

The Histories of Herodotus

Herodotus

I now proceed to give a more particular account of Egypt; it possesses more wonders than any other country, and exhibits works greater than can be described, in comparison with all other regions; therefore more must be said about it. The Egyptians, besides having a climate peculiar to themselves, and a river differing in its nature from all other rivers, have adopted customs and usages in almost every respect different from the rest of mankind. Among them the women attend markets and traffic, but the men stay at home and weave. Other nations, in weaving, throw the wool upward; the Egyptians, downward. The men carry burdens on their heads; the women, on their shoulders. They ease themselves in their houses, but eat out of doors; alleging that, whatever is indecent, though necessary, ought to be done in private; but what is not indecent, openly. No woman can serve the office for any god or goddess; but men are employed for both offices. Sons are not compelled to support their parents unless they choose; but daughters are compelled to do so, whether they choose or not. In other countries the priests of the gods wear long hair; in Egypt they have it shaved. With other men it is customary in mourning for the nearest relations to have their heads shorn; the Egyptians, on occasions of death, let the hair grow both on the head and face, although accustomed to shave. Other men live

apart from beasts, but the Egyptians live with them. Others feed on wheat and barley, but it is a very great disgrace for an Egyptian to make food of them; but they make bread from spelt, which some call *zea*. They knead the dough with their feet; but mix clay and take up dung with their hands. The Egyptians are circumcised. Every man wears two garments; the women, but one. Other men fasten the rings and sheets of their sails outside; but the Egyptians, inside. The Grecians write and cipher, moving the hand from left to right; but the Egyptians, from right to left: and doing so they say they do it right-ways, and the Greeks left-ways. They have two sorts of letters, one of which is called sacred, the other common.

They are of all men the most excessively attentive to the worship of the gods, and observe the following ceremonies: they drink from cups of brass, which they scour every day; nor is this custom practised by some and neglected by others, but all do it. They wear linen garments, constantly fresh washed, and they pay particular attention to this. They are circumcised for the sake of cleanliness, thinking it better to be clean than handsome. The priests shave their whole body every third day, that neither lice nor any other impurity may be found upon them when engaged in the service of the gods. The priests wear linen only, and shoes of byblus, and are not permitted to wear

any other garments, or other shoes. They wash themselves in cold water twice every day, and twice every night; and, in a word, they use a number of ceremonies. On the other hand, they enjoy no slight advantages, for they do not consume or expend any of their private property; but sacred food is cooked for them, and a great quantity of beef and geese is allowed each of them every day, and wine from the grape is given them; but they may not taste of fish. Beans the Egyptians do not sow at all in their country, neither do they eat those that happen to grow there, nor taste them when dressed. The priests, indeed, abhor the sight of that pulse, accounting it impure. The service of each god is performed, not by one, but by many priests, of whom one is chief priest; and, when any one of them dies, his son is put in his place. The male kine they deem sacred to Epaphus, and to that end prove them in the following manner: If the examiner finds one black hair upon him, he adjudges him to be unclean; and one of the priests appointed for this purpose makes this examination, both when the animal is standing up and lying down; and he draws out the tongue, to see if it is pure as to the prescribed marks, which I shall mention in another part of my history. He also looks at the hairs of his tail, whether they grow naturally. If the beast is found pure in all these respects, he marks it by rolling a piece of byblus round the horns, and then having put on it some sealing earth, he impresses it with his signet; and so they drive him away. Any one who sacrifices one that is unmarked is punished with death. In this manner the animal is proved. The established mode of sacrifice is this: having led the victim, properly marked, to the altar where they intend to sacrifice, they kindle a fire. Then having poured wine upon the altar, near the victim, and having invoked the god, they kill it; and after they have killed it, they cut off the head; but they flay the body of the animal: then having pronounced many imprecations on the head, they who have a market and Grecian merchants dwelling among them, carry it there, and having so done, they usually sell it; but they who have no Grecians among them, throw it into the river: and they pronounce the following imprecations on the head: "If any evil is about

