

Ancient Origins of the History of Religions: Herodotus Example

Dinler Tarihinin Antik Kökenleri: Herodotos Örneđi

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Abstract

Although it is stated that the history of religions started to be formed as a discipline in the 19th century, when Max Müller lived, it is stated by religious scholars that researching other religious traditions is dates back to earlier times. In this respect, it is stated that Herodotus, who is described as the father of history because of his work titled *History*, can be considered as the father of the history of religions because he has a comparative study of the religions of foreigners and includes religious phenomena in research on the societies he studied. Therefore, in this study, within the framework of the approach which bases the research on beliefs of others on Herodotus in the literature of *History of Religions*, answers are sought for the questions such as what the basic features are that made Herodotus gain this position, whether it is possible to accept Herodotus as a historian of religions and whether it is possible to accept his work as a work history of religions. Therefore, to find answers to these and similar questions by putting forth the parameters of Herodotus's method, the importance and value of the way he dealt with the religious phenomena, which he used as a research subject, are examined in terms of the *History of Religions*.

Keywords: *History of Religions, Herodotus, God, Sacred Person, Sacred Place, Sacred Time, Sacrifice.*

Öz

Genel olarak Dinler Tarihinin, Max Müller'in yaşadığı XIX. Yüzyılda bir disiplin olarak teşekkül etmeye başladığı ifade edilse de diğer dini gelenekleri araştırma konusu yapmanın daha eski tarihlere dayandığı, din bilimcileri tarafından dillendirilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda "Tarih" adlı eseri nedeniyle tarihin babası olarak nitelendirilen Herodotos'un, yabancıların dinlerini karşılaştırmalı şekilde ele alması ve incelediği toplumlardaki dini fenomenleri de araştırmasına dâhil etmesi nedeniyle Dinler Tarihinin babası olarak kabul edilebileceği belirtilmektedir. Bu itibarla bu çalışmada, Dinler Tarihi literatüründe başkalarının inançlarını araştırmayı Herodotos'a kadar dayandıran yaklaşım çerçevesinde Herodotos'a bu payeyi kazandıran temel özelliklerin neler olduğuna, Herodotos'u dinler tarihçisi ve eserini Dinler Tarihi çalışması olarak kabul etmenin mümkün olup olmadığına dair soruların cevabı aranmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu ve benzeri sorulara cevap bulmak amacıyla Herodotos'un metodunun parametreleri ortaya konularak, araştırma konusu ettiği dini fenomenleri ele alış biçiminin Dinler Tarihi açısından önemi ve değeri irdelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Dinler Tarihi, Herodotos, Tanrı, Kutsal Kişi, Kutsal Mekân, Kutsal Zaman, Kurban.*

INTRODUCTION

History of Religions, focusing on the manifestations of religions and religious phenomena, separating itself from theological disciplines by examining them comparatively in the axis of neutrality from past to present, is a discipline that studies both local and universal religions and phenomena in these religions with their various dimensions. Although, in general, it is expressed that this field was formed as a discipline in late nineteenth century, when German descent Oxford professor Fredrich Max Müller lived, it is known and expressed by religious scholars that making the similarities and differences between religious traditions of those who are considered other and religions or religious phenomena a research subject dates back to earlier times. For instance, Eric J. Sharpe (1930-2000) an English Historian of Religion, states in his work called *Comparative Religion* (1975), in which he discusses the development of History of Religions, that this discipline did not emerge in the mentioned time, however this

manifestation could be described as the germination of the sown and watered seeds in the previous periods. In this respect Sharpe sets three conditions in order for a study to gain the quality of History of Religions to have three basic properties. These are; an impulse to compare religions (interest), accessible materials about others' religion (first or second hand information) and an appropriate method that would help understand the obtained material as a whole. Within this context, Sharpe, who thinks the methods used in the ancient world are not so distinct as it is thought compared to the ones used in the modern world, states that Herodotus is the first to put forward one of the basic approaches of History of Religions by his observation of data belonging to his own culture and that of the religions of foreigner cultures in his work named "Histories".¹ This approach is closely connected with History of Religions being not only depicting religious traditions, but also being a comparative discipline that gives place to comparisons with other religions.² This view that falls within the context of the approach, which dates studying the religions of others back to Herodotus in the literature of History of Religions, brings these questions to mind: What are the main characteristics that helped Herodotus gain this mentioned position? Is it possible to accept Herodotus as a historian of religions and his work as a work of history of religions? In this study, to find answers to these and similar questions by touching the parameters Herodotus's method, the importance and value of the way he dealt with the religious phenomena, which he used as a research subject, will be examined in terms of History of Religions.

1. HERODOTUS AND HIS HISTORICAL METHOD

According to the limited information about his life, Greek historian Herodotus was born in a rich and well-informed family in approximately 484 B.C. in Anatolia, in Halicarnassus (Bodrum) which is in Caria region that was under the reign of the Persian at that time. He lived in Athens for some of his life and in various cities of South Italy for some other part of his life and died in approximately 325 B.C. in Thurium. The time he lived in coincides with a process in which the war between Greeks and the Persian was influential.³ Herodotus's characteristic making him significant for History, in general, and for History of Religions, in particular, is his work called "Histories", which caused Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 B.C.-43 B.C), who played an important role in the development of Greek philosophy, to describe Herodotus as the "Father of

¹ Eric J. Sharpe, *Dinler Tarihi: Tarihsel Bir Anlatı*, trans. Fuat Aydın (Sakarya: Sakarya University Kültür Pub., 2013), 18-21.

² Mahmut Aydın, *Ana Hatlarıyla Dinler Tarihi: Tarih, İnanç ve İbadet* (İstanbul: Ensar Pub., 2015), 68-69.

³ See Thomas Harrison, "Herodotus 484-425", *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, ed. Nigel Wilson (New York, London: Routledge, 2006), 350-351; Robin Sowerby, *The Greeks: An Introduction to Their Culture* (New York, London: Routledge, 2015), 34-39; Muzaffer Demir, "Eski Tarih Yazıcılığında Herodotos'un Yeri ve Önemi", *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 20/2 (2005): 69-70.

