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**“KNOW THYSELF”
THROUGH THE DIALOGUE WITH THE OTHERS:
FORMATION OF THE ANCIENT CULTURAL
DICHOTOMY “HELLENES—BARBARIANS”**

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At the dawn of the European civilization, the description of the earth was sooner a mythologization of space than an interest in the physical world. The main thesis of this sketch purports that Antique Mythology as often as not is associated with amusing geography and ethnography, which makes it unique as compared with myths of other nations. This can be traced throughout the Greek and the Roman literature of classical antiquity — starting with the epic poems by Homer (8th century BC) to *Dionysiaca* by Nonn Panopolis (5th century AD); the epic, hymnal, legit, historical and geographical Greek “neo-mythology” is abundant in real, yet even more so chimerical, images of faraway countries and nations ἔσχατοι. A most important aspect of Hellenic mythic stories — marvelous exotica and descriptions of various ethnic geographical curiosities — is the indispensable outlandish atmosphere, zoo-anthropomorphic monsters and other never-before-seen creatures, which gave the antique audience an impression of actual distance. The ethnographic thought and the Greek identity emerged as an outgrowth of the dichotomy of the Hellenes and “Barbarians”. The very first contacts of the Greeks with “Barbarians” provoked antagonistic response, which made them aware of the two worlds — *ours* and *theirs*. Exploration of the geographic space — extension of their universe — created marginal monsters in the mythic picture of the world. The realms beyond the oecumene seemed to be inhabited by zoo-anthropomorphic, wild and hostile creatures. Eerie xenomorphs of Hellenic tales were not taken for certain “otherworldly imp” but for fairly “realistic wonders” from beyond our realm. These wondrous elements in the Old Greek cultural macrocosm represented the contrast between the Greek “civilization” and the “barbaric savagery” clashed during “the archaic globaliza-

tion”. The world got jinxed within the space of the myth; the Hellenes were getting “estranged” from their alien neighbours: Egyptians, Thracians, Scythians, Persians, Jews *et al.* The encounter with others caused the Greek universe to clam up: by discovering “barbarians” the Hellenes distanced and estranged themselves. The ancient ethnographic legends were governed not by pragmatic considerations aimed at commercial competition and mercantile interests but by the mythopoetic spirit of the Hellenes, their flamboyance, hot spiritedness, wanderlust, quests and discoveries. Tales of queer marginal and foreign monsters, outlandish exotica were meant to remind those of “us” of “other realms in the world”, full of danger yet challenging.

Keywords: geography and ethnography, *imago mundi*, Greek myths, Homer, epic, drama, art, exotic ornamentation, Hellenes and Barbarians, neighbours, Scythians, Egyptians, Persians, ours and theirs, wonders and monsters, “the archaic globalization”

**«ПОЗНАЙ САМОГО СЕБЯ»
ЧЕРЕЗ ДИАЛОГ С ДРУГИМИ:
СКЛАДЫВАНИЕ АНТИЧНОЙ ЭТНОКУЛЬТУРНОЙ
ДИХОТОМИИ «ЭЛЛИНЫ—ВАРВАРЫ»**

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В отличие от мифологий других народов, классическая мифология исконно связана с этногеографией. Древнегреческие предания, получившие обработку в дошедшем до нас корпусе источников — от эпических поэм Гомера (VIII в. до н. э.) до «Дионисовых деяний» Нонна Панополитанского (V в. н. э.), — подтверждают этот тезис. Географическое чувство эллинов есть чувство пространства, и оно предполагает мифологизацию оною. Эпическая, гимническая, драматическая, историческая, географическая и философская неомифология эллинов полна реальных и в еще большей степени фантастических представлений о дальних странах, где «на неведомых дорожках следы невиданных зверей». Мифологизация служила самоидентификации древних греков через сопоставление своего мира и мира чужого (странного и монструозного). Такое распределение стало основой их представления об ойкумене и космическом порядке: центр и периферия, мы и они, свой и иной миры. Наличие других миров содействовало самоопределению эллинов, их отграничению от культурно чуждых соседей, с одной стороны, а с другой, позволяло им обрести ощущение широты пространства, огромности вселенной. Повышенный интерес греков

к инаковому, запредельному, миру — своего рода «мания иноземного» — явился основой межкультурных контактов и первого витка «античной глобализации». Эллинский мир «заколдовывался» в пространстве мифа, и происходило «отчуждение» эллинов от соседей: египтян, фракийцев, скифов, персов, евреев и прочих. Этнографическая мысль и греческая идентичность родились как продукт дихотомии эллинов и «варваров». Основная дифференциация между своими и чужими, греками и не-греками, сохранялась на протяжении всей античности. Страсть к чудесам и изображение маргинальных монстров в описании морских путешествий были унаследованы средневековой агиографической традицией, что мы встречаем и в византийской литературе.

Ключевые слова: география и этнография, *imago mundi*, греческие мифы, Гомер, эпос, лирика, драма, искусство, экзотическая аргументация, эллины и варвары, соседи, скифы, египтяне, персы, свои и чужие, чудеса и чудища, «архаическая глобализация»

1. THE FIRST “ENLIGHTENED SEAFARERS” AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

At the dawn of European civilization, the first “enlightened seafarers” were discovering a mysterious universe, cultivating amazing stories about foreign lands and the wonders they beheld. They would tell and retell their adventures, and each time, quite naturally, adding something new to embellish their tales. Along with the exploration of the oecumene and the expansion of knowledge about it, the world was being mythologized¹.

In the beginning there was a legend, and this legend was of the Greeks’ creation. It concerned a hero whom the gods had condemned to long travels, and as he journeyed he encountered untold marvels on strange seas and in foreign lands. The hero of this European myth is none other than the crafty Odysseus, ἄνθρωπος πολύτροπος, and

Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose mind he learned, aye,
and many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the sea, seeking to win his
own life and the return of his comrades².