to befall either those that now sacrifice, or Egypt in general, may it be averted on this head." With respect, then, to the heads of beasts that are sacrificed, and to the making libations of wine, all the Egyptians observe the same customs in all sacrifices alike: and from this custom no Egyptian will taste of the head of any animal. But a different mode of disembowelling and burning the victims prevails in different sacrifices. I proceed therefore to speak of the practice with regard to the goddess whom they consider the greatest, and in whose honour they celebrate the most magnificent festival. When they have flayed the bullocks, having first offered up prayers, they take out all the intestines, and leave the vitals with the fat in the carcass; and they then cut off the legs and the extremity of the hip, with the shoulders and neck, and having done this, they fill the body of the bullock with fine bread, honey, raisins, figs, frankincense, myrrh, and other perfumes; and after they have filled it with these, they burn it, pouring on it a great quantity of oil. They sacrifice after they have fasted; and while the sacred things are being burned they all beat themselves; and when they have done beating themselves, they spread a banquet of what remains of the victims.

All the Egyptians sacrifice the pure male kine and calves, but they are not allowed to sacrifice the females, for they are sacred to Isis; for the image of Isis is made in the form of a woman with the horns of a cow, as the Grecians represent Io; and all Egyptians alike pay a far greater reverence to cows than to any other cattle. So that no Egyptian man or woman will kiss a Grecian on the mouth, or use the knife, spit, or caldron of a Greek, or taste of the flesh of a pure ox that has been divided by a Grecian knife. They bury the kine that die in the following manner: the females they throw into the river, and the males they severally inter in the suburbs, with one horn, or both, appearing above the ground for a mark. When it is putrefied and the appointed time arrives, a raft comes to each city from the island called Prosopitis; this island is in the Delta, and is nine scheni in circumference: now in this island Prosopitis there are several cities; but that from which the rafts come to take away the bones of the oxen is called Atarbechis; in it a Temple of Venus has

been erected. From this city, then, many persons go about to other towns; and having dug up the bones, all carry them away, and bury them in one place; and they bury all other cattle that die in the same way that they do the oxen; for they do not kill any of them. All those who have a temple erected to Theban Jupiter, or belong to the Theban district, abstain from sheep, and sacrifice goats only. For the Egyptians do not all worship the same gods in the same manner, except Isis and Osiris, who, they say, is Bacchus; but these deities they all worship in the same manner.

[...]

Their manner of mourning and burying is as follows: When in a family a man of any consideration dies, all the women of that family besmear their heads and faces with mud, and then leaving the body in the house, they wander about the city, and beat themselves, having their clothes girt up, and exposing their breasts, and all their relations accompany them. On the other hand, the men beat themselves, being girt up, in like manner. When they have done this, they carry out the body to be embalmed. There are persons who are appointed for this very purpose; they, when the dead body is brought to them, show to the bearers wooden models of corpses, made exactly like by painting. And they show that which they say is the most expensive manner of embalming, the name of which I do not think it right to mention on such an occasion; they then show the second, which is inferior and less expensive; and then the third, which is the cheapest. Having explained them all, they learn from them in what way they wish the body to be prepared; then the relatives, when they have agreed on the price, depart; but the embalmers remaining in the workshops thus proceed to embalm in the most expensive manner. First they draw out the brains through the nostrils with an iron hook, taking part of it out in this manner, the rest by the infusion of drugs. Then with a sharp Ethiopian stone they make an incision in the side, and take out all the bowels; and having cleansed the abdomen and rinsed it with palm-wine, they next sprinkle it with pounded perfumes. Then having filled the belly with pure myrrh pounded, and cassia, and other perfumes, frankincense excepted,

