

Mirko Obradović

**KADMEIAN LETTERS OR WHAT DID HERODOTOS
REALLY SEE IN THE TEMPLE OF THE
ISMENIAN APOLLO IN BOIOTIAN THEBES
(HDT. V 59—61)?**

ABSTRACT: The paper discusses the background of the inscriptions engraved on tripods dedicated to Apollo Ismenios in Thebes, as they were seen and quoted by Herodotos in Book V of his *Histories* (V 59—61). Even though the inscriptions were made on behalf of the figures from the Heroic age — Amphitryon, the son of Alkaios, Skaios, the son of Hippokoon, and Laodamas, the son of Eteokles — and were supposedly written in “Kadmeian letters”, they probably date from the second half of 6th century. That is why this paper considers the reasons to ascribe these dedications to the mentioned heroes, and an attempt has been made to identify possible dominant groups of aristocrats that played a role in transmitting information about the past in this way.

KEYWORDS: Herodotos, inscriptions, alphabet, epic poetry, Thebes, Boiotian League, Apollo, myth, religion, history, politics, cultural values.

In a digression of the fifth book of Herodotos’ *Histories* (Book V, chapters 59—61) while discussing the origin and early history of the aristocratic Gephyraioi *genos*, to whom famous tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton belonged, Herodotos gave the description of three votive tripods which he himself saw in the sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios at Boiotian Thebes. The tripods bear inscriptions in a form of archaic epigrams which Herodotos quotes and dates to the times of heroes, i.e. from before the Trojan War. They are declared to be offerings of the mythical persons Amphitryon, the son of Alkaios (V 59), Skaios, the son of Hippokoon (V 60), and Laodamas, the son of Eteokles (V 61). They are also said to be en-

graved in “Kadmeian letters” (Καδμήια γράμματα) or “Phoenician letters” (Φοινικηία γράμματα), the first alphabet which hero Kadmos and his Phoenicians brought into Greece. There has always been a question of authenticity and reliability of Herodotos’ testimony on that topic. However, neither the inscriptions which Herodotos quotes, nor the whole of his account can offer a reliable answer to the question as to what Herodotos could have really seen in the Temple of Ismenian Apollo in Boiotian Thebes. In order to fully explain the whole tripods issue it is necessary to take into account the epoch in which they could have been dedicated to Apollo, as well as the possible historical and political context of the mentioned dedications.

First of all, it should be emphasized that these three epigrams are only some of the epigraphical sources, both Greek and non-Greek (Oriental), which Herodotos mentions in his work, having known about them from other people or having seen them himself. Over two decades ago, in a successful article, Stephanie West discussed Herodotos’ use of inscriptions, and she, quite naturally, dealt also with these hexameter inscriptions from the Temple of Ismenian Apollo at Thebes.¹ The important conclusion she came to in her study, besides the fact that Herodotos was not entirely reliable even when citing well known inscriptions (e.g. the inscription on the famous “serpent-column” dedicated to Apollo at Delphi and the first of the three Thermopylae epigrams), was that his intention had not only been to improve the understanding of the remote past from which little oral tradition survived, but also to use epigraphical evidence occasionally to strengthen his historical argumentation.² Herodotos’ decision to record the inscriptions on tripods dedicated to Apollo Ismenios should be looked upon in that light, since a larger digression is in question (Book V, chapters 55—62, 1) which primarily aims at showing Kadmeian origin of the Gephyraioi.³

Regarding this case, as well as generally, Herodotos’ good aims and intentions as a writer should not be questioned.⁴ There is no

¹ S. West, Herodotos’ Epigraphical Interests, *CQ* 35, 1985, 278—305, on the inscriptions on tripods dedicated to Apollo Ismenios pp. 289—295.

² West (n. 1) 302—3.

³ On digressions in Book 5 of Herodotos’ *Histories*, see now E. Irwin and E. Greenwood (edd.), *Reading Herodotus: A Study of the Logoi in Book 5 of Herodotus’ Histories*, Cambridge 2007.