History”⁴. This work by Herodotus was written in Ionian dialect and was compiled in nine books by the grammarians after him. The main theme of the book is about the conflict between the Persian and Greeks, which has an important effect in dominating the European history and which occurred towards the end of 5th century B.C.⁵ Herodotus differs from his forerunners in this work of his,⁶ which has both memory and educatory qualities, in terms of his approaching the material he obtained in a scientific way, his writing ability, and the way he organized the subjects. It also contributes to this that he does not simplify research subjects into shallow political and moral analyses.⁷

The most important aspect of Herodotus’s historical method is about using sources. Because, he had to make references to oral tradition, to epic poetry, which is fueled by this tradition, to story-writing, whose reality is controversial, and to tragedy plays while mentioning the background information about Greek history and geography. However, after having comprehended the contradictions of the sources he used and having been exiled, Herodotus had the opportunity to know different cultures and, by respecting traditions and cultures special to different cultures, adopted himself to the idea that these can be compared to Greek culture in an entertaining and objective way. That is why he felt necessity to give place to the geography, ethnography, cultures, religious traditions and history of other cultures in his work. For this aim, he used an inclusive and comparative method by means of⁸ including different elements such as his personal observation, temple clerks, foreigner and native people, archives and foreigners’ sources in his research. Herodotus,⁹ who acts with less suspicion towards foreigner sources rather than Greek sources -probably because he could not make a cross-examination- was never besotted with imposing his own truths on his readers, but showed an approach in the way “I believe in this one, and you can believe in that one, as well”, and by this provided an opportunity for the readers to have different opinions and to come to conclusions that they believe to be true.¹⁰ Therefore, when he went to places like Egypt and Babylon, he preferred describing them as he himself observed or heard about by accepting them as they are without saying “these people are not like us, and they must be like us” for the nations there.¹¹

⁴ Cicero, *The Republic and The Laws*, trans. Niall Rudd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 98.

⁵ Demir, “Herodotos ve Yabancı Kültürler: Mısır Örneği”, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 27 (2012): 316.

⁶ Alan Lloyd, “Book II”, *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I-IV*, ed. Oswyn Murray- Alfonso Moreno (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 232.

⁷ Donald Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto, London: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 8.

⁸ Demir, “Herodotos ve Yabancı Kültürler: Mısır Örneği”, 317-318.

⁹ Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, 91.

¹⁰ Demir, “Eski Tarih Yazıcılığında Herodotos’un Yeri ve Önemi”, 66.

¹¹ İlber Ortaylı, *Tarih Yazıcılık Üzerine* (Ankara: Cedit Pub., 2011), 26.

In fact, Herodotus, being aware of the delusiveness of some of the stories he told, leaves the conclusion up to the reader in using the oral tradition by saying he only reported what was told him, made some distinctions by being skeptical about some certain topic; sometimes made efforts to come up with his own rational explanation with some evidence -though they are wrong- and denied oral sources, which are obviously wrong, in a cynical way. All these things are evaluated as the authenticity of his method and a method change in prehistoric period history writing.¹² Although Herodotus is directed criticism claiming the stories he included in his book are delusive because of the method he used, he is regarded as an important source by most of today's historians.

Herodotus reviews his research subjects with a comparative approach according to the circumstances, and his comparisons, which aim to reveal what the origin of the religious phenomena is as well as other elements and in which way they interact with various aspects of life are significantly of an ethnographic content. Within this context, the well-known American historian of religion Jonathan Z. Smith (1938-2009) specifies Herodotus as the Father of History of Religions and evaluated his work among the ancient sources.¹³ According to these information, Herodotus used a method that criticizes the mythology-centeredness of the history writing before him; that objects to showing other cultures as barbarian without knowing them; that tells the research subjects with reference to what he saw and heard as much as possible, and that serves to refer to all aspects of the nations he examined.

2. RELIGIOUS PHENOMENA IN HERODOTUS

In Herodotus's work, religion is discussed as an element which influences human life in various aspects with an approach that is sometimes direct and sometimes indirect. Because for Herodotus, religion has an important place both via the sources of other cultures and in the events it mentions. While on the one hand he gave information about great cultures such as the Persian and Greeks, which he used as research subjects, and made large scaled descriptions on religious traditions and practices; on the other hand, in some of his stories, he also touched upon -thou the cultures and religious beliefs of Libyans and Babylonians. Moreover, in his top stories, the divine and supernatural properties related to the cause-effect relationship of events and foreknowing are frequently a question of debate. In this way, religion and religious phenomena were used as a key concept to understand events and happenings for Herodotus.¹⁴ Under this

¹² Demir, "Eski Tarih Yazıcılığında Herodotos'un Yeri ve Önemi", 69.

¹³ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 245; Demir, "Eski Tarih Yazıcılığında Herodotos'un Yeri ve Önemi", 64.

¹⁴ John Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory, and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 359.

title, the main characteristics of the emphasis and analyses related to religious phenomena that are prominent in Herodotus will be tried to be presented.

2.1. God

Having examined ancient Greek and foreigner religions, the most basic subject that Herodotus especially dwelt on and made comparisons about is the god phenomena. This depends on the very fact that throughout history, beliefs in (a) superior power/powers, which form(s) the basis of all religious beliefs, and which generally appear(s) as believing in a power/powers that is/are transcendental being or beings, are of the most basic characteristics of religions and on the fact that this/these power(s) was/were generally accepted as god or gods.¹⁵ This approach which starts with the opinions¹⁶ of Ionian philosophers, who are considered the first appearance of History of Religions and who tried to explain the world in the axis of an imperishable principle and who criticized the nation's religions, on God and which depends on philosophical knowledge took a form that bases on historical knowledge thanks to Herodotus.¹⁷ In this respect, it is important in terms of History of Religions that Herodotus examined Greek and foreigners' gods and compared them.

2.1.1. Names of Gods

Frequently addressing god and gods in his work, Herodotus stated that Homer and Hesiod, who lived approximately four hundreds year before him, are the first people to organize the family trees; to state the qualities, tasks and their unique characteristics for the Greek people, after scrutinizing the origins of knowledge about gods.¹⁸ Having gained a global citizen identity thanks to journeys he made and various religious beliefs he observed Herodotus, moving from the idea that being limited to the opinions of his forerunners is easy but means taking the easy way out, resorted to comparisons and by this he propounded various opinions related to the origins of Greek gods' names.¹⁹ By referring to the fact that although there was a general opinion for the presence of gods in his time, there was much controversy about their names, Herodotus,²⁰ dwelt on their names by making comparisons and contrasts between Greek and Egyptian gods. According to this, he concluded that twelve names for the gods

¹⁵ Şinasi Gündüz, "Dinler Tarihine Giriş", *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, ed. Ali Erbaş (Eskişehir: Anadolu University Pub., 2013), 14-15.