they sew it up again; and when they have done this, they steep it in natrum, leaving it under for seventy days; for a longer time than this it is not lawful to steep it. At the expiration of the seventy days they wash the corpse, and wrap the whole body in bandages of flaxen cloth, smearing it with gum, which the Egyptians commonly use instead of glue. After this the relatives, having taken the body back again, make a wooden case in the shape of a man, and having made it, they inclose the body; and thus, having fastened it up, they store it in a sepulchral chamber, setting it upright against the wall. In this manner they prepare the bodies that are embalmed in the most expensive way. Those who, avoiding great expense, desire the middle way, they prepare in the following manner: When they have charged their syringes with oil made from cedar, they fill the abdomen of the corpse without making any incision or taking out the bowels, but inject it at the fundament; and having prevented the injection from escaping, they steep the body in natrum for the prescribed number of days, and on the last day they let out from the abdomen the oil of cedar which they had before injected, and it has such power that it brings away the intestines and vitals in a state of dissolution; the natrum dissolves the flesh, and nothing of the body remains but the skin and the bones. When they have done this they return the body without any further operation. The third method of embalming is this, which is used only for the poorer sort: Having thoroughly rinsed the abdomen in syrmaea, they steep it with natrum for the seventy days, and then deliver it to be carried away. But the wives of considerable persons, when they die, they do not immediately deliver to be embalmed, nor such women as are very beautiful and of celebrity, but when they have been dead three or four days they then deliver them to the embalmers; and they do this for the following reason, that the embalmers may not abuse the bodies of such women; for they say that one man was detected in abusing a body that was fresh, and that a fellow-workman informed against him. Should any person, whether Egyptian or stranger, no matter which, be found to have been seized by a crocodile, or drowned in the river, to whatever

city the body may be carried the inhabitants are by law compelled to have the body embalmed, and, having adorned it in the handsomest manner, to bury it in the sacred vaults. Nor is it lawful for any one else, whether relatives or friends, to touch him; but the priests of the Nile bury the corpse with their own hands, as being something more than human.

They avoid using Grecian customs; and, in a word, the customs of all other people whatsoever. ...

Cambyzes is said, even from infancy, to have been afflicted with a certain severe malady, which some called the sacred disease. In that case, it was not at all surprising that when his body was so diseased his mind should not be sound. And toward the other Persians he behaved madly in the following instances: for it is reported that he said to Prexaspes, whom he highly honoured, and whose office it was to bring messages to him, and whose son was cup-bearer to Cambyzes, and this is no trifling honour, he is reported to have spoken as follows: "Prexaspes, what sort of man do the Persians think me? and what remarks do they make about me?" He answered, "Sir, you are highly extolled in every other respect, but they say you are too much addicted to wine." Prexaspes said this of the Persians, but the king, enraged, answered as follows: "Do the Persians indeed say that, by being addicted to wine, I am beside myself, and am not in my senses? Then their former words were not true." For, on a former occasion, when the Persians and Cræsus were sitting with him, Cambyzes asked what sort of man he appeared to be in comparison with his father Cyrus; they answered that he was superior to his father, for that he held all that Cyrus possessed, and had acquired besides Egypt and the empire of the sea. Cræsus, being present, not being pleased with this decision, spoke thus to Cambyzes: "To me now, O son of Cyrus, you do not appear comparable to your father, for you have not yet such a son as he left behind him." Cambyzes was delighted at hearing this, and commended the judgment of Cræsus. Therefore, remembering this, he said in anger to Prexaspes: "Observe now yourself, whether the Persians have spoken the truth, or whether they who say such things are not out of their senses; for if I shoot that son of yours who

stands under the portico, and hit him in the heart, the Persians will appear to have said nothing to the purpose; but if I miss, then say that the Persians have spoken truth, and that I am not of sound mind." Having said this, and bent his bow, he hit the boy; and when the boy had fallen, he ordered them to open him and examine the wound; and when the arrow was found in the heart, he said to the boy's father, laughing: "Prexaspes, it has been clearly shown to you that I am not mad, but that the Persians are out of their senses. Now tell me, did you ever see a man take so true an aim?" But Prexaspes, perceiving him to be out of his mind, and being in fear for his own life, said, "Sir, I believe that a god himself could not have shot so well." At that time he committed such an atrocity; and at another time, having, without any just cause, seized twelve Persians of the first rank, he had them buried alive up to the head.

