of cisalpine and then transalpine Europe became new referents of the barbarian label. At the same time, the capacity to be motivated (to the appropriate extent) by anger ceased to be as distinguishing a characteristic of those inhabiting the perfectly balanced center of the world, as Aristotle had believed was the case for the Greeks. By the time the Romans had established their hegemony over the Mediterranean, the emotion anger, especially when accompanied by a lack of rational self-restraint, had become closely associated with northern peoples whose conquered resources and slave labor further enriched the empire.

As noted above, it may be assumed that this expansion in the *locus* of the barbarian is best understood in terms of the great shift in the geopolitical position of Greco-Roman authors. Writers working within the Greek, and then Roman, ethnographic tradition had gone from being first the vulnerable objects of Persian imperial expansion to becoming the triumphant leaders of imperial conquest. Accordingly, the concept of the barbarian Other expanded to include not only the, as the Greeks saw it, subservient and passive subjects of the Great King of Persia but also the intractable, and, as the Romans saw it, civilizationally inferior peoples of the north. The result, however, was not just a broadening of the swath of humanity to be designated as "barbarians"; it also entailed the loss of any consistently conceived notion of an Other against which Hellenized, Roman civilization could be defined.[86]

The role of terms for the emotion anger, or concepts closely associated with it, in this evolving discourse of alterity therefore illustrates the fluidity and instability of Greek and then Roman efforts to provide a coherent rationalization

85 iram ante vicit quam Hannibalem (Seneca, *De Ira* 1.11.5).

86 Adding further complexity to the picture is the fact that the term "barbarian" never lost its original associations with speech or use of language that was seen as somehow corrupt, deficient, or inferior: even in fifth-century AD (and nearly post-Roman) Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris could make a pun about his Roman friend's mastery of the Burgundian language of some of the region's new, and increasingly dominant, inhabitants, saying, "it is impossible for you to imagine how funny it is to me and others whenever I hear that the barbarian is afraid to commit a barbarism in his own language when you are present": aestimari minime potest, quanto mihi ceterisque sit risui, quotiens audio, quod te praesente formidet linguae suae facere barbarus barbarismum (*Epistles* 5.5.3).

for the parameters of their own cultural and political communities. Beginning with Herodotus' more or less clearly articulated definition of what it meant to be Greek, *to Hellēnikon*-τὸ Ἑλληνικόν,[87] the succeeding centuries witnessed a series of efforts to rationalize and delimit access and belonging within the ever-changing political landscapes of the ancient Mediterranean. That this is the case should have important implications for our understanding of ancient notions of Self and Other, a dichotomy which remains a fixture in modern assessments of ancient worldviews. Seeing that the conception of the barbarian in the ethnographic discourse was elastic enough to refer first to peoples characterized as deficient in their allotment of *thymos*, but then also include peoples characterized by their excessive endowment of that very quality, efforts to establish ideological boundaries moved in step with the need to respond to changing political, cultural, and economic horizons.[88] Put simply, barbarians were lacking in *thymos* for many fifth-century Greeks, whereas an excessive complement of *thymos* and its related emotions defined them for the Romans of the first century AD. Such a change points to a marked semantic ambiguity inherent in the term "barbarian" itself: it shows that the urbanized, wealthy, monarchical empire of Persia, which had once served as the barbarian Other in the crystallization of a new awareness of Hellenicity, was replaced by a similarly self-defining Roman "coherent barbarology," characterized by the haphazardly agricultural, poor, and politically disorganized societies of Germania.[89] What we see is not only the geographical renegotiation of a "civilized" center whose location moved to accommodate itself in relative position to its oppositional inverse but also an evolving set of perceived qualities and characteristics used to define the civilized community.

By the time of the Roman principate, the point at which this essay began, the works of Roman authors such as Cicero, Virgil, Livy, Seneca, and (soon

87 "What it is to be 'Greek': the same blood and language, common temples and sacrificial rites to the gods, and the same customs: τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὸν ὅμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἱδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα (Herodot. 8.144.2).

88 As the above discussion demonstrates, general assessments of ethnographic characteristics of the "barbarian" in Greco-Roman worldviews can be problematic. For example, Harris has suggested that "in the imagination of Greek and Roman men, women – like barbarians and children – are especially susceptible to anger." While that certainly may often have been the case in the age of Roman conquest and empire, it does not seem to apply to the thought of Aristotle and the Hippocratic corpus. Harris (2003) 130.

89 Shaw (2000) 378. However, I would suggest that "coherence" is perhaps not the best term to describe any such worldviews.

after) Tacitus make clear that the Romans imagined themselves as a community that had incorporated into its citizen body peoples who had once been, if not barbarians, then at least external enemies of the Roman state.[90] An awareness on the part of the Romans that they themselves had been considered barbarians by the Greeks is just one indication of the Roman understanding that barbarism was a condition out of which, and perhaps into which, individuals and whole communities could move.[91] While the unrestrained rage and anger that Seneca associates with northern barbarians is rationalized in terms of climatological analysis, his admonition to his audience makes clear that even the anger of the barbarians, should they ever mitigate it by learning the Roman virtues of *ratio* and *disciplina* and thus enter the Hellenized Mediterranean community, might not prevent them from threatening the Roman political order.[92] While the conceptual dichotomy of a barbarian world opposed to first Greek, and then Roman, civilization remained a useful rhetorical and theoretical convention in media ranging from oratory, historiography, and panegyric to sculpture and triumphal processions,[93] the discourse of anger in representations of barbarian peoples points to the malleability, fluidity, and inconsistency of Greco-Roman strategies of political and cultural self-definition. That what the term "barbarian" did or should signify was a constantly renegotiated phenomenon suggests a vision of community whose boundaries were perhaps not as closely guarded, or at least insurmountable, as moderns have at times assumed.

90 See, for example, the work of Farney (2007), who has documented the persistence, and even prestige, of non-Roman ethnonyms down to through the end of the republican period. That Horace would publicly refer to his patron Maecenas as "the Etruscan offspring of kings," Tyrrhena regum progenies, is just one example (*Odes* 3.29).

91 "Le barbare, comme d'ailleurs le civilisé, est sujet à mutation et peut toujours evoluer: l'accès à l'*humanitas* est toujours possible, de même que la chute, ou rechute, dans la barbarie." Dauge (1981) 19–20. As Shaw has noted, "'barbarian peoples' . . . were, it is true, potential Romans." Shaw (2000) 376. Woolf has described the permeability of categories in slightly different terms: "Romans could not define themselves purely in contradistinction to barbarians, since not all civilized men were Romans." Woolf (1998) 59.

92 *De Ira* 1.11.4.

93 Though not discussing it as an expression of a Roman-barbarian dichotomy, Dench describes the Roman triumphal procession as an "ethnographic" practice. Dench (2005) 76–80.

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