These lines of poetry are attributed to the legendary Homer, whom the great geographer Strabo, with a reference to his predecessors, calls “the founder of the science of geography”³. The “archaegetes” of geography and ethnogra-

¹ On the initial understanding of the oecumene by the Hellenes: Ditmar 1973; Ramin 1979; Andreev 1990, 121–176; Jacob 1991; Bichler, Sieberer 1996, 116–155; Hübner 2000; Heilen 2000; Adams, Roy 2007; Rathmann 2007; Raaflaub, Talbert 2010; Dueck, Brodersen 2013; Almagor, Skinner 2013; Trzaskoma, Smith 2013; Kaplan 2014, 298–311; Podosinov 2014; Podosinov 2015; McPhail 2015; Bianchetti, Cataudella, Gehrke 2016.

² Homer, *Odyssey*, 1. 3–5; as translated by A. T. Murray in Murray 1927, 3.

³ See Strabo, 1. 1. 2: ἀρχηγέτην εἶναι τῆς γεωγραφικῆς ἐμπειρίας Ὀμηρον; Strabo is cited according to the translation by H. L. Jones in Jones 1960, 5; cf. Strabo, 1. 1. 11:

phy, Homer speaks of many exotic places in the world that Odysseus had visited, about his encounters with the peoples ἔσχατοι (“living at the edge of the world”)⁴ and various “uncivilized” creatures. Homer’s narration of the travels of the king of Ithaca reflected the picture of the ancient Greeks’ vision of the world⁵ — an echo of the active intercultural communication in the first centuries of the first millennium BC⁶.

The ancient Greeks, of course, created countless myths about gods and heroes in which the theme of fantastic travels played a key role. Singers composed songs about Jason and the Argonauts, Heracles’ voyages, Dionysus’ “world travels”, Zeus’ exploits, Io’s peregrinations, and Triptolemus’ “round-the-world tour” in a magic chariot. Others concerned Aeneas, Theseus, Pelops, Perseus, Telemachus, Orestes and a host of many other legendary travelers, Kulturtracgers and wanderers⁷.

Θαλάσσιος βίος of the Hellenes determined their spatial and mental universe⁸. Greek seafarers were, for John Boardman, the first to explore *all* the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, which by right they regarded as *their own*⁹, all other seas seemed *alien* to them, even “inhospitable” (at first the Black Sea was called “the Inhospitable Sea” — Ἄξεινος πόντος). The Greeks were the first to venture to the Pontus Euxinus, to explore the Azov and the Adriatic Seas,

⁴ Ὅμηρος τῆς γεωγραφίας ἤρξεν (“Homer was the first geographer”); Strabo, 8. 3. 3 *et al. loc.* On Strabo’s attitude to the first wandering “poet-geographer”: Schenkeveld 1976; Biraschi 2005; Dueck 2005; Kim 2010, 47–84; Patterson 2013, 213–215; Prontera 2016, 239–258.

⁴ It is noteworthy that within the limited geographic realm of the Greeks prior to the colonization movement of the 8th century BC, following from Homer’s epos. ἔσχατοι — that is, people who inhabited the remotest edges of the oecumene — were Phaeacians (on the island of Scheria, now Corfu; Homer, *Odyssey*, 6. 204–205) and Ithacians (on the island of Ithaca; Homer, *Odyssey*, 9. 24–25), who dwelt at western boundaries (at the farthest reaches of the oecumene, according to Homer, see, for example, Podosinov 2012, 76–80, 85; Podosinov 2015, 20–25, with references to literature).

⁵ For more details see below.

⁶ On this subject: Boardman 1999; also Boruhovič 1976; Burkert 1984; Yailenko 1990, 119–227; Purcell 1990, 29–58; Gindin, Tsymburskii 1996; Andreev 1996; Andreev 2010, 13–16, 23–27, 609–627; Vlassopoulos 2007, 91–111; Vlassopoulos 2013; Dihle 2009; Ulf 2009, 81–132; Ulf 2014a, 469–504; Podosinov 2011a; Loudon 2011; Podosinov 2013a; Podosinov 2013b; Whitmarsh, Thomson 2013; Haubold 2014, 325–342; Rollinger 2014; Podosinov 2015; Roller 2015; Saprykin 2018, 15 ff., 43 ff., 250 ff., 319 ff., et al.

⁷ On wandering heroes in ancient mythology: Meuli 1921; El’nitskii 1962; Ramin 1979; Vojatzi 1982; Bernand 1985; Andreev 1990; Hübner 2000; West 2005; Montiglio 2005; Shaub 2007, 58–79; Sulimani 2011; Zahrnt, Zahrnt 2012; Podosinov 2012; Podosinov 2013a; Podosinov 2013b, *passim* (and version of reconstructed maps of mythical heroes’ travels: ill. 12–16, 19–23, 29–34); Musbakhova 2013; Garland 2014; Podosinov 2015, 14 ff., 55 ff., 70 ff., 83 ff., 96 ff., 124 f., 131 ff.; Musbakhova 2015; Burgess 2016.

⁸ See Jani 2016.

⁹ Cf. J. Boardman’s thesis: “The Greeks were the first to explore *all* the coasts of the inland sea and the Black Sea ... To all intents it had become ‘their’ sea without being settled or ruled by them” (Boardman 2014, 213).

and to reach the north-easternmost and westernmost parts of the oecumene. Throughout the centuries — in the age of the European “sea lovers” and their first discoveries — the process as defined by J. Boardman was one in which the Greeks “learned in the east, teaching in the west”¹⁰. In cultural terms, Odysseus and Jason’s fellow countrymen *had created their own world*: they had explored it, found meaning in it and expressed it in *logos*.

As cultural treasuries of experience and meaning, myths are of paramount importance for the understanding of the picture of the world. And it is this specific aspect of ancient mythology which best illuminates the Greeks’ perception of alien lands and their inhabitants rather than the history of contact between the Hellenic and *alien* world that I find most compelling.