⁴ On Herodotos’ aims, his historical method, chronological problems, and the question of his possible sources of information the modern literature is vast and the following studies I find the most useful: D. Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot*, Berlin 1971; D. Leteiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, Toronto 1989; various essays in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian’s Craft in the Age of Herodotus*,

possibility that the author might have fabricated the whole story of heroes' dedications. In any case, for these dedications Herodotos (V 59, 1) explicitly states that “*I myself saw Cadmeian characters engraved upon some tripods in the temple of Apollo Ismenias in Boeotian Thebes*” (εἶδον δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς Καδμήια γράμματα ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ Ἰσμηνίου ἐν Θήβησι τῆσι Βοιωτῶν ἐπὶ τρίποσι τρισὶ ἐγκεκολαμμένα.⁵ Herodotos, of course, understands well that inscriptions can be forged, as in the case of a Spartan dedication at Delphi which is in fact the offering of king Kroisos of Lydia (I 51, 3—4). On the other hand, we cannot agree with Herodotos that the heroes cited as dedicants really made the mentioned dedications themselves. It is quite understandable that it is historically impossible, as well as the notion that the inscriptions were engraved in the script which was in use in the Bronze Age, when the hero Kadmos, the founder of Boiotian Thebes — Kadmeia, supposedly lived. The inscriptions might have only been engraved in the name of heroes, and most probably in archaic alphabet used in Boiotia during the 7th or 6th century B.C. Besides, Herodotos himself adds (V 59) that the tripods he saw at the temple of Apollo Ismenios in Thebes were inscribed in archaic Kadmeian script which is, in fact, “Ionian-like letters” (τὰ πολλὰ ὅμοια ἔόντα τοῖσι Ἴωνικοῖσι). The main question, however, remains who the mentioned heroes and dedications could be important to and why they were in that way recalled in the collective memory.

The inscription on the first tripod is supposed to be the dedication of the hero Amphitryon, the son of Alkaios king of Tiryns and Herakles' mortal father:

Ἀμφιτρώων μ' ἀνέθηκεν ἔων ἀπὸ Τηλεβοάων (V 59).

Me did Amphitryon place, from the far Teleboans coming.

That it is, in fact, Amphitryon, son of Alkaios and grandson of Perseus, we can find from the epigram which speaks about Amphitryon's fight with the Teleboans, as well as from Herodotos' addi-

Oxford 2001; papers presented in P. Derow and R. Parker (edd.), *Herodotus and his World. Essays From a Conference in Memory of George Forrest*, Oxford 2003; almost all of chapters published in C. Dewald, J. Marincola (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge 2006, but also still inescapable *RE* article of F. Jacoby, *RE Suppl.* II, 1913, 205—520, s.v. Herodotos (7).

⁵ I cite the Greek text of Herodotos from Hude's edition (*Herodoti Historiae* II, Oxonii 1927³) and English from Rawlinson's translation of Herodotus first appeared in 1858 and reprinted in *Wordsworth Classics of World Literature series*, 1996 (ed. T. Griffith).

tional note (V 59) that it could have happened in the time of Laios, son of Labdakos and descendent of Kadmos. The war of Amphitryon with the Taphians and the Teleboans is well known in ancient epics and later tradition alike.⁶ After Amphitryon killed by accident Elektryon, Alkmene's father and his father-in-law, he was accused and fled to Thebes for purification. There he was purified of the murder and waged successful wars against the enemies of Thebes to please his wife Alkmene. Accompanied by Boiotians, Lokrians, and Phokians, Amphitryon defeated the Taphians and the Teleboans and also led the Thebans successfully in other wars.⁷ His dedication to Apollo Ismenios can be understood as an act of thanksgiving for a great achievement, i.e. for a victory over enemies in this particular case. On the other hand, it can be assumed that such inscribed objects could often be seen in Greek sanctuaries. Tripods were usually dedicated as gratitude to gods for prizes in athletic competitions and were a characteristic of the political and ruling elite in Greek cities of the Archaic period. They originated in extremely rich and long epic tradition which reaches deep into the past.⁸