¹⁶ Sharpe, *Dinler Tarihi: Tarihsel Bir Anlatı*, 19-20; For extended information about this philosopher's opinions See Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Tarihi Thales'ten Baudrillard'a* (İstanbul: Say, 2012), 37-41.

¹⁷ Ömer Faruk Harman, "Bir Disiplin Olarak Dinler Tarihinin Ortaya Çıkışı (Doğu-Batı)", *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları-VII*, ed. Ali İbra Güngör et al. (Ankara: Turkey History of Religions Foundation Pub., 2010), 25-26.

¹⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. Müntekim Onay (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Pub., 2017), 2: 53. (it means chapter II, paragraph 53).

¹⁹ John D. Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars* (Chapel Hill, London: The University of North Carolina, 2003), 136-137.

²⁰ Lloyd, "Book II", 233.

were used by Egyptians first and then he revealed that Greeks took these names from them, and he concluded that it is also Egyptians who made altars, monuments and temples for gods and who engraved animal figures on stones.²¹

Herodotus tried to ground the fact that the name Heracles, which is regarded as one of the twelve gods by Greeks, was taken by Greeks from Egyptians with different rational motives such as Egyptians' increasing the number of gods from eight to twelve and their incorporating Heracles in them, in immemorial times.²² Herodotus remarks that people living in Mendes region in Egypt included Pan in the eight gods that were before twelve gods, and as is in Greeks their symbolic statues were made with a goat's head and billygoat feet, and although he says that Mendes means both Pan the god and billygoat, he had resort to saying "if you let me, I should keep quiet at this point"²³ about the reason of this symbol.²⁴ In another point, Herodotus tried to emphasize the incorrectness of Greeks' considering Heracles, Dionysus and Pan as the youngest gods said that Egyptians, who are quite developed about calendars and who recorded historical events, had previously put the generations of the mentioned gods in a chronological order. At this point, although he tried to adopt an objective approach as if saying "one may accept whichever he considers true", he did not abstain from stating that Greeks took the mentioned god names from Egyptians and organized a family tree by making their names live in this way.²⁵

At this point, it must be taken naturally that Herodotus adopted an attitude on the side of Egyptian resources. Because, Egyptians started to write down their history long before Greeks. That's why it is considered quite natural that like Egyptian sources are source of inspiration for Greek writers, who produced works about gods, the Greek religion was also affected by this same thing.²⁶ Because, he was attentive to take European, African and Asian originated different ancient sources as references as part of the subjects he dwelt on.²⁷ Herodotus's giving information about the fact that Egyptians took place among the first ones in terms of cultural and ethnographical aspects shows that he, generally, acted within the frame of this understanding. In this way, he had the idea that the same god was called with various names in different societies, and asserted that the Greek god Zeus is actually identical with the Egyptian god

²¹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 4.

²² Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 43.

²³ It is stated that Herodotus tries to hide his lack of knowledge with such comments. Herodotus, *Tarih*, 119 (Translator's 48th note).

²⁴ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 46.

²⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 145-146; For Herodotus's comparative analyses between Greek and foreigner gods See Thomas Harrison, *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 208-222.

²⁶ Demir, "Herodotos ve Yabancı Kültürler: Mısır Örneği", 332.

²⁷ Lloyd, "Book II", 347.

Amon, and Apollo, in real, is Horus himself²⁸ and he emphasized that the goddess Aphrodite takes places in Assyrians with the name Mylitta, in Arabs with the name Alilat and in Persians with the name Mitra.²⁹

Herodotus's analyses about the names of gods brings to mind philologist Max Müller's opinions, which he presented as a result of the examinations he made on Hindus' holy book Vedas. According to this, in the beginning although god informed people about his existence, human beings gave different names to god because of linguistic illusions and it resulted in polytheism that some of the adjectives defining god turned into names.³⁰ In this respect, it is remarkable that there are similarities, at least for their approach to the subjects they reviewed, between Herodotus's studying the origins of the names moving from the god names and Müller's attempt to present the origins of the idea of god in the context of language -even though there are significant differences in terms of sources and method.

2.1.2. Attributes for Gods

Herodotus mentions the divine vengeance and god's influence to determine human's destiny in various events and stories he used as subject matters. Within this frame, Herodotus believes, when he first discusses the matter of vengeance, that some actions inevitably draw the vengeance of gods and vengeance practices appear in different ways.³¹ In this context, it may be thought that he addresses to an understanding/system in the way that "unfair actions are answered with fair and appropriate answers" with examples he chose from different cultures³² such as the Persian emperor Kserkes's implication that because the messengers he sent to Athenians were killed, Athenians met a variety of disasters;³³ Ethiopian King Sabakos's stating that he dreamt a dream in which all of the Egyptian priests were gathered and slaughtered and then describing this dream as a kind of deception which may draw the rage of gods³⁴ and his reporting that extreme vengeance draws the anger of gods³⁵. Hence, it is stated that Herodotus tries to form a rule of an extensive and sensible moral understanding with various narrations.³⁶

When it is discussed how the moral understanding based on divine vengeance will work in the world and the belief of the believers in this, some provisions may

²⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 50; Mustafa Alıcı, *Evrıncı Politeizm Devrimci Monoteizm: Erken Kültürlerde Yüce Varlık Fikrine Etnolojik ve Fenomenolojik Yaklaşımlar* (İstanbul: Rağbet Pub., 2013), 23-24.

²⁹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 131. For detailed information about names used for a god in different societies see Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 110.

³⁰ Baki Adam, "Din Hakkında Genel Bilgiler", *Dinler Tarihi*, ed. Baki Adam (Ankara: Grafiker Pub., 2015), 50-51.

³¹ Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 103.

³² Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 110.

³³ Herodotus, *Histories*, 7: 133.