While he was acting in this manner, Cræsus the Lydian thought fit to admonish him in the following terms: "O king, do not yield entirely to your youthful impulses and anger, but possess and restrain yourself. It is a good thing to be provident, and wise to have forethought. You put men to death who are your own subjects, having seized them without any just cause; and you slay their children. If you persist in such a course, beware lest the Persians revolt from you. Your father Cyrus strictly charged me to admonish you, and suggest whatever I might discover for your good." He then manifested his good-will in giving this advice; but Cambyzes answered: "Do you presume to give me advice, you, who so wisely managed your own country; and so well advised my father, when you persuaded him to pass the river Araxes, and advance against the Massagetæ, when they were willing to cross over into our territory? You have first ruined yourself by badly governing your own country, and then ruined Cyrus, who was persuaded by your advice. But you shall have no reason to rejoice; for I have long wanted to find a pretext against you." So saying, he took up his bow for the purpose of shooting him; but Cræsus jumped up and ran out. Cambyzes, when he was unable to shoot him, commanded his attendants to seize him, and put him to death. But the attendants, knowing his temper, concealed

Crœsus for the following reason, that if Cambyses should repent, and inquire for Crœsus, they, by producing him, might receive rewards for preserving him alive; or if he should not repent, or regret him, then they would put him to death. Not long afterward Cambyses did regret Crœsus, and the attendants, knowing this, acquainted him that he was still living; on which Cambyses said: "I am rejoiced that Crœsus is still alive; they, however, who saved him shall not escape with impunity, but I will have them put to death." And he made good his word.

He, then, committed many such mad actions, both against the Persians and his allies, while he stayed at Memphis, both opening ancient sepulchres, and examining the dead bodies; he also entered the Temple of Vulcan, and derided the image, for the image of Vulcan is very like the Phœnician Pataici, which the Phœnicians place at the prows of their triremes. For the benefit of any one who has not seen them, I will describe them; it is a representation of a pigmy. He likewise entered the temple of the Cabeiri (into which it is unlawful for any one except the priest to enter), and these images he burned, after he had ridiculed them in various ways: these also are like that of Vulcan; and they say that they are the sons of this latter. It is then in every way clear to me that Cambyses was outrageously mad; otherwise he would not have attempted to deride sacred things and established customs. For if any one should propose to all men to select the best institutions of all that exist, each, after considering them all, would choose their own; so certain is it that each thinks his own institutions by far the best. It is not therefore probable that any but a madman would make such things the subject of ridicule. That all men are of this mind respecting their own institutions may be inferred from many and various proofs, and among them by the following: Darius having summoned some Greeks under his sway, who were present, asked them for what sum they would feed upon the dead bodies of their parents. They answered that they would not do it for any sum. Darius afterward having summoned some of the Indians called Callatians, who are accustomed to eat their parents, asked them in the presence of the Greeks, and who were informed of what

was said by an interpreter, for what sum they would consent to burn their fathers when they die. But they, making loud exclamations, begged he would speak words of good omen. Such, then, is the effect of custom: and Pindar appears to me to have said rightly, that "custom is the king of all men."

[...]

The Euxine Sea, to which Darius led an army of all countries, except the Scythians, exhibits the most ignorant nations: for we are unable to mention any one nation of those on this side the Pontus that has any pretensions to intelligence; nor have we ever heard of any learned men among them, except the Scythian nation and Anacharsis. By the Scythian nation one of the most important of human devices has been contrived more wisely than by any others whom we know; their other customs, however, I do not admire. This most important device has been so contrived that no one who attacks them can escape; and that, if they do not choose to be found, no one is able to overtake them. For they, who have neither cities nor fortifications, but carry their houses with them, who are all equestrian archers, living not from the cultivation of the earth, but from cattle, and whose dwellings are wagons – how must not such a people be invincible, and difficult to engage with? This device has been contrived by them, as the country is fit for it, and the rivers aid them: for the country, being level, abounds in herbage and is well watered: and rivers flow through it almost as numerous as the canals in Egypt. Such of them as are celebrated and navigable from the sea I will mention: the Ister, that has five mouths; then the Tyres, the Hypanis, the Borysthenes, the Panticapes, the Hypacyris, the Gerrhus, and the Tanais.

