

Violence & Imperial Anxiety: The Case of Cambyses

1. (Hdt. 3.35.3-4)

ταῦτα δὲ εἰπόντα καὶ διατείναντα τὸ τόξον βαλεῖν τὸν παῖδα, πεσόντος δὲ τοῦ παιδὸς ἀνασχίζει αὐτὸν κελεύειν καὶ σκέψασθαι τὸ βλήμα· [...] Πρηξάσπεα δὲ ὀρῶντα ἄνδρα οὐ φρενήρεα καὶ περὶ ἑωυτῶ δειμαίνοντα εἰπεῖν «δέσποτα, οὐδ' ἂν αὐτὸν ἔγωγε δοκέω τὸν θεὸν οὕτω ἂν καλῶς βαλεῖν.»

And after saying these things [Cambyses] strung the bow and shot the boy, and once the boy fell [Cambyses] ordered them to cut him open and examine the shot; [...] and Prexaspes, who saw that the man was not of sound mind and who was afraid for himself, said, "Master, I wouldn't think that even the god would shoot as beautifully."

2. (Hdt. 7.26.2)

ἐν τῇ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Σιληνοῦ Μαρσύεω **ἀσκός** ἀνακρέμαται, τὸν ὑπὸ Φρυγῶν λόγος ἔχει ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐκδαρέντα ἀνακρεμασθῆναι.

...also in this place, the **hide** of Marsyas the Silenus is nailed up, whom the Phrygian account maintains was skinned and nailed up by Apollo.

3. (Hdt. 5.25.1-2)

τοῦ τὸν πατέρα Σισάμνην βασιλεὺς Καμβύσης γενόμενον τῶν βασιληῶν δικαστέων, ὅτι ἐπὶ χρήμασι δίκην ἄδικον ἐδίκασε, σφάξας ἀπέδειρε **πᾶσαν τὴν ἀνθρωπείην, σπαδίξας** δὲ αὐτοῦ **τὸ δέρμα ἱμάντας** ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔταμε καὶ ἐνέτεινε τὸν θρόνον ἐς τὸν ἴζων ἐδίκασε· (2) ἐντανύσας δὲ ὁ Καμβύσης ἀπέδεξε δικαστὴν εἶναι ἀντὶ τοῦ Σισάμνεω, τὸν ἀποκτείνας ἀπέδειρε, τὸν παῖδα τοῦ Σισάμνεω, ἐντειλάμενός οἱ μεμνησθαι ἐν τῷ κατίζων θρόνῳ δικάζει.

[Otanēs,] whose father Sisamnes, being one of the royal judges, king Cambyses slaughtered and flayed **the man's entire skin**, because he judged a case unfairly for money, and after peeling off his **skin**, [Cambyses] cut **leather strips** from it and stretched them on the chair on which he used to judge; and after stretching them tight, Cambyses appointed the son of Sisamnes to be judge instead of Sisamnes, who was killed and flayed, and he commanded [Otanēs] to remember on which chair he sits and judges.¹

¹ Translations are my own.

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