³⁴ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 139.

³⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, 4: 205.

³⁶ Demir, "Eski Tarih Yazıcılığında Herodotus'un Yeri ve Önemi", 72.

be inferred from his work on the appearance of vengeance. First of all is that divine vengeance takes place through human element/actions. Such a vengeance is set an example with a Persian merchant who lives off emasculating young boys and selling them in bazaars and then he experiences the same thing made by one of those whom he previously emasculated.³⁷ Because the words of the person who took revenge from the Persian merchant “*Did you think this villainy you did will get off the punishment of gods? However, now they have shown their justice, they handed you over to me in order for you to pay the penalty for the great sin you committed, and now you do not have the right to complain from the punishment I will give you*”³⁸ summarize this understanding. In this way, the divine vengeance in Herodotus’s narrations are expressed with a style in which they are made by human beings rather than being miraculous and in which they are, rationally, attributed to some reasons. Second thing is the transferring of divine vengeance to new generations by inheritance. In his narrations Herodotus, by emphasizing that vengeance of various characters flamed up throughout generations, stated that gods have a hand in this.³⁹ In this manner, he had the aim to keep the belief of divine justice by adopting the inherited idea of crime.⁴⁰ Third is to ensure the belief in the certainty of divine vengeance by human’s suffering in different ways.⁴¹ For this case, Herodotus gave the example that there was an earthquake in Delos where there were no earthquakes until then, and stated that this trouble was because of Persians and the men who were in conflict for the government of sites.⁴² Hereby, he emphasized that divine vengeance was a credible moral understanding according to the provisions he presented.⁴³

Herodotus thinking that although the names of gods are different in different cultures, they actually refer to the same gods, fictionalized a moral doctrine by evaluating divine vengeance as the adjective of gods within the frame of his comparative approach or he analyzed an existing but unnamed moral doctrine. His approach which can be simply formulated as “The biter is bit” may at least be evaluated -though its moral understanding is subjective and god-centered- under the same category in terms of determining a universal moral essence, with acceptance⁴⁴ of the principle in the religions taken as subject matter in History of Religions that “Do not do anything to anyone that you do not want to be done” as the common moral rule.

³⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, 8: 105-106.

³⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, 8: 106.

³⁹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 7: 137.

⁴⁰ Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 112-113.

⁴¹ Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 113.

⁴² Herodotus, *Histories*, 6: 98.

⁴³ Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 115.

⁴⁴ On this matter see Jacob Neusner- Bruce D. Chilton, *Altruism in World Religions* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2013).

Herodotus secondly included predestinating the destiny of human in the adjectives of gods. In Herodotus man is generally depicted as a being that cannot foresee his future and that is incapable. Because, human beings are in conflict with sudden divine changes that are beyond foresight and control. Man is also exposed to his fate. Yet, Herodotus's fatalism has an aspect that goes beyond the forms of divine intervention and gives prominence to cause-effect relationships between events.⁴⁵ In this direction, Herodotus manifests the adjectives for gods moving from how the belief in god works among people or from how it appears in human life. In the studies of History of Religions, as it is the essential part to focus on the appearance of the divine and to discuss how a religious phenomenon works among people/believers in individual and social aspects in order to understand that religious phenomenon,⁴⁶ Herodotus's analyses on god's vengeance and fatalism may be considered in this context.

2.2. Divine Person

From past to today, religion has been an essential part of human beings and it is also a well-known case that in all societies there are divine people who come to the forefront, who direct them, who are believed to have connection to divine powers and to have some spiritual powers and who represent the divine world. As a natural result of this, divine people have been made subject matters in various aspects for the studies in History of Religion.⁴⁷ In Herodotus's work, the relationship between gods and people was frequently addressed and it was emphasized that various mediators such as *Oracles*, dreams, prophecies, predictors, and warning characters played an active role.⁴⁸ In his narrations, while it is a common state that the intervention of god and getting the knowledge of intervention via prophecies,⁴⁹ *Oracles*, which form the human behaviors and come to the fore as a divine character, have been especially referred to because they are the focus of religious and social life.⁵⁰

Oracle is the name given to the predictors who have different centers in ancient world's Anatolia and Greece and explain the gods' messages to human beings and to the ambiguous and complicated⁵¹ answers they inform people

⁴⁵ Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 223.

⁴⁶ Irving Hexam, *Understanding World Religions: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (USA: Zondervan, 2011), 16-17. For James L. Cox's paradigmatic model summarizing the subject see James L. Cox, *Kutsal İfade Etmek: Din Fenomenolojisine Giriş* (İstanbul: İz Pub., 2004), 208.

⁴⁷ Ekrem Sarıçioğlu, *Din Fenomenolojisi: Dinlerin Mahiyeti ve Tezahür Şekilleri* (Isparta: Fakülte Press, 2011), 174; Durmuş Arık, "Kutsal Kişi", *Dinler Tarihi*, ed. Ahmet Hikmet Eroğlu (Ankara: Ankara University Uzaktan Eğitim Pub., 2013), 77; Cox, *Kutsal İfade Etmek*, 154-155.

⁴⁸ Lloyd, "Book II", 233; Deborah Boedeker, "Epic Heritage And Mythical Patterns In Herodotus", *Brill's Companion To Herodotus*, Ed. Egbert J. Bakker- Irene J.F. De Jong- Hans Van Wees (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), 194-195.

⁴⁹ Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 122.

⁵⁰ See Herodotus, *Histories*, 7: 111.

⁵¹ As an example for this see Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 46-49, 55, 62, 65, 66, 67, 85, 174; 4: 19, 77, 86, 98; 7: 111, 140, 141, 142, 148, 220; 8: 20, 77, 96; 9: 43.

with.⁵² In Herodotus's work, which shows a descriptive approach via various narrations to explain the individual and social roles of *Oracles*, the answers by *Oracles* about Lydia-Pers war summarize *Oracle* as divine person both in terms of his position in ancient times and the way Herodotus reviewed this phenomenon.