[...]

Thus the Scythians are provided with these celebrated rivers. The grass that grows in Scythia is the most productive of bile for cattle of any with which we are acquainted; and when the cattle are opened one may infer that such is the case.

Thus the greatest commodities are furnished them in abundance. Their other customs are established as follows: They propitiate the following gods only: Vesta, most of all; then Jupiter, deeming the Earth to be the wife of Jupiter; after

these Apollo, and Venus Urania, and Hercules, and Mars. All the Scythians acknowledge these; but those who are called Royal Scythians sacrifice also to Neptune. Vesta, in the Scythian language, is named Tabiti; Jupiter is, in my opinion, very rightly called Papæus; the Earth, Apia; Apollo, Etosyrus; Venus Urania, Artimpasa; and Neptune, Thamimasadas. They are not accustomed to erect images, altars, and temples, except to Mars; to him they are accustomed. The same mode of sacrificing is adopted by all, with respect to all kinds of victims, alike, being as follows: The victim itself stands with its fore feet tied together; he who sacrifices, standing behind the beast, having drawn the extremity of the cord, throws it down; and as the victim falls he invokes the god to whom he is sacrificing; then he throws a halter round its neck, and having put in a stick, he twists it round and strangles it, without kindling any fire, or performing any preparatory ceremonies, or making any libation, but having strangled and flayed it he applies himself to cook it. As the Scythian country is wholly destitute of wood, they have invented the following method of cooking flesh: When they have flayed the victims, they strip the flesh from the bones, then they put it into caldrons made in the country, if they happen to have any, which very much resemble Lesbian bowls except that they are much larger; having put it into these, they cook it by burning underneath the bones of the victims. If they have no caldron at hand, they put all the flesh into the paunches of the victims, and having poured in water, burn the bones underneath: they burn very well, and the paunches easily contain the flesh stripped from the bones; thus the ox cooks himself, and of all other victims each cooks itself. When the flesh is cooked, he that sacrifices, offering the first fruits of the flesh and entrails, throws it before him. They also sacrifice other cattle, chiefly horses.

In this manner, then, and these victims, they sacrifice to the other gods; but to Mars, as follows: In each district, in the place where the magistrates assemble, is erected a structure sacred to Mars, of the following kind: bundles of fagots are heaped up to the length and breadth of three stades, but less in height; on the top of this a square platform is formed; and three of the sides are perpendicular, but on the fourth it

is accessible. Every year they heap on it one hundred and fifty wagon-loads of fagots, for it is continually sinking by reason of the weather. On this heap an old iron scimeter is placed by each tribe, and this is the image of Mars; and to this scimeter they bring yearly sacrifices of cattle and horses; and to these scimeters they offer more sacrifices than to the rest of the gods. Whatever enemies they take alive, of these they sacrifice one in a hundred, not in the same manner as they do the cattle, but in a different manner; for after they have poured a libation of wine on their heads, they cut the throats of the men over a bowl; then having carried the bowl on the heap of fagots, they pour the blood over the scimeter. This then they carry up; but below at the sacred precinct, they do as follows: having cut off all the right shoulders of the men that have been killed, with the arms, they throw them into the air; and then, having finished the rest of the sacrificial rites, they depart; but the arm lies wherever it has fallen, and the body apart. Such, then, are the sacrifices instituted among them. Swine they never use, nor suffer them to be reared in their country at all.