2. *COLOR EXOTICUS* OF ANCIENT GREEK LITERATURE

Contrary to other peoples’ mythologies, the classical tradition¹¹ is closely related to ethno-geography. As Fritz Graf, a Swiss scholar of ancient religions and mythologies, noted, “Greek mythology is firmly anchored in geography”¹². The ancient Greek tales that, transformed, constitute the corpus of sources now available — from Homer’s epic poems (8th century BC) to Nonnus of Panopolis’s *Dionysiaca* (5th century AD) — reinforce this argument. The epic, hymnal, dramatic, historical, geographical and philosophical neo-mythology of the Hellenes is full of real and, even more so, fantastical ideas of distant lands where “there, on unknown paths, are trails of beasts unseen before”.

We find ethno-geographic themes in the earliest literature of the West: sporadically in the *Iliad*, globally in the *Odyssey*, an adventurous epic poem, where they are instrumental in shaping the plot¹³. Homer’s geographic sweep is almost universal: his knowledge encompasses almost the entire oecumene. He describes the mental pattern of the world through Odysseus’ adventures while sailing the seas. The space related by Homer is full of various geograph-

¹⁰ Boardman 1999; *cf.* Boardman 2014.

¹¹ Above all, ancient Greek mythology is basic while Roman mythology is “secondary”, “derivative” in essence. The same holds true of geography, which was noted by Aleksandr Podosinov in his introduction to Roman geographic sources (Podosinov 2011b, 9). See Dueck, Brodersen 2013, 24–27.

¹² Graf 2011, 211; see also Dueck, Brodersen 2013, 29–45; Patterson 2013, 201–221; Armstrong, Clarke 2018, 26–35.

¹³ On ethnography and ethno-psychology in Homer’s poetry, see, for example: Schwabl 1962, 3–23 (and the discussion, pp. 24–36); Andraea, Parisi Presicce 1996; Malkin 1998; Gratsianskaja 1999, 46–58; Dougherty 2001, *passim*; Ivanchik 2005; Loudon 2011; Skinner 2012; Vlassopoulos 2013, 165–187; on Homer’s geography: Meuli 1921; Bérard 1927–1929; Hennig 1934; Dickie 1995, 29–56; Knight 1995; Ivanchik 2005; Ivanchik 2008; Warnecke 2008; Machinskii, Musbakhova 2009; Dihle 2009, 26–27, 35–36; Wolf 2009; Cole 2010; Podosinov 2011a; Podosinov 2012; Bilić 2012; Dueck, Brodersen 2013, 29–34, 36; Yailenko 2013, 11–43; Musbakhova 2013; Garland 2014; Musbakhova 2015, 665–666; Podosinov 2015; Bilić 2016.

ic and ethnological, (sub)territorial and cosmic (in the ancient sense) fantasies¹⁴. But it is in this mode that space is cloaked in myth — it is contemplated and spelled out as a certain being. The Poet's thorough understanding of the wanderings of his long-suffering hero and the “reconstruction” of the *mythoepic map* of Odysseus's routes seem to correlate with the visions of the oecumene that the Hellenes had in those days¹⁵. Podosinov's argument seems reasonable when he says that those who listened to Homer's songs formed a literal perception of the *imago mundi* that he depicted; the contemporary audience the bard aimed at must have understood the geographic and ethno-geographic meanings of the poetic narration of Odysseus' wanderings¹⁶.

Ethnic and geographic reminiscences frequently occur in ancient Greek tragedy, comedy and satyr play. Outlandish, “barbaric” plots and realities reflected in Attic drama were thoroughly studied by Helen H. Bacon¹⁷ and Edith Hall¹⁸ (in tragedy), and Timothy Long¹⁹ (in comedy)²⁰. In addition, after perusing the geographic discourse of ancient Greek drama, André Bernard²¹ outlined the mental “map of the tragic”: the French researcher studied the oecumenic ideas that the Hellenes had through the prism of 5th century tragedy. Bernard's book on geography based on his analysis of tragedy triggered a debate about “space in ancient tragedy” (“l'espace dans la tragédie antique”)²² and even “geo-tragic space” (“l'espace géo-tragique”)²³.

¹⁴ See Berger 1904; also Ballabriga 1998; Hölscher 2000; Couprie 2011.

¹⁵ Cf. Meuli 1921, 52–54; Evsiukov 1988, 39–41; Podosinov 2012, 72–79, 88–95, 105–109; Podosinov 2015, 9–11, 20–24, 145, 148, 151.

¹⁶ See Podosinov 2012, 107–109 and Podosinov 2015, 12–13, 151, with a reference to K. Meuli's and A. Ballabriga's opinion with a reference to Meuli's and Ballabriga's (Podosinov 2012, 108, n. 150; Podosinov 2015, 13, n. 7). As to Homer's *contemporary* audience, the very conception is vague. Indeed, since the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* reflect heterogeneous-in-time geographic concepts — we find echoes of the new, early archaic, worldview shared by the elite and those of the rudimentary views typical of the “Homeric” and “pre-Homeric” — Creto-Mycenaean — ages; see R. J. A. Talbert's remark: “Like other aspects of the poems, Homer's geography is a mixture of memories from the Mycenaean world, contemporary knowledge of the eighth or early seventh century BC, and fairy tale” (Talbert 2003, 8).

¹⁷ Bacon 1961.

¹⁸ Hall 1989.

¹⁹ Long 1986.

²⁰ I will mention the collection prepared by Thomas Harrison (Greeks and Barbarians 2002) which encompasses works on the topic written in the last thirty years; first of all, there are articles by S. Goldhill (Goldhill 2002, 50–61) and S. Saïd (Saïd 2002, 62–100) on “barbaric” themes in classical tragedy; and the works by E. Hall (Hall 2002, 133–152) and J. Rudhardt (Rudhardt 2002, 172–185) on the influence of foreign religion and mythology on Hellenic beliefs and tales. There is also the book by J. E. Skinner “The Invention of Greek Ethnography: From Homer to Herodotus. Greeks overseas” (Skinner 2012).

²¹ Bernard 1985.

²² Broc 1987, 745–746.

²³ Tissier 1989, 38.

The mythological foundation of Greek Thespian art had largely determined its ethno-geographic context (scores of plays loosely based on tales of the Argonauts, the Trojan myth cycle, and so forth). Insofar as one can judge, this important aspect of tragedy can be traced back to the early 5th century BC — from Athenian works that are fully extant or are in fragmentary²⁴. But it is noteworthy that in the majority of tragedies Oriental elements have no bearing on the content, but serve as a kind of *exotic ornamentation*²⁵. Such “tricks” in ancient Greek drama must have been meant to enhance the effect on the theatrical audience, by presenting a partial bias to foreign, “barbarian”, curiosities²⁶.

The works of the first Greek travelers, learned geographers and ethnographers — from the so-called “logographers”, historians and storytellers of the 6th – 5th centuries BC to the philosopher-“ethnologist” Stephan of Byzantium (works by Hecataeus and Herodotus, Diodorus of Sicily and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo and the seafarer, geo-mythographer Pausanias, the author of the famous *Description of Greece*, and many others) — are exciting stories in which, in spite of the rationalistic criticism of myths (to different extents), elements of the *magic* play an important role.

Aelian, an educated Roman citizen, summarizes a famous passage from the *Thaumasias* by the Greek historian Theopompus, who recounts a conversation between Midas the Phrygian and Silenus, the son of a nymph. Silenus is said to have informed his interlocutor about many amazing wonders:

Europe, Asia and Libya are islands, around which the ocean flows, and the only continent is the one surrounding the outside of this world. He explained how infinitely big it is, that it supports other large animals and men twice the size of those who live here.²⁷ ... He added an even more remarkable fact. He said that some men called Meropes live among them in numerous large cities, and on the edge of their territory is a place named Point of No Return, which looks like a chasm and is filled neither by light nor darkness, but is overlaid by a haze of a murky red colour. Two rivers run past this locality, one named Pleasure, the other Grief²⁸... If someone is prepared

²⁴ Hall 1989; Sinitsyn 2011b; Vlassopoulos 2013, 162, 195–196; Kennedy 2014 (with literature).

²⁵ As previously pointed out Sinitsyn 2011b, 224–225; Sinitsyn 2012b; Sinitsyn 2013, 223–224.

²⁶ On the *exotica* in the Attic tragedy see Bacon 1961; Diller 1962; Borukhovich 1974; Hall 1989, *passim*; Saïd 2002; Cartledge 2002, 8–17, 36–50; Rung 2005, 133–144; Marinovich 2006, 14–17; Sinitsyn 2006; Sinitsyn 2008; Sinitsyn 2011a; Sinitsyn 2011b; Sinitsyn 2012a; Sinitsyn 2012b; Sinitsyn 2013; Braginskaia, Koval’ 2008; Garvie 2009; Papadodima 2010, 1–42; Vlassopoulos 2013, 19–22, 161–164, 180–184 et al.; Kennedy 2014, 2.

²⁷ Silenus continues by noting that the continent has strange towns and that the inhabitants practice odd customs.

²⁸ At this point, there is a description of both mythical rivers, whereupon the account ends with Silenus taking all this with *cum grano salis*.

to believe the author from Chios, let this tale be credited; but to me he seems a clever inventor of stories, both in this and in other cases²⁹.

In the ancient literary tradition (as in life, I presume), the deeds performed by historical persons were compared to the wanderings of mythic heroes. Such is the case in an episode from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*:

No Hellene before Cimon and no Roman before Lucullus carried his wars into such remote lands, if we leave out of our account the exploits of Heracles and Dionysus, and whatever credible deeds of Perseus against the Ethiopians or Medes and Armenians, or of Jason³⁰, have been brought down in the memory of man from those early times to our own³¹.

Both of these excerpts have been chosen as examples of a fanciful ethno-geography, and, as often as not, with the author's critical attitude to details, and even to the very essence of the story.

The specific *color exoticus* of ancient Greek literature testifies to the Hellenes' *mania of the foreign*. As Kostas Vlassopoulos famously said about the creation of the imaginative universe by the "logographers" (*sic*: the world expressed in logos), "myth and ethnography were combined in order to create a *literary universe* (italics mine. — *A. S.*) which expanded immensely in both space and time"³².

3. THE ANCIENT GREEKS-ODYSSEANS, WANDERING SPIRIT AND THE GREAT GREEK COLONIZATION

This peculiarity of the mythopoetic vision of the world was caused by the mobility of the Greeks, their constant contacts with their neighbours, the acme of which falls in the Archaic Period (8th–6th centuries BC) — the era of the Great Greek colonization³³. Sometimes, in scholarship we come across an opinion that stories about never-seen-before monsters and various outlandish wonders were spun by Greek traders, for whom such fables had a "pragmatic meaning", that is, they served, first and foremost, their commercial interests³⁴.

²⁹ Aelian, *Varia historia*, 3. 18; Aelian is cited after the translation by N. G. Wilson in Wilson 1997 145, 147, 149.

³⁰ Plutarch proceeds, but with a shade of distrust in the legendary.

³¹ Plutarch, *Cimon*, 3; Plutarch is cited after the translation by B. Perrin in Perrin 1968, 411.

³² Vlassopoulos 2013, 181.

³³ I refer to the publications in the new collection "Kulturkontakte in Antiken Welten: Vom Denkmodell zum Fallbeispiel" (Rollinger, Schnegg 2014), and especially to the two long chapters prepared by Christopher Ulf (Ulf 2014, 469–504 and Ulf 2014, 507–566 = Ulf 2009), to whose anniversary this volume is dedicated. A wide range of topics and methods used by researchers represents various aspects of the same problem of *Kulturkontakte*.

³⁴ Igor Surikov has frequently pointed to the "merchant folklore" as "πρακτικὸς μῦθος": "Among merchants of different epochs and civilizations such stories were common, es-

There is a strong possibility that there was a commercial reason for composing such tales, but its role is unlikely to be of primary importance, and besides it is highly problematic to establish it as a fact.

People who told such stories were Greek sailors, warriors, colonists, traders, emigrants, pilgrims, and “tourists”, all of whom created legends about foreign curiosities, and wanderings full of adventure and dangers³⁵. In the first centuries of European history, these amazing tales sustained the interest of Greeks about the unknown world. It seems that it was the *cultural and psychological factor* that played a key role. The dynamic relations between the Greeks and their neighbours, which grew out their colonizing efforts, was based on the Greek propensity of curiosity, exploration, and a yearning for the unknown³⁶.

The Russian historian, Yu. V. Andreev, renown for having criticized O. Spengler’s argument regarding the Greek aversion of *infinity of space*, contributed to the understanding of this wandering spirit:

The Greeks, as they are, were literarily so obsessed with the urge to devour space, forever ‘desiring to change places’, that they had traveled all over the Mediterranean in their rickety boats... No wonder that the Greeks were the first of the ancient peoples to take up the description of all the lands known to them, and they drew the first maps, thereby laying the foundations of geography³⁷.

The crafty and audacious Odysseus is the paragon of Hellenic vivacity and keen-wittedness, and the ancient Greeks in turn were Odysseans, successors and imitators of the legendary wandering captain: both in reality as seafarers and in their imagination — pilgrims of the mythic space, and *poets of dreams*. Such are the ancient Greeks as opposed to the contemporary Greeks, their descendants. This remark derives from the author’s observation of the Greeks after having spent years traveling throughout Greece: Crete, the Peloponnesus, central Greece and eastern Sicily — *Magna Graecia*. Contemporary Greeks appear to this researcher in comparison to their distant ancestors apathetic, long settled-down and firmly anchored. The spark that had set off the Argonauts and Odysseus on their travels is long gone. Cunning and impertinent

pecially those on the fancied side and fuelling horror. ... They were told with a sole aim to drive away potential competitors so that those listening to these stories would never dream of going to India themselves in search of gold and then face monstrous and bloodthirsty ants” (Surikov 2009, 272); cf. similar explanations in his other works: Surikov 2011, 450 (both remarks refer to Herodotus’ account of the Issedones); Surikov 2013, 193–194 — again about the giant ants standing guard over gold, the tricks of the Indians stealing gold, and the instinct of the she-camels in Herodotus’ “Indian logos” (accompanied by a long quotation Herodotus, 3. 102–105).

³⁵ See Garland 2014.

³⁶ On agonistic spirit and rivalry as the core of ancient Greek culture see, for example: Zaicev 1993; Zaitsev 2000; Andreev 1998/1999.

³⁷ Andreev 2013, 23.

as the contemporary Greeks may be, they are rather contemplative, reflecting an Oriental manners, more sedentary than agile, and less spiritually vibrant. These ethno-psychological transformations are the result of having become for centuries reliant on their settled way of life: ruthless Clio had played a low-down trick on these descendants of the first “civilizers” of Europe.

4. THE IMAGE OF “THE OTHER” AND THE ETHNO-CULTURAL POLARIZATION

As previously noted, it is the ancient Greeks who had discovered “barbarians”, and not vice versa³⁸. It is the Hellenes who had started the “cultural dialogue” in which they themselves played the leading role.

Very complicated and controversial was the picture of cultural interaction of the two ethnic arrays³⁹. For a long time, the Greeks played the leading role of the *Kulturtraeger* or donors of cultural values while barbarians had to consider themselves satisfied with the role of passive recipients⁴⁰.

In ancient Greek literature, especially drama, and the visual arts, particularly Attic vase painting, the real and imaginative “the Other” is seen, as it were, from a *hellenocentric* point of view. Generally, the Others is composed of exaggerated types. The image of “the Other” served to present the ideal image of the Greeks for the sake of their own self-awareness and self-identification⁴¹. The literature on this topic is extensive. Therefore, I will confine my references only to those works of Classical scholars of the past quarter of the century, and will omit cultural studies also undertaken on this topic, of which the number has recently grown exponentially⁴².

³⁸ See Andreev 1996, 5 = Andreev 2010, 611; *cf.* Surikov 2007, 151; Surikov 2009, 24; Surikov 2011, 622; Surikov 2012 (2015), 277.

³⁹ I. e., the Greek and the “barbarian” worlds.

⁴⁰ Andreev, Marchenko 2005, 8. In fact, the author deliberately discusses here the Greek-barbarian contacts in the north-eastern periphery of the oecumene; see *The Greeks and Barbarians* 2005, *passim*; also *cf.* Andreev 1996, 9–10, 11–12; Marchenko 1999; Andreev 2010, 616–617, 619–621; Vinogradov 2009, 6–7; Vinogradov, Goroncharovskii 2009, 13–14, 17–19, 26–28.

⁴¹ Specifically for this topic in ancient literature see the edited work by Beth Cohen (Cohen 2000), which brings together publications by experts in various fields of Classical studies. *Cf.* the most recent publications of the *Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World on Greek Art*: Smith, Plantzos 2012, esp. part III “Contacts and Colonies” (pp. 291–396) — articles by S. Weber, V. Köse, J. Bouzek et al., and chapter 23 in the volume 2, “The Non-Greek in Greek Art” prepared by B. Cohen (2012, 456–479); see also Vlassopoulos 2007; Vlassopoulos 2012; Vlassopoulos 2013.

⁴² Hall 1989, 9–11 et al. loc.; Coleman 1997, 175–220; Cartledge 2002, 8–77, esp. pp. 51–77; Georges 1994, 14–16; Gratsianskaia 1999; Gratsianskaia 2002; Lissarrague 2002, 101–124; Nippel 2002, 278–310, esp. 282–283; Isaac 2004; Rung 2005, 125–132; Lund

Cultural antagonism played an important role in creating an ethno-mental sense of self among the Hellenes in terms of self-awareness as a community. As Paul Cartledge has famously remarked,

[The Greeks] constructed their identities negatively, by means of a series of polarized oppositions of themselves to what they were not⁴³.

Here one will recall the classic study by Edith Hall on the Greeks' "inventing the Barbarian"⁴⁴.

Defining the binary opposition of "Hellenes and Barbarians" as fundamental for understanding Greek social terminology, Eduard Frolov noted that

... The making of the Hellenicness occurred as a result of distinguishing themselves from other people in terms of their language and culture. The Great Colonization of the 8th–6th centuries, Greeks spending their lives in foreign parts, surrounded not just by non-Greeks, but often hostile peoples, played a special, stimulating role in this process⁴⁵. Moreover, we may well assume that the *aggressive character* of this developing ancient civilization *had from the very start given the Greek perception of alien people a clear-cut chauvinistic tinge* (italics mine — A. S.)⁴⁶.

A. A. Lund⁴⁷, expounding on Thucydides' "cultural and anthropological" approach in the first chapters of the *History* (1. 3. 1–4), says:

Ohne das Bewußtsein der Zusammengehörigkeit aller Hellenen gibt es auch den Gegenbegriff der Barbaren nicht — oder umgekehrt. Da bei vielen präliterarischen Bevölkerungsgruppen der Name für die ethnische Selbstidentifikation und Selbstskription zu einer bestimmten ethnischen Gruppe ein überaus wichtiges Diakritikum ist, liegt es sozusagen auf der Hand, daß sich die Bipolarität *Hellenen — Barbaren* erst zu einer Zeit ergeben hat, als sich die antiken Griechen schon als Hellenen verstanden haben⁴⁸.

The Danish scholar comes to the conclusion that the Greeks had enjoyed "fellow-feeling", the so-called "us-feeling" ("Wir-Gefühl")⁴⁹ only in the 5th century BC when they had had to endure foreign invasion in the Bal-

2005, 1–17; Marinovich 2006; Skinner 2012; Хазина 2012; Basile 2013; as well as other papers.

⁴³ Cartledge 2002, 12–13.

⁴⁴ Hall 1989. See also the works of Jonathan Hall on the ethnic identity of the Hellenes (Hall 1997; Hall 2002), the collections prepared by E. Gruen (Gruen 2005; Gruen 2011), and the aforementioned research by J. Skinner and K. Vlassopoulos (Skinner 2012; Vlassopoulos 2007; Vlassopoulos 2012; Vlassopoulos 2013).

⁴⁵ Here Eduard Frolov relies on Herman Bengtson's opinion.

⁴⁶ Frolov 1993, 15 = Frolov 2004, 222.

⁴⁷ Lund 2005, 5, 7–8, 11.

⁴⁸ Lund 2005, 8

⁴⁹ See A. A. Lund: "ein Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit, ein sogenanntes 'Wir-Gefühl'" (Lund 2005, 5 and 12, 16).

can Greece until they liberated their land⁵⁰. A similar opinion had been offered by H. Diller,

In dieser Zeit⁵¹ gewinnt die Barbaren-Bezeichnung den Sinn einer politischen Antithese zum Hellenentum, den sie vorher nicht hatte⁵².

Yet hints of the *ethno-cultural polarization* can be found in Homer's epic poems, the extant fragments of the archaic lyric poets, Anacreon and Archilochus, in the 7th–6th centuries BC, and in the works of Hesiod and Heraclitus⁵³. *Self-opposition* of the Greeks to “barbarians” is also found in the Attic iconography of the 6th century BC⁵⁴: Hellenic artists captured differences in physiognomics, clothing, weaponry, and profession, all of which testifies to the degraded status of non-Greeks. Contrary to the opinion that has become *locus communis* with scholars that *the Greek-Barbarian dichotomy* emerged full-blown only in the first half of the 5th century as a result of the Greek-Persian wars, I believe that this process had begun with the expansion of the oecumene at the dawn of the Archaic Period⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ Lund 2005, 8, 16–17.

⁵¹ According to Diller, in the first half of the 5th century BC, during the Greek-Persian wars.

⁵² Diller 1962, 39. The later — classical — dating of the making of the conception of the Barbarian was supported by F. Hartog, L. Marinovich, W. Nippel, E. Hall (see references to the works of these and other scholars below, in note 55).

⁵³ See E. Frolov: “Ancient tradition testifies to the distinct division and opposition of the notions of Hellenicness and Barbarism that had existed from the first steps of Classical Civilization and Classical Literature” (Frolov 2004, 221–222). Cf. Rochette 1997, 37–39; Khazina 2002, 37–38; Khazina 2012; Skinner 2012, 14–15, 116–118 et al.

⁵⁴ For example: Raeck 1981; Lissarrague 1990; Lissarrague 2002, 101–124; Cartledge 2002, 36–50; Ivanchik 2002a; Ivanchik 2002b; Ivanchik 2005, 100–113; Ivanchik 2006, 197–271; Cohen 2000; Cohen 2012, 456–479; Podosinov et al. 2016, 174–195.

⁵⁵ I will note that we should draw a distinction between the meanings of established dichotomous pairs: “us-them”, “civilization-barbarity / natural state” as a dialectic in the broadest sense of culture genesis and “Hellenes—Barbarians”, “Europe—Asia” as an opposition in the most concrete, political, ethnic, geographic and cultural senses. The framework of the article being limited, I think it improper to get involved in the broad discussion of the time of origin of ethno-cultural polarization in classical antiquity; it is a separate topic. I will cite here only some publications by authors who have different views on this topic. Jüthner 1923; Snell 1952; Schwabl 1962; Diller 1962; Weiler 1968; Bengtson 1974; Lévy 1984, 5–8; Hartog 1988; Cunliffe 1988; Hall 1989, 6–7, 10, 56, al.; Nippel 1990; Frolov 1993, 14–16; Frolov 2004, 221–223; Georges 1994; Andreev 1996; Andreev 2010; Battezzatore 1996, 5–34; Rochette 1997; Greeks and Barbarians 1997; Tuplin 1999; Heit 2005, 726, 728–730; Rung 2005, 129–132; Lund 2005; Surikov 2005, 53–55, 283–285; Surikov 2007; Surikov 2009, 22–26, 36–42, 321–323; Surikov 2011, 260–270; Surikov 2012 (2015), 275–284; Surikov 2015, 509–525; Marinovich 2006; Domínguez 2006, 446–457; Mitchell 2007; Sánchez 2007, 33–49; Vinogradov 2009, 9 ff.; Dihle 2009; Skinner 2012; Vlassopoulos 2012; Vlassopoulos 2013; Dueck, Brodersen 2013, 102–103; Obidina 2013; Kim, 2013; Boletsi 2013, 57–107; Basile 2013, 113–134.

The discovery of “the Others” started with the first encounters of ancient Greeks with neighbouring non-Greek peoples, unknown and alien to them. The “alienation” of the European world contributed to the “Wir-Gefühl” of the Greeks had happened centuries before their direct collision with Persian aggressors and had become a most significant aspect of the genesis of *ancient cosmos*. The cultural opposition intensified in the age of Great Colonization when the mobile mental Greek universe was well on the way of pushing the limits. In the Classical Period this process came into its own.

5. THE ARCHAIC GLOBALIZATION AND THE GREEKS’ SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Urged by their agonal spirit, the agile Greeks set out on their journeys in search of the new and, as a result, they clashed against an “alien” world. The intercultural “dialogue” ensued in the process, as was already noted, had its characteristic aspects: at the time of *global colonization*, *τηλόθι πάτρης* (“far from home”), the Greeks came in touch with the remotest *ἔσχατοι* peoples, discovered them *for their sake*, thereby showing true colours and estranging from “the barbarian foreignness”⁵⁶. Identifying themselves through clashing against aliens redounded to the cultural revolution of the archaic epoch⁵⁷.

Another facet of geographic discoveries and interethnic contacts is that the Greeks were outlining the horizons of their mental universe for their own benefit. The urge to uncover the lurking in the distance allowed the ancient ‘enlightened seafarers’ to determine their cultural world by means of alienating from the unknown, lying beyond the borders, world. The “archaegetes” of ethnographic knowledge artfully interpreted (= created) *their cosmos* by delimitating from *chaotic* “barbarian” worlds — so new and so different, “primitive” and alien. By discovering alien neighbours, the “Odysseans” drew a line between themselves and the non-Greeks.

“The archaic globalization” had activated this new attempt at “Europeanizing Europe”⁵⁸. The exploration of space and encounters with strange ethnos at the borders of the oecumene had contributed to the emergence of the Hellenes’ “Wir-Gefühl”. The process of their self-identification entailed the *enchantment* of the secret, the alien and the back of beyond⁵⁹.

⁵⁶ On the unilateral character of “acculturation”, see Gratsianskaia 1999, 46–48; Cartledge 2002; Lund 2005; Khazina 2012; Vlassopoulos 2013; Basile 2013.

⁵⁷ Zaitsev’s work has been devoted to the phenomenon of cultural alteration in Hellas in the 8th–5th centuries: Zaicev 1993; Zaitsev 2000 (= Zaitsev 1985).

⁵⁸ This term has been borrowed from Yu. V. Andreev (see Andreev 2002; Andreev 2010, 209).

⁵⁹ It was a process that was seemingly the opposite of *Entzauberung der Welt* — used by Max Weber, although in a completely different context.

E. D. Frolov, whose argument is cited in the previous section, points to the initially “aggressive character” of the ancient culture, to the “chauvinistic tone” of the civilizing mission of the first Europeans⁶⁰. The archeologist Yury Vinogradov draws the following psychological picture of the first contacts of the Hellenes with the “outlanders”:

Ancient Greeks seemed to take visitors from darkest Asia, at least at the beginning of their wanderings, for all but apparitions⁶¹.

Here Vinogradov refers to the nomads whom the Greeks encountered at the north-eastern borders of the oecumene⁶². Hordes of savage nomads, of a different faith and speaking a different language, from beyond the remote parts of the oecumene must have looked to the worshipers of the Olympic religion like enemies of the civilization, real monsters⁶³.

The ancient mythic geography describes seas and lands inhabited by Anthropophagites, Laestrygones, Cyclopes, the Sirens and Harpies, Cynocephalians, Skiapodes, Arimaspians, Lotophagians, Panottians, Blemmyes, Pygmies and Hyppopodes, the invincible monsters Scylla and Kharybdis and all other amazing outlandish exotics⁶⁴.

⁶⁰ Frolov 1993, 15 = Frolov 2004, 222.

⁶¹ Vinogradov 2009, 6; see also Vinogradov 2000; Vinogradov, Goroncharovskii 2009, 17, 27–28; Vakhtina 2013, 68–70.

⁶² For more connotations on the term “Scythia” and how it was used by the Greeks, consult: Ivanchik 2005a, esp. pp. 113–115, 162 ff., 221 ff.; Vakhtina 2009; Sinitsyn 2011a; Podosinov 2014; Ratcliff 2014, 13–20; Sinitsyn 2014b; Sinitsyn 2015; Podosinov et al. 2016, *passim*.

⁶³ The Hellenes, of course, distinguished between their neighbours: aliens differ. The Attic literature had a tradition to idealize the “barbarians”. Different was the attitude the Greeks had assumed toward the Egyptians. They held in great veneration the culture of the “land of gods and pharaohs”, the millennium-long wisdom of the Egyptians, though the Hellenes perceived their strange realm as a kind of *topsy-turvy world* (cf. Hartog 1988; Thomas 2000, 42–43, 130–131; Vannicelli 2001; Ivanchik 2002a, 53; Sinitsyn 2006; Sinitsyn 2013, 225; Dihle 2009, 12–13; Surikov 2009, 283–284; Surikov 2011, 350; Török 2014, 99–100); the Attic literature is abundant in ironic remarks about peculiar customs and morals of these revered, though strange, southern neighbours. L. Török, with reference to R. Thomas and T. Rood (see Török 2014, 99, n. 324), notes that Herodotus’ contrasting of the Egyptians with other peoples has a geographical explanation, and this view held by the “Father of History” agrees with opinions entertained by other Greek writers, his contemporaries. Among the classic narrative of ethnic stereotypes based on climate and geography, see, for example, Isaac 2004; Dueck, Brodersen 2013, 100–104.

⁶⁴ Of the latest works on the *xenomorphs* in the Greek-Roman mythopoetic tradition: Hopman 2012; see Dodson-Robinson 2014; also Cohen 2012, 456–479, esp. 457–460, 478–479; Ogden 2013; Ratcliffe 2014; these latest studies contain a rich classical “bestial” iconography with reviews of sources and literature; see also corresponding articles in the old good *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* by W. H. Roscher and in the new luxurious *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (ed. by H. C. Ackermann and J. R. Gisler) with illustrations.

The very first contacts with the “barbarians”—*ἔσχατοι* provoked antagonism, engendered the awareness of difference and incompatibility of the two worlds — *ours* and *theirs*. Exploration of geographic space — discovery of the extent of the universe — in the mythic picture of the world bred marginal monsters. It seemed that the back of the beyond of the oecumene was inhabited by zoo-anthropomorphic, savage and hostile creatures. Weird *xenomorphs* of the Hellenic tales were not regarded as “supernatural bogeys”, but as quite ‘real wonders’ dwelling beyond the *borders of our world*. These strange elements in the ancient Greek cultural macrocosm represented the contrast between *the Greek civilization* and *the barbarian savagery* clashed against each other in the age of “the archaic globalization”.

6. CONCLUSION

The main content of this essay may be boiled down to the following theses.

(i) Ancient mythology had stemmed from the Hellenes’ geographic sense.
(ii) This sense is the sense of space and it presupposes mythologization thereof.

(iii) Mythologization served the purpose of self-identification of the ancient Greeks through juxtaposing their world and the alien world (strange and monstrous).

(iv) Such distribution had become the foundation of their vision of the oecumene and the cosmic order: the centre and the periphery, their own and the other worlds.

(v) The existence of such worlds contributed to the Greeks’ self-identification, their delineation from the linguistically and culturally different neighbours, on the one hand, and on the other hand, allowed them to feel the expanse of space and the hugeness of the universe. The keen interest the Greeks had in the alien world lying beyond their borders (what I have termed “the mania of the foreign”) constituted the basis of intercultural contacts and the first round of “globalization”.

I complete this cultural and anthropological sketch on wanderings and discoveries with several general remarks.

Inquisitive descendants of Deucalion, the Greeks were drawn to things that were *beyond* the known. For real wonders can be found *there* — “worlds away”, “in the faraway lands”, beyond the borders of the *civilized* world, “where the woods and dales are full of dreams”. And the farther away from their own shores, the more weird and frightful the phenomena should be; and the more intricate stories about those oddities are, the greater the interest they resonate among their locale listeners/readers. Exotic leitmotifs of mythology aimed to impress the Greek audience, and the greater was the trust when they spoke of faraway countries. Such exciting concoctions were taken seriously and gave an *impression of real remoteness*.

At the dawn of the European civilization, geography was about space mythologizing rather than about describing the physical world. The world got “enchanted” in the space of the myth, seemingly estranging the Greeks from their alien neighbours. The event of encounter with others made the Greeks’ universe close in on themselves: the discovery the “barbarians” made them recoil, and in doing so they self-alienated themselves from the non-Greeks. The ethnographic thought and the Greek identity were born from out the *dichotomy Hellenes—Barbarians*. This differentiation had remained unchanged throughout the whole Antiquity.

The ancient ethno-geographic legends were grounded not on the pragmatic interest that pursues the aims of commercial competition (understood as a phenomenon of the Hellenic agonic nature) but the mythopoetic spirit of the “Odysseans”, their expansiveness, their unbridled enthusiasm for action, an appetite for travels, quests and new discoveries. Tales of wondrous monsters at the borders and beyond, attractive outlandish exotics were to remind them about “the other lands in this world” that are both attractive and dangerous.

Post scriptum.

Passion for wonders and depiction of marginal monsters in the accounts of sea travels passed on into the medieval hagiographical tradition, which we encounter, for example, in the Byzantine literature of the 8th – 10th centuries⁶⁵. Yet, in Christian “tales”, “lives” and “peregrinations” the purpose of the *topoi* of exotic hagiography is different: outlandish wonders and monsters are there to try moral courage of the heroes of these stories — pilgrims, missionaries, wandering monks, seekers of faith. But even here ethno-geographic curiosities serve as markers of the bordering world (at the junction of the sacral of *ours* and *theirs*, that is, those of the “barbarians”), though this “Wir-Gefühl” of *our community* was of a different nature⁶⁶.

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⁶⁵ See Mantova 2014, 612, 616–618, 620–622, with bibliography.

⁶⁶ I am very grateful for the assistance that I received on this topic from Yury N. Kuzmin (Samara, Russia), Valery P. Nikonorov and Dmitry A. Scheglov (St. Petersburg, Russia), Gocha R. Tsetskhladze (Oxford, UK).

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