According to the narration, Lydian king Kroisos wants Lydians who were to go to the temple with their offerings to ask the *Oracle* in Delphoi the question "*Should Kroisos wage war with Persians; if he should, should he get a few troops from an ally nation?*". When those Lydians arrived at the *Oracle* they were sent and presented their offerings, they asked their king's question as matching up with the *Oracle's* answer to whom they had previously consulted they get the answer "If the king waged a war with Persians, he would overthrow the great empire; also he should get in touch with the most powerful people in Greek".⁵³ When he learned the brought *Oracles*, Kroisos celebrated the predictors and had no doubt about overthrowing Persian kingdom, sent his men back to Delphoi and makes them distribute golds to everyone. As a response to this generosity people of Delphoi bestowed privileges on Lydians such as meeting the *Oracle* without having to wait, not paying residence fee and being able to become a Delphoi citizen whenever they wanted.⁵⁴ Kroisos, after impressing the people Delphoi in this way, consulted to *Oracle* for the third time and makes ask the question, "*Will his reign be long?*". This time he gets this answer, which has a warning quality: "*One day a mule will be the king of Meds. Then, run o soft-footed Lydian, run away through the Gravelled Hermos, Do not be ashamed as you are escaping.*"⁵⁵ Being more happy for these words than he was for the previous ones, Kroisos consoled himself thinking that a mule's ascending to the Lydia throne instead of a man would be impossible and moving from that by reaching the conclusion he and his children will not lose the government misinterpreted the *Oracle*.⁵⁶ Because Lydia-Persian war resulted in the loss of king Kroisos and Persian king Kyros appointed Kroisos as his consultant after sparing his life.⁵⁷

When he had the chance Kroisos soon sent some messenger to Delphoi and made them ask why the prophecy turned out to be wrong and took this answer:

"Kroisos has no right to complain about it. His Oracle informed him that if he attacks Persians, he will overthrow a great empire. If he had been able to think rightly, he would have sent a man and ask again whether this empire to be overthrown is mine or Kyros's. He did not understand the words of god, and did not ask later, so he must blame himself. Also, in the

⁵² James Skerret Shore Baird, *The Classical Manual: an Epitome of Ancient Geography, Greek and Roman* (Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1863), 104.

⁵³ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 53.

⁵⁴ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 54. In various narrations, it is underlined that desired *Oracles* are bought with payment. See Herodotus, *Histories*, 5: 63.

⁵⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 55.

⁵⁶ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 56.

⁵⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 84-90.

answer given to his last question, did not his Oracle talk about a mule? He did not hear this, as well. This mule is Kyros; because his father and mother are not from the same blood; his mother was from a better lineage however his father was not that noble.” After this answer, Kroisos admitted that the fault was his, not the god’s.⁵⁸

Jutta Kirchberg, a Greek and Latin literature specialist who wrote a book called *Die Funktion der Orakel im Werke Herodots* (Göttingen, 1965) “The Function of Oracle in Herodotus’ Works” on this and such narrations by Herodotus, sums up the roles of *Oracles* in five articles as; mediating for the healings that can be obtained by soothing gods, mediation and mentoring for the solution of political difficulties, presenting a policy for colony, explaining cults and traditions and making an effect to lead to an occupation.⁵⁹ In this way, the *Oracle* narrations in Herodotus offer a holy expert typology⁶⁰ that plays the mediator role again and again between people and the limitless value of these people (holy/god). The responses given place in narrations function as behavior and warning forms presented by gods for people.⁶¹

On the whole Herodotus introduces the function, holiness and the role of *Oracle* in the society with his idiosyncratic storytelling, by remaining faithful to objectivity as much as possible and with a sensitivity that focuses on the believer’s perspective. As a matter of fact, by expressing that he cannot consider deceptive the *Oracles* that he could not oppose and he also cannot consider their unambiguous prophecies worthless, he states that he would keep away from making them matters of debate.⁶² However, he leaves the door open for the discussion of accuracy of the answers by laying the unambiguity of the answers as a condition.⁶³

2.3. Holy Place

Being at the center of religious life, giving directions and meaning to human life, holy places are important phenomena whether it is a primitive tribe religion or a universal religion. Attributing holiness to these places to which people show favor for moral and material benefits depends on reasons such as indication of this place by god, god’s dwelling there, god’s showing himself or his power there and consideration of this place as holy by people.⁶⁴ Holy place may be a prayer place, a tomb, a graveyard or a place where supernatural events happen or objects

⁵⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 91.

⁵⁹ Philipp Vandenberg, *Mysteries Of The Oracles: The Last Secrets Of Antiquity* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 1989), 269.

⁶⁰ Cox, *Kutsalı İfade Etmek*, 147.

⁶¹ C. W. Fornara, “Human History and the Constraint of Fate in Herodotus”, *Conflict, Antithesis, and the Ancient Historians*, ed. J. W. Allison (Columbus, Ohio, 1990), 39.

⁶² Herodotus, *Histories*, 8: 77.

⁶³ Harrison, *Divinity and History*, 130-131.

⁶⁴ Ahmet Güç, *Dinlerde Mabet ve İbadet* (İstanbul: Esra Fakülte Press, 1999), 21-25; Baki Adam, “Kutsal Nedir?”, *Halk İnanışları*, ed. Durmuş Arık- Ahmet Hikmet Eroğlu (Ankara: Grafiker Pub., 2017), 58-60.

or places such as a tree, a stone, a rock, water, a mountain, a cave or a hill.⁶⁵ These places and various rituals and phenomena forming around them are made research subjects for History of Religions and server the function of a triangulation point for religious analyses.⁶⁶ Therefore, the information and analyses presented and reported by Herodotus as a result of his observations in various parts of the world Greece and Egypt being at the first place, in which he interviewed religious officials about temples of which he reported different traditions and rituals. Because he observed temples as a whole and he uses the architectural forms of temples, the statues and valuable goods inside them and the rituals and beliefs depending on them as the subject of research.⁶⁷