Their military affairs are ordered as follows: When a Scythian overthrows his first enemy, he drinks his blood; and presents the king with the heads of the enemies he has killed in battle: for if he brings a head, he shares the booty that they take; but not if he does not bring one. He skins it in the following manner: Having made a circular incision round the ears and taking hold of the skin, he shakes from it the skull; then having scraped off the flesh with the rib of an ox, he softens the skin with his hands; and having made it supple, he uses it as a napkin; each man hangs it on the bridle of the horse which he rides, and prides himself on it; for whoever has the greatest number of these skin napkins is accounted the most valiant man. Many of them make cloaks of these skins, to throw over themselves, sewing them together like shepherd's coats; and many, having flayed the right hands of their enemies that are dead, together with the nails, make coverings for their quivers: the skin of a man, which is both thick and shining, surpasses almost all other skins in the brightness of its white. Many, having flayed men whole, and stretched the skin on wood, carry it about on horseback.

Such usages are received among them. The heads themselves, not indeed of all, but of their greatest enemies, they treat as follows: Each, having sawn off all below the eyebrows, cleanses it, and if the man is poor, he covers only the outside with leather, and so uses it: but if he is rich, he covers it indeed with leather, and having gilded the inside, he so uses it for a drinking-cup. And they do this to their relatives if they are at variance, and one prevails over another in the presence of the king. When strangers of consideration come to him, he produces these heads, and relates how, though they were his relatives, they made war against him, and he overcame them, considering this a proof of bravery. Once in every year the governor of a district, each in his own district, mingles a bowl of wine, from which those Scythians drink by whom enemies have been captured: but they who have not achieved this do not taste of this wine, but sit at a distance in dishonour; this is accounted the greatest disgrace: such of them as have killed very many men, having two cups at once, drink them together.

Soothsayers among the Scythians are numerous, who divine by the help of a number of willow rods, in the following manner: When they have brought with them large bundles of twigs, they lay them on the ground and untie them; and having placed each rod apart, they utter their predictions; and while they are pronouncing them, they gather up the rods again, and put them together again one by one. This is their national mode of divination. But the Enarees, or Androgyni, say that Venus gave them the power of divining. They divine by means of the bark of a linden tree: when a man has split the linden tree in three pieces, twisting it round his own fingers, and then untwisting it, he utters a response. When the King of the Scythians is sick, he sends for three of the most famous of these prophets, who prophesy in the manner above mentioned; and they generally say as follows, that such or such a citizen has sworn falsely by the royal hearth, mentioning the name of the citizen of whom they speak: for it is a custom with the Scythians in general to swear by the royal hearth when they would use the most solemn oath. The person who, they say, has sworn falsely is immediately seized and brought forward; and when he is come, the

prophets charge him with being clearly proved by their prophetic art to have sworn falsely by the royal hearth, and for this reason the king is ill. He denies it, affirming that he has not sworn falsely, and complains bitterly. On his denial, the king sends for twice as many more prophets; and if they also, examining into the prophetic art, condemn him with having sworn falsely, they straightway cut off his head, and the first prophets divide his property between them; but if the prophets who came last acquit him, other prophets are called in, and others after them. If, then, the greater number acquit the man, it is decreed that the first prophets shall be put to death. They accordingly put them to death in the following manner: When they have filled a wagon with fagots, and have yoked oxen to it, having tied the feet of the prophets and bound their hands behind them, and having gagged them, they inclose them in the midst of the fagots; then having set fire to them, they terrify the oxen, and let them go. Many oxen therefore are burned with the prophets, and many escape very much scorched, when the pole has been burned asunder. In this manner, and for other reasons, they burn the prophets, calling them false prophets. The king does not spare the children of those whom he puts to death, but kills all the males, and does not hurt the females. The Scythians make solemn contracts in the following manner with whomsoever they make them: Having poured wine into a large earthen vessel, they mingle with it blood taken from those who are entering into covenant, having struck with an awl or cut with a knife a small part of the body; then, having dipped a scimitar, some arrows, a hatchet, and a javelin in the vessel, when they have done this, they make many solemn prayers, and then both those who make the contract and the most considerable of their attendants drink up the mixture.

The sepulchres of the kings are in the country of the Gerrhi, as far as which the Borysthenes is navigable. There, when their king dies, they dig a large square hole in the ground; and having prepared this, they take up the corpse, having the body covered with wax, the belly opened and cleaned, filled with bruised cypress, incense, and parsley and anise-seed, and then sewn up again, and carry it in a chariot to another nation: those who receive the corpse brought to

them do the same as the Royal Scythians; they cut off part of their ear, shave off their hair, wound themselves on the arms, lacerate their forehead and nose, and drive arrows through their left hand. Thence they carry the corpse of the king to another nation whom they govern; and those to whom they first came accompany them. When they have carried the corpse round all the provinces, they arrive among the Gerrhi, who are the most remote of the nations they rule over, and at the sepulchres. Then, when they have placed the corpse in the grave on a bed of leaves, having fixed spears on each side of the dead body, they lay pieces of wood over it, and cover it over with mats. In the remaining space of the grave they bury one of the king's concubines, having strangled her, and his cup-bearer, a cook, a groom, a page, a courier, and horses, and firstlings of everything else, and golden goblets; they make no use of silver or brass. Having done this, they all heap up a large mound, striving and vying with each other to make it as large as possible. When a year has elapsed, they then do as follows: Having taken the most fitting of his remaining servants; they are all native Scythians; for they serve him whomsoever the king may order, and they have no servants bought with money; when, therefore, they have strangled fifty of these servants, and fifty of the finest horses, having taken out their bowels and cleansed them, they fill them with chaff, and sew them up again. Then having placed the half of a wheel, with its concave side upper-most, on two pieces of wood, and the other half on two other pieces of wood, and having fixed many of these in the same manner, then having thrust thick pieces of wood through the horses lengthwise, up to the neck, they mount them on the half-wheels; and of these the foremost part of the half-wheels supports the shoulders of the horses, and the hinder part supports the belly near the thighs, but the legs on both sides are suspended in the air: then having put bridles and bits on the horses, they stretch them in front, and fasten them to a stake; they then mount upon a horse each, one of the fifty young men that have been strangled, mounting them in the following manner: When they have driven a straight piece of wood along the spine as far as the neck, but a part of this wood projects from the bottom, they fix it into

a hole bored in the other piece of wood that passes through the horse. Having placed such horsemen round the monument, they depart.

Thus they bury their kings. But the other Scythians, when they die, their nearest relatives carry about among their friends, laid in chariots; and of these each one receives and entertains the attendants, and sets the same things before the dead body, as before the rest. In this manner private persons are carried about for forty days, and then buried. The Scythians, having buried them, purify themselves in the following manner: Having wiped and thoroughly washed their heads, they do thus with regard to the body: when they have set up three pieces of wood leaning against each other, they extend around them woollen cloths; and having joined them together as closely as possible, they throw red-hot stones into a vessel placed in the middle of the pieces of wood and the cloths. They have a sort of hemp growing in this country very like flax, except in thickness and height; in this respect the hemp is far superior: it grows both spontaneously and from cultivation; and from it the Thracians make garments, very like linen, nor would any one who is not well skilled in such matters distinguish whether they are made of flax or hemp, but a person who has never seen this hemp would think the garment was made of flax. When, therefore, the Scythians have taken some seed of this hemp, they creep under the cloths, and then put the seed on the red-hot stones; and this being put on, smokes, and produces such a steam that no Grecian vapour-bath would surpass it. The Scythians, transported with the vapour, shout aloud; and this serves them instead of washing, for they never bathe the body in water. Their women, pouring on water, pound on a rough stone pieces of cypress, cedar, and incense tree; and then this pounded matter, when it is thick, they smear over the whole body and face: and this at the same time gives them an agreeable odour, and when they take off the cataplasm on the following day they become clean and shining.

They studiously avoid the use of foreign customs; not only, therefore, will they not adopt those of each other, but least of all Grecian usages.