However, reasons for the tripod, which Herodotos saw in the temple of Ismenian Apollo, to be ascribed to Amphitryon should not be looked for in the connections of this Theban sanctuary and the Thebans themselves, not only with the hero Amphitryon, the newcomer and stranger who was as a hero adopted in Thebes, but above all, in his connection with Herakles, the greatest of all Greek heroes. Herakles was born in Thebes and his importance for the Thebans is undeniable.⁹ Amphitryon is only his mortal parent, the real one being Zeus, of course. His wife Alkmene gave birth to the twins, Iphikles by Amphitryon, and Herakles by Zeus. Besides, it is known from the later tradition that Amphitryon dedicated the tripod in the Temple of Ismenian Apollo in commemoration of Herakles'

⁶ It was already mentioned in Pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Herakles*. Cf. Hes. *Scut.* 12ff (within the story of Herakles' birth). On the date and nature of the *Shield* (most probably the first half of 6th century B.C.), see R. M. Cook, *The Date of the Hesiodic Shield*, *CQ* 31, 1937, 204—214; R. Janko, *The Shield of Heracles and the Legend of Cynus*, *CQ* 36, 1986, 38—59.

⁷ Cf. T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth. A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*, Baltimore and London 1993, 374—76; A. Kühr, *Als Kadmos nach Boiotien kam. Polis und Ethnos im Spiegel thebanischer Gründungsmythen*, *Hermes-Einzelschriften* — Bd. 98, Stuttgart 2006, 169—172.

⁸ On tripods as sacred symbol of the Greeks and their role in early Greek history, see now N. Papalexandrou, *The Visual Poetics of Power: Warriors, Youths, and Tripods in Early Greece*, Lanham 2004.

⁹ On honouring Herakles at Thebes as Herakles Promachos, whose sanctuary was situated outside the city walls, see A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*, *BICS* 38.2, London 1986, pp. 14—30.

daphnephoria.¹⁰ However, Amphitryon himself could have been honoured by the Thebans and certified in the tradition by the state. He seems to have been initially a local Theban warrior hero. Amphitryon, according to one version, was killed fighting at Herakle and Thebans' side against the king Erginos and the Mynians of Orchomenos.¹¹ And the city of Orchomenos became a rival to Thebes in the Archaic period for the hegemony of Boiotia and in the Boiotian League, whose outlines crystallized in the second half of 6th century B.C.¹² All of that could increase the importance of the myth on Amphitryon, making him a kind of national hero of the Thebans and a legitimate leader of the nation.¹³ The tripod dedicated to Apollo for the victory over the Teleboans aimed at recalling those glorious events from the distant past, as well as showing the contemporaries on whose side the gods and heroes, Herakles, Apollo and, above all, Zeus were.

The second tripod is the dedication of Skaios, the son of Hippokoon:

Σκαῖος πυγμαχέων με ἐκηβόλω Ἀπόλλωνι
νικήσας ἀνέθηκε τὸν περικαλλὲς ἄγαλμα (V 60).

*I to far-shooting Phoebus was offered by Scaeus the boxer,
When he had won at the games — a wondrous beautiful offering.*

At first sight it can be surprising that Skaios, the son of Hippokoon, is amongst the famous dedicants of the tripods to Apollo Ismenios at Thebes. He is cited here as the boxer who won at the games, and Herodotos himself wonders (V 60) if the tripod is dedicated by Skaios, the son of Hippokoon, and not by another of the same name. That made some scholars suppose this Skaios might not have been a mythical figure of the heroic age, but a historical figure

¹⁰ Paus. IX 10, 4: Ἀμφιτρώωνος ἀνάθημα ἐπὶ Ἡρακλεῖ δαφνηφορήσαντι. Herakles' office to Apollo the "Laurel-Bearer" (δαφνηφόρος) could serve as an example to the boys from noble families who are chosen priests of Ismenian Apollo for a year.

¹¹ Cf. *Apd. Bibl.* II 4, 11.

¹² On the formation of the Boiotian League and its beginnings, cf. R. J. Buck, *A History of Boeotia*, Edmonton 1979, pp. 107—117.

¹³ Similarly Papalexandrou (n. 8) 36: "Amphitryon was victorious against the Teleboae, and, as such, he became a legitimate member of the Theban polity. He was thus an earthly alter-ego of Zeus, the celestial sovereign of the cosmos. Amphitryon's tripod at the Ismenion was perceived not only as an *agalma* to Apollo in thanksgiving for his victory against the Taphians and the Teleboae; I would argue that the Thebans saw in this religious gesture a symbolic manifestation of his legitimate accession to political and military leadership."

of the Archaic period.¹⁴ The hero Skaios had strong Spartan connections and it seems unlikely that he dedicated the tripod to Apollo in Boiotian Thebes. It is, however, my belief that any further identification is not necessary, and the reasons of the mentioned dedication should be naturally looked upon in the connections between Skaios and Herakles, well attested by the tradition itself. Skaios the boxer we are talking about is, no doubt, the hero Skaios. Similarly editors of the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* are equally certain that Skaios the boxer cannot be a historical figure, and quite expectedly they do not record his name.¹⁵

The hero Skaios is one of the twelve Hippokoon's sons killed by Herakles in Sparta. Hippokoon, the hero evidently important in Spartan tradition, was the elder brother of Tyndareus, husband of Leda and supposed human father of Helen and Dioskouroi. Hippokoon drove out Tyndareus from Sparta, but his rule did not last long. Herakles invaded land and killed Hippokoon and his twelve sons. Afterwards Herakles restored the throne of Sparta to Tyndareus.¹⁶ In that light Skaios' connections with Thebes in Boiotia can only be speculated about. They might be found in traditional mythical, as well as historical connections of Thebes and Lakonia, and further in mythical bonds between the Peloponnese and Boiotia. Apart from their Heraklid ancestry, the Spartan kings could also claim Theban and Kadmeian descent through Polyneikes, Autesion, Argeia, and Theras (the eponym for Spartan early colony Thera) who acted even as regent in Sparta in the name of Eurysthenes and Prokles. From Theras descends the great and distinguished Aigeidai *genos* at Sparta, whose members were proud of their Kadmeian ancestry. The story was well known to Herodotos.¹⁷ But whatever the case the story necessarily goes back to Herakles, respected in Sparta and Thebes equally.

The third tripod is allegedly dedicated to Apollo by Laodamas, the son of Eteokles:

¹⁴ West (n. 1) 292: "Certainly Scaeus the son of Hippocoon is not known to have had any connection with Thebes, and there is nothing against supposing that this dedication commemorates a homonymous archaic pugilist."

¹⁵ Cf. P. M. Fraser, E. Matthews (edd.), *LGPN III B*, Oxford 2000, which covers Central Greece, including Boiotia.

¹⁶ See Gantz (n. 7) 216—17, 427—28. On the *Hippokoontidai* in the later Spartan tradition, cf. C. Calame, Spartan Genealogies: The Mythological Representation of a Spatial Organisation, in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, London 1987, 153—186.

¹⁷ Theras' sister who had been wedded to Heraklid Aristodemos had borne the first Spartan kings. Cf. Hdt. IV 147, 1—2. On the Aigeidai, Hdt. IV 149. See F. Vian, *Les origines des Thèbes: Cadmos et les Spartes*, Paris 1963, 216—225.

Λαοδάμας τρίποδ' αὐτὸς εὐσκόπῳ Ἀπόλλωνι
μουναρχέων ἀνέθηκε τειν περικαλλῆς ἄγαλμα (V 61).

*King Laodamas gave this tripod to far-seeing Phoebus,
When he was set on the throne — a wondrous beautiful offering.*

Here the case is by far more certain, since Laodamas in question, the son of Eteokles, was legitimate ruler of Thebes, who emphasized himself on the inscription to have the sole rule (μουναρχέων).¹⁸ However, in the well known Theban myth his rule was disputed first by the regency of Kreon, and then by the expedition of the Epigoni against the city of Thebes. According to the legend, Laodamas was killed in a battle, after killing Aigialeus, the son of Adrastos. The second version records that he saved himself by deserting to Illyria. In this case it is obviously about an intention of the Thebans to emphasize the continuity with the distant past and the dynasty of Labdakids, descending ultimately from the hero Kadmos, the founder of the city. After Laodamas, Thersandros, the son of Polyneikes and Argeia, ruled the city of Thebes. Thersandros was of Kadmeian descent like the previous kings and the city continued to be ruled by the old family in spite of its fall.

Although tripods frequently functioned as prizes in athletic contests, they were, however, as we have seen, also dedicated for a variety of reasons. Around 700 B.C. the Boiotian poet Hesiod won a tripod in the music contest at the funeral games of king Amphidamas of Chalcis.¹⁹ But Boiotia was the very region “where tripods were most at home”.²⁰ Even the Roman-era periegete Pausanias saw some of these bronze tripods in Ismenion,²¹ and the great Theban poet Pindar sang that Ismenion was “treasure-house of golden tripods” (χρυσέων τριπόδων θησαυρός).²² Some tripods were dedicated in the honour of victory in athletic or music contests, and some were not. But, whatever the reasons might be, in all the presented cases it is obvious that we are dealing with the world deeply influenced by the epic poetry, tradition and religion. It is the very world

¹⁸ Cf. Papalexandrou (n. 8) 36: “This dedication is certainly meant to be understood as an act of piety occasioned by Laodamas’ need to link his *monarchia* (sovereignty, single rulership) with the authority of the divine patron of the Theban state”.

¹⁹ Hes. *Op.* 654—9.

²⁰ See B. Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods. Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece*, Oxford 2007, 335.

²¹ Paus. IX 10, 4.

²² Pind. *Pyth.* 11, 4—5, victory-poem composed in honour of Thrasydaos of Thebes and his victory in boys’ foot race in 474 B.C.

where the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* was composed reflecting not only interests in heroic genealogies, but also the political landscape of the sixth-century Greece, where Thebes and Boiotia had their important positions.²³

On the other hand, for Thebans this Apollo's sanctuary could have become of great importance very early.²⁴ The temple of Apollo Ismenios, located on a hill south-east of the Kadmeia was first built in the second half of 8th century B.C. Cult activities at Ismenion are well attested with dedications of various objects and for different reasons. It is likely to have been the place which gave one of the oldest preserved dedications to Apollo on the bronze statuette of a naked warrior with an inscription in hexameter verses by certain Mantiklos, today held in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.²⁵ Such dedications must have been abundant, and those which were not originally engraved, later could have been ascribed to a hero. The role of priests and religious officials in such cases could have been crucial. In this way they could have significantly influenced shaping historical consciousness. Such practice is best attested in the temple of goddess Athena in Lindos on the island of Rhodes where numerous dedications from the heroic age were recorded.²⁶ Amongst a number of famous mythical figures who gave votive offerings to Athena Lindia like Kadmos, Minos, Herakles, Telephos, Teukros, Menelaos and Helen, dedication of the hero Kadmos comes first. It is cited for Kadmos that he dedicated "bronze cauldron inscribed with Phoenician letters".²⁷ These "Phoenician letters" appear to correspond to "Kadmeian letters" which Herodotos allegedly had seen on votive tripods at the temple of Apollo Ismenios in Thebes. The connection between them is the hero Kadmos, the founder of Boio-

²³ Cf. for date and purpose M.L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Its Nature, Structure, and Origins*, Oxford 1985; R. L. Fowler, *Genealogical Thinking, Hesiod's Catalogue, and the Creation of the Hellenes*, *PCPhS* 44, 1998–99, 1–19; now also papers in R. Hunter (ed.), *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions*, Cambridge 2005.

²⁴ Cf. Kowalzig (n. 20) 328–391, *Chapter 7: Who were the Boiotians? Myth of Migration in Ritual*, especially pp. 371–382.

²⁵ For this famous early inscription usually dated from c. 700–675 B.C. see L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, Oxford 1961, 90–1, Pl. 7 (1); P. Hansen, *Carmina epigraphica graeca saeculorum VIII-V A. Chr. N.*, Berlin 1983, Nr. 326; B. B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 167–169.

²⁶ The so-called "Lindian Temple Chronicle", *FGrHist* 532 = *I. Lindos* II 2A-D. See also for text, translation and commentary C. Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of Their Past*, Oxford 2003.

²⁷ *I. Lindos* II 2B, 15–16: Κάδμος λέβητα χά[λ]κεον φοινικικοῖς γράμμασι ἐπιγραμμένον.

tian Thebes and his Phoenicians, who, it was believed, introduced the alphabet and passed on many skills and cultural values to the Greeks.

The myth of Kadmos and his descendents existed in the Archaic period as well.²⁸ It can also be seen by the fact that the heroic name Kadmos is attested as a personal name from 6th century B.C. onward. In a society in which aristocratic families competed for prestige, honour and reign, the choice of heroic names as personal names of mortals could also mark tendencies of clans for recognition of their heroic origin.²⁹ In Thebes itself, it was not natural for the hero Kadmos' name to appear as a personal name, since he was the founder of the city. However, referring to the origin of the hero Kadmos and his Kadmeians in the city which was in 6th and 5th century well known for its narrow oligarchy seems quite expected. Those aristocratic families, who gave both priests and temple officials to Apollo Ismenios, could also have been expected to engrave inscriptions on blank tripods dedicated to the god at their will and needs. Later they could have displayed them in public and refer to them, and those are probably the ones that Herodotos had seen. We certainly should not exclude the possibility that behind those inscriptions there was also some interest of the wider community, namely the city of Thebes, especially in the period of around the year 520 B.C. when the Thebans strived to establish their hegemony in the Boiotian League. Likewise there might have been attempts to turn the local sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios into a sanctuary of national importance to all Boiotians.³⁰ Such demands could be supported with "historical arguments from the distant past".

To sum up, "Kadmeian letters" which Herodotos saw engraved on the tripods dedicated to Apollo Ismenios in Boiotian Thebes have nothing to do with the hero Kadmos and his mythical Phoenicians. Evidently, those are dedications inscribed in a local archaic alphabet used in Boiotia. The dedications, however, reflect religious as well as political intentions of aristocratic groups who ordered them. Thus, the choice of heroes is not coincidental. It can point to

²⁸ See now the detailed and careful study of Kadmos and Theban myth by A. Kühr (n. 7) 83ff.

²⁹ For the notion that the name *Kadmos* appears as a personal name in aristocratic families in order to emphasize their connection with the world of heroes, cf. M. Obradović, Notes on the Name *Kadmos* as a Personal Name in the Greek-speaking World, *Зборник Филозофског факултета у Београду*, Серија А: Историјске науке, књига XX, 2006, *Sobria ebrietas: У спомен на Мирона Флашара*, 191—204.

³⁰ In that sense cf. Kowalzig (n. 20) 371ff.

the age and importance of the sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios to whom the tripods are dedicated, as well as the primacy of the Thebans over their neighbours in the period of the Boiotian League formation, most probably in the second half of 6th century B.C. From the earliest period of the Boiotian League the Thebans were trying to enforce a kind of hegemony within the League. It is possible that this political tone came from some aristocratic families who recognized their own interests in that. In the second half of 6th century B.C. dedications in the name of heroes Amphitryon, the son of Alkaios, Skaios, the son of Hippokoon, and Laodamas, the son of Eteokles were probably made. Additionally, the term “Kadmeian letters” accepted by Herodotos was probably used by Thebans themselves, who might have been proud of Kadmos, their mythical founder of the city, naming their alphabet after him, which is in accordance with the hypothesis of the Phoenician origin of the alphabet.

Mirko Obradović
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Belgrade

Мирко Обрадовић

**КАДМЕЈСКА СЛОВА ИЛИ ШТА ЈЕ ХЕРОДОТ ЗАИСТА ВИДЕО
У ХРАМУ АПОЛОНА ИЗМЕНИЈСКОГ У БЕОТСКОЈ ТЕБИ
(Hdt. V 59—61)?**

Резиме

У раду се расправља о позадини натписа које је, урезане на троношцима посвећеним Аполону Изменијском у беотској Теби, видео и цитирао Херодот у петој књизи своје *Историје* (V 59—61). Наведени одељци део су једног већег дискурса у коме Херодот заправо расправља о историји Атине архајске епохе и где настоји да каже нешто више о пореклу и улози славних тираноубица Хармодија и Аристогејтона. Пажњу читалаца, међутим, одувек је нарочито интригирало то што су, како наводи велики историчар, посвете начинили сами хероји Амфитрион, Алкајев син и Хераклов смртни отац, Скај, Хипоконтов син, и Лаодамант, Етеоклов син из династије Лабдакида, као и то да су, наводно, биле исписане тзв. *кадмејским словима*. Под овим *кадмејским* или *феничким словима* Херодот очигледно подразумева најстарије грчко писмо које је, како се веровало, Хеленима донео херој Кадмо, када је, трагајући за сестром Еуропом, са својим Феничанима пристигао у Грчку. То има посебну тежину у контексту наведених посвета Аполону у Теби, пошто је херој Кадмо сматран и митским оснивачем Тебе — Кадмеје. Исто тако, није без значаја да

су и вотивни треношци, који се под утицајем традиције и епске поезије јављају у целом грчком свету, опет нарочито чести и карактеристични за град Тебу и Беотију као област.

Треношци су обично посвећивани боговима у знак захвалности за остварену победу, најчешће на важним панхеленским светковинама. Међутим, победе на спортским или музичким такмичењима нису морале бити и једини разлог и мотив за овакву врсту посвета. Захвалност боговима изражавана је вотивним даровима и за успех сваког другог већег предузећа. Поред тога, многи од ових вотивних предмета, нарочито у старијим епохама, нису носили натпис који је, по правилу, могао садржати само име дедиканта и име бога коме је предмет био посвећен. На првобитно неисписаним треношцима могле су се накнадно урезати посвете у име стварних или измишљених дедиканата. Такав је, без сумње, случај и са треношцима из Аполоновог храма у Теби чије натписе у хексаметру наводи Херодот.

Натписи на треношцима који бележе посвете Аполону хероја Амфитриона, Скаја и Лаодаманта потичу вероватно из друге половине 6. века пре н.е. и само су дате у име наведених личности из митске прошлости. Посвете су, по свему судећи, биле исписане архајским алфабетом коришћеним у Беотији, а који је и по Херодотовом признању (V 59) сасвим одговарао писму каквим се у истом периоду писало у Јонији. Разлоге, међутим, да се ове посвете припишу баш поменути херојима треба тражити у активностима оних друштвених група и слојева у Теби и Беотији који су налазили интерес у преносењу информација о далекој прошлости на овај начин. Добро је познато да се Хелени нису присећали своје прошлости, већ су је престано стварали. Поред песника, храмови и особље храмова су имали нарочито важну улогу у обликовању историјске свести и представа о митској прошлости Хеладе. За Тебанце је светилиште Изменијског Аполона било од посебног значаја, што показују остаци првобитног храма подигнутог већ у 8. веку, као и бројни заветни дарови из различитих епоха. Зато је и улога свештеника и храмовних службеника овог Аполоновог светилишта у обликовању историјске свести Тебанаца, али и конкретно у вези са наведеним дедикацијама Аполону, могла бити одлучујућа. Савременицима, као и самом Херодоту који је посетио светилиште, ове посвете у име хероја нису побуђивале никакву сумњу. Оваква пракса, вероватно раширена у хеленском свету, најбоље је позната на основу славне *Храмовне хронике* из Линда на Родосу која бележи заветне дарове богињи Атине Линдији у име бројних славних личности из далеке и митске прошлости (FGrHist 532 = I.Lindos II 2). С друге стране, интерес у бележењу оваквих посвета налазили су и аристократски родови и породице које су могле изводити порекло од хероја, а преко њих од богова. И ова пракса је добро позната већ у архајском периоду, а нема сумње да је тако било и у граду Теби, познатом по својим олигархијским владама. За потребе креирања ових генеалошких веза са боговима и херојима вероватно је током 6. века пре н.е., можда баш у Беотији, и ис-

певан славни и често коришћени еп *Каталоџ жена*, грешком навођен под именом старијег беотског песника Хесиода. Осим тога, у вези са наведеним посветама Аполону у име хероја Амфитриона, Скаја и Лаодаманта, можда се из тих натписа да наслутити и интерес шире заједнице, наиме града Тебе, пре свих других. То нарочито важи за период око и после 520. године, када су Тебанци настојали да учврсте своју хегемонију у новоформираном Беотском савезу. У том правцу су могли ићи и покушаји да се локално тебанско светилиште Аполона Изменијског представи као светилиште од значаја за све Беоћане. Овакви захтеви су могли бити само појачани и оснажени „историјским аргументима из далеке прошлости”.