Herodotus presents his analyses about temples in the axis of similarity of beliefs in different societies. To illustrate, he informs that no mortal (human) is allowed to stay the night in the tower of Zeus-Baal Temple in Babylon, except for the ones that god chose among the native women. According to what priests says -however, he does not believe them- god comes to the temple and rests in the bed. Similarly, he writes that according to what Egyptians tell in some temples, gods spend the night with women that are virgin or are abbess.⁶⁸ Within this frame, one of the most significant beliefs that Herodotus depicted about temples is what he defines as the most shameful tradition of Babylonians that every woman had to prostitute themselves in Aphrodite temple to a complete stranger once in their lifetime. As required by this belief, a woman cannot come back her home back unless a complete stranger comes and gives money to have sex with her. It is a must that the stranger says “I call goddess Mylitta (Aphrodite) in your person” while giving the money. The amount of money is not important as the women have to accept it and this money is regarded holy. After the intercourse, the woman goes back to her house by having pleased the goddess and after that time she cannot be seduced no matter what is given to her. Giving the information that in some parts of Cyprus island there is a similar tradition⁶⁹, Herodotus, by giving the Lydian King Kroisos’s father Alyattes’s tomb as an example, says that in this tomb that was made with the money of common people, girls selling themselves until they get married had a huge contribution.⁷⁰ After mentioning that all societies except for Egyptians and Greeks have sexual intercourse with women even in holy places and that they can directly go to a temple without cleaning themselves or having a bath after this intercourse, Herodotus points out that these nations evaluate human beings and animals

⁶⁵ Durmuş Arık, “Kutsal Mekân ve Ziyaret Fenomeni”, *Halk İnanışları*, ed. Durmuş Arık- Ahmet Hikmet Eroğlu (Ankara: Grafiker Pub., 2017), 70.

⁶⁶ For example, for an analysis on holy and non-religious within the context of holy place see Mircea Eliade, *Kutsal ve Profan*, trans. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay (Ankara: Gece Pub., 1991).

⁶⁷ For example, see Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 178-184.

⁶⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 181-182.

⁶⁹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 199.

⁷⁰ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 93.

under the same category moving from the fact that animals have sexual intercourse everywhere and god does not interrupt them.⁷¹ In this way, Herodotus draws attention to that prostitution has an important place in some religions and societies⁷² and by revealing the fact that Greeks do not have such and understanding, he aims to show that their moral understanding is in a better level.

Having used belief systems that are stranger to his own society in this way, Herodotus considers disrespect against holy places and holy objects that people respect as a sign of madness. For instance, he concluded that the Persian King Kyros's son Kambyses was an insane person by looking at his actions, because he made open the tombs of earlier times and watched the dead bodies, entered into temples and made fun of sculptures, he entered into the part of temple to which only allowed for the priest and he ridiculed the sculptures there and burned them.⁷³ In this respect, Herodotus, by exhibiting an attitude that finds non-Greek traditions interesting in themselves and even does not fail to praise them when he considered them positive in a time when ancient Greek-Barbarian antithesis was coming into focus,⁷⁴ by means of implying to accept the belief of those who are considered other as a phenomenon and to respect them, showed an approach to that of History of Religions which aims to understand the beliefs of other and to respect them.

Through Herodotus's depictions about holy place, the basic characteristics of national god/religions understanding may be inferred that was dominant at the time. For example, he points out that there is a temple belonging to Zeus in Mylasa, and only the nations of Karina, Kaunos ve Lykia can enter into this temple⁷⁵ and the people of Kaunos agreed on worshipping to gods to which their ancestors worshipped and also agreed on excluding stranger gods.⁷⁶ According to this information, while it can be said that people of ancient times tended to identify themselves with a god, it is also possible to see the life-saving role of god and holy place regarding the information that against the Lydian attack, people of Ephesus, by holding out a rope reaching to Artemis temple and connecting the temple with the castle, devoted their city to the temple and considered it a part of the temple.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 64.

⁷² Mehmet Aydın, "Kutsal Fahişelik", *Ansiklopedik Dinler Sözlüğü* (Konya: Din Bilimleri Pub., 2005), 437.

⁷³ Herodotus, *Histories*, 3: 37-38.

⁷⁴ Demir, "Herodotos ve Yabancı Kültürler: Mısır Örneği", 315.

⁷⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 171.

⁷⁶ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 172.

⁷⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 26.

2.4. Holy Time

From past to present, it is emphasized that in all societies times which are related to holy or in which the holy appears are defined as holy times and they have a place in all religions in various ways and are research subjects for History of Religions.⁷⁸ Holy times, which conduce to sacralization of time and to experience a time that has different meanings from non-religious (profane) time for religious people, appears in different ways in social and religious life such as feasts and rites of passage.⁷⁹ Within this direction, it seems possible to evaluate Herodotus's depictions about feasts and analyses practiced in different societies under the holy time category.

In a general sense, about feasts that sign days which are important in religious or national aspects, and which are celebrated all together,⁸⁰ it is attention grabbing to mention Egyptian feasts in Herodotus. Herodotus, talks about Artemis feast, celebrated in Bubastis, and Isis feast celebrated in Busiris, where is the biggest Isis temple, as the most important and most common feasts in Egypt. Moreover, he tells that four feasts called Athene, Sun, Leto and Ares are celebrated in different cities.⁸¹ He describes the Artemis as a feast, in which a large number of animals are sacrificed and in which wine is drunk more than any other time.⁸² In Isis feast, he tells that after the animals are sacrificed hundreds of thousands of people bewail and lament to their gods;⁸³ and that Athene feast is called the light feast because the city is lightened with lamps at the night of sacrifices,⁸⁴ that in Sun and Leto feasts people come to cities only to sacrifice animals and he also presents the origin and rituals of Ares feast, which includes a beating ceremony in which priests take part.⁸⁵ When considered generally, Herodotus's depicting Egyptians feasts' origins and basic rituals by associating them with a god and city in his descriptions about the subject, holds the qualification to present the place and importance of holy times in the religious life of Egyptian people. In this way, he takes on the task of a historian of religion and presents a holy time panorama example of ancient times.

Transition periods and ceremonies that correspond to birth, marriage and death are important time periods for History of Religions as they manifest religions' view to human and to life. Because, the research done on the practice of funeral rites that include various rituals and burial forms in ancient times, and

⁷⁸ See Mustafa Ünal, *Dinlerde Kutsal Zamanlar* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Pub., 2008).

⁷⁹ Münir Yıldırım, "Mircea Eliade'de 'Kutsal ve Kutsal Zaman Kavramı'", *Dini Araştırmalar Dergisi* 30/28 (2007): 59-82

⁸⁰ Sargon Erdem, "Bayram", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Pub., 1994), 5: 257.

⁸¹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 59.

⁸² Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 60.

⁸³ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 61.

⁸⁴ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 62.

⁸⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 63; Also, about Iranian and Scythian feasts see Herodotus, *Histories*, 3: 79; 4: 76.

the information obtained in the research gives clues about the religious beliefs of the time. For this reason, the information and analyses in Herodotus that are about funeral rites in various societies lend assistance to understand ancient time beliefs. In this respect, the information he gave about the funeral rites in various societies such as Egyptians and Scythians are noteworthy. According to Herodotus, the funeral rites of Egyptian people consist of two parts as mourning and mummification. Accordingly, when there is a loss in a house the women in that house put mud on their heads and faces, leave the dead alone in the house and they walked in streets by pulling their skirts up and lamenting. Their relatives and men accompany them. After all mourning, the dead is given to mummification masters to be embalmed.⁸⁶

Herodotus categorizes mummification methods as the rich, middle class and the poor by reason of their being preferred according to the appropriateness of people's income. According to the descriptions he made, it can be said that the practice of mummification is a work of mystery and mastership and the price is determined considering the primitiveness and development of the methods practiced while cleaning the body from internal organs. It is understood that keeping the physical integrity of the dead is the base of all methods.⁸⁷ Also, thinking that Egyptians do not accept the tradition of other nations, Herodotus⁸⁸ states that they act according to rules that are specific to themselves in various cases about the dead.⁸⁹

Herodotus depicts they funeral rites of Scythians by categorizing them as kings and common people. He tells that when kings die, they are mummified, special tombs for them are made, they are taken about among people, one of their wives, a servant and a horse, one of the belongings they used and their golden cups are put into the tomb and the tom is covered with soil with the aim of forming the highest hill.⁹⁰ He also emphasizes that when someone from common people dies, the dead body is taken about with a vehicle for forty days to visit their relatives and a piece of the meal they eat is reserved for the dead person. He remarks that Scythians hold a ceremony to clean themselves after burying the dead body.⁹¹

According to the information which Herodotus gave about Egyptian and Scythian funeral rites and a good part of which are archeologically confirmed in historical process, mummification of the dead, giving utmost importance to physical integrity and putting a number of people and material elements into the

⁸⁶ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 85.

⁸⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 85-88.

⁸⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 91.

⁸⁹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 90.

⁹⁰ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 71.

⁹¹ Herodotus, *2: 73*; Also, about funeral ceremonies of Persians and Spartans see Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 140.

tomb that were held by the dead person when alive, are considered among the indications that these societies believed in life after death. Because, it is stated that the hereafter has an important place in societies that have such traditions and rituals.⁹² Therefore, the information exhibited by Herodotus about funeral rites, contributes to understand the hereafter belief in these societies and implies their salvation understandings that is formed according to this belief of them.⁹³

2.5. Sacrifice

Sacrifice, which is as long-established as the history of humanity, is a universal ritual that takes part in all religions in the world stage. Sacrifice, which states the offerings with or without blood, presented to a holy being or to holy beings,⁹⁴ is of the important research subjects of History of Religions. Sacrifice is one of the basic elements of life ancient world and it is discussed in a way that contains traditions in different cultures with Herodotus's narrations. Within this context, for instance it is told that Lydian King Kroisos had three thousand animals sacrificed to ingratiate himself to Delphoi god, and then he compiled golden and silver beds, golden cups, redbud fabrics and shirts and offered them to god and also ordered Lydians to offer some gold according to their conditions and later he had these compiled gold carried to the temple as chunks.⁹⁵ From such narrations in Herodotus, it is understood that sacrifice was presented in various ways such as choking, burning and cutting and with the aim of pleasing god/gods and then to reach the things they requested.⁹⁶

In Herodotus's depictions about sacrifice, it is possible to find his contemporary examples of elements that are similar in many religions in the historical process. To illustrate, it is considered forbidden to sacrifice an animal without a Mag (religious officials chosen from the Mags who are a tribe of Medes)⁹⁷ and as their task is mainly to mention the names of gods, it is described as performing a discourse that tells god chains.⁹⁸ According to this, the active role of a Mag in performing the sacrifice ritual and that being a religious official depends on race shows parallelism with Brahmins in Hinduism of Vedic period⁹⁹

⁹² See Salima Ikram, "Afterlife Beliefs And Burial Customs", *The Egyptian World*, Ed. Toby Wilkinson (New York: Routledge, 2007), 340-354; İlhami Durmuş, "İskitler'de Ölü Gömme Geleneği", *Millî Folklor* 61 (2004): 21-29.

⁹³ For an analysis about salvation understandings of religions in which there is also Egyptian religion see Fuat Aydın, "Dinlerde Kurtuluş Anlayışı (Teorik Bir Giriş Denemesi)", *Pesa Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 1/1 (2015): 71-101.

⁹⁴ Joseph Henninger, "Sacrifice", *Encyclopedia of Religion (Second Edition)*, ed. Lindsay Jones (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 12: 7997-7998.

⁹⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 50.

⁹⁶ As an example to narrations within this context, see Herodotus, *Tarih*, 1: 167; 2: 39; 4: 59-62.

⁹⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 101.

⁹⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 132.

⁹⁹ See David M. Knipe, "Priesthood: Hindu Priesthood", *Encyclopedia of Religion (Second Edition)*, ed. Lindsay Jones (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 11: 7405-7407.

and with the Cohens in Judaism.¹⁰⁰ This case sets an example for priesthood understanding that takes part in various styles in religions.

Herodotus's narrations on Egypt's beliefs about sacrifice are also striking. In fact, he states that the ox to be sacrificed is examined by the religious official, and that sacrificing an ox that did not pass this examination would be labeled as going into death risk.¹⁰¹ In this way, he wants to emphasize the importance that Egyptians gave to cleanliness in every respect.¹⁰² He also tells that, while Egyptians sacrifice clean oxen and young calves, cows are not sacrificed because they are the holy animals of the God Isis. He tries to depict the appearing of holiness of cows among believers by looking at the fact that Isis's sculptures are made as a woman with cow horns and that Egyptians have an agreement on all hands about this subject. Moreover, by showing that in different parts of Egypt, where different animals are considered holy, female sheep is considered holy but not goat, or goat is considered holy and female sheep is sacrificed, as the reason of this he points out to the fact that Egyptians do not worship the same gods.¹⁰³ Such information in Herodotus,¹⁰⁴ reveal that a lot of animals are considered holy and are related to a cult in the mentioned geography.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, as archeological findings confirm the sacrifice culture that was ritualized under the ancient Egyptian priests, Herodotus becomes the mirror of the appearance with his narrations.¹⁰⁶

Herodotus discusses human sacrifice that is seen in ancient times and has a part in History of Religions researches, as related to various events. In this respect, in his narrations where captive and children sacrifices are highlighted, tells that after the Persian king Kyros defeated Lydian king Kroisos, he wanted to offer Kroisos and the fourteen children with him to the gods by burning them in fire.¹⁰⁷ He reports he was told that when Menealos, who came to Egypt to find Helen, was about to set off to go back home with Helen could not find the proper wind for his sail and so sacrificed two children in a way that is contrary to religion.¹⁰⁸ The wildest narrations of Herodotus on human sacrifice are about the people of Scythians and Tauris. According to this, he tells that Scythians sacrificed one in every hundred captives captured in wars for God Ares, by

¹⁰⁰ See Baruch A. Levine, "Priesthood: Jewish Priesthood", *Encyclopedia of Religion (Second Edition)*, ed. Lindsay Jones (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 11: 7399-7400.

¹⁰¹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 38.

¹⁰² Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 38.

¹⁰³ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 41-42.

¹⁰⁴ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 65-77.

¹⁰⁵ Kürşat Demirci, "İslam Öncesi Din ve Toplumlarda Hayvan", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Pub., 1998), 17: 82.

¹⁰⁶ Ahmet Güç, "Kurban", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Pub., 2002), 26: 434.

¹⁰⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 49-50.

¹⁰⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 119.

cutting their right arms in shoulder and leaving them to where they fell.¹⁰⁹ He also reports that the people of Tauris sacrificed Greeks who had a shipwreck by killing them hitting their heads with sticks and throwing their bodies down the rock where the temple is, and hanging their heads on a pole.¹¹⁰ Generally, these narrations which are confirmed with archeological datum in historical process show that human sacrifice is practiced for various reasons such as a price for victory or for penance in the mentioned places. Also, by pointing out that the human sacrifice discussed in Sami religions Abraham and Ishmael/Isaac was in fact in a different time and place, he aims to reach a more extensive analysis about the subject in terms of History of Religions.

Herodotus -apart from the religious phenomena examined until this point – did not abstain from touching on the traditions and rituals of the societies he examined in a detailed way. From this point of view, his determinations on the practice of circumcision in ancient times reflect his approach. It was asserted that the practice of circumcision, which is identified with Sami religions, date back to ancient Egypt and from there it passed to Samis who live near Egypt, and from them it passed to other societies.¹¹¹ Concordantly, according to Herodotus Egyptians and other who took this tradition from them were circumcised.¹¹² For this reason, as well as Egyptians; Ethiopians, Phoenicians, Syrians, Colchis and Macrons practiced circumcision. In the spread of circumcision, trade with Egypt is effective and transitivity is present between neighboring nations.¹¹³ What is more, in reference to Herodotus, the reason why Egyptians were circumcised was their cleaning understanding, because they valued cleanliness over beauty.¹¹⁴ Archeological datum and academic studies support Herodotus’s determinations especially in terms of places where circumcision is practiced.¹¹⁵ Therefore, Herodotus makes contribution to History of Religions with his determinations about the development stage and function of a religious phenomenon which has an impact on human life in modern world as in the Jewish and Muslims.

¹⁰⁹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 4: 62.

¹¹⁰ Herodotus, *Histories*, 4: 103. Also, Herodotus shows an Egyptian-sided attitude by not finding realistic the narrations which tell that Heracles went to Egypt, and that sacrifices were tried to be made for Zeus there. He presents this approach of his by saying, “While their religion bans to sacrifice other animals except for pork, ox and calf on condition that they are clean, how come they can sacrifice humans?” Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 45.

¹¹¹ Salime Leyla Gürkan, “Sünnet”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Pub., 2010), 38: 156; Reay Tannahil, *Tarihte Cinsellik*, trans. Sinem Gül (Ankara: Dost Pub., 2003), 68.

¹¹² Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 36.

¹¹³ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 104.

¹¹⁴ Herodotus, *Histories*, 2: 37.

¹¹⁵ See Asaf Ataseven, “Sünnet Hakkında Bir Araştırma”, *İslami Araştırmalar* 2/6 (1988): 22.

CONCLUSION

Herodotus presented in his work called “Histories” the religions of foreigners with a great interest that leads him to compare religions, with a believer-centered method that depends on what he saw and heard as much as possible and with having a grasp about both the written and oral sources of his time. Thus, he seems to have ensured the minimum characteristics that have to be in a study of History of Religions. Herodotus comparatively reviewed religious phenomena such as god, holy person, holy place, holy time and sacrifice, which are mentioned in modern period studies of History of Religions, in terms of their influencing and shaping human life sometimes in a direct and sometimes in an indirect way. With this respect, it becomes possible to evaluate his method of reviewing religious phenomena and the information he presented about them as the ancient origins of History of Religions. As a matter of fact, this evaluation turns out to be right because he examined the sources of gods in a similar approach to Müller’s, he set a moral essence for religions moving from adjectives for gods’, he offered a holy person profile within the context of *Oracle* and he referred to this person’s role in society, he emphasized the centrality of holy places in religious life by referring to temple’s general functions and characteristics, he exhibited a panorama of holy time by showing feast understandings and burial traditions of different nations and he made detailed analyses on sacrifice types and practices. All these characteristics make Herodotus authentic in his time and bring his work into the forefront in terms of introduction to History of Religions.

In conclusion, Herodotus objected to marginalization of others by calling them barbarians for their beliefs by means of telling others’ belief in an objective way as much as possible and by depending on his observations, and by this way he developed a kind of “other phenomenology”. Although there are various matters for which he may be criticized, it is seen that Herodotus moved with the reflex of a historian of religions in respect of his aiming to research, understand and when necessary compare and present common essences for others’ religions, and that in this manner, he has enough characteristics to be defined as “father of History of Religions” as well as father of